

# Information for Polokwane for greening the Tourism and Hospitality sector

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Sustainable Energy Africa

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# FOREWORD

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This document has been produced by Sustainable Energy Africa as part of the SAMSET outputs in supporting municipalities to transition towards a sustainable, energy efficient future.

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SUSTAINABLE  
ENERGY  
AFRICA

**SAMSET**  
Supporting Sub-Saharan Africa's Municipalities  
with Sustainable Energy Transitions

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>South African Responsible Tourism Certification Systems</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Benefits of greening the Tourism and hospitality industry</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Suggestions for Polokwane</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>1</b>

# INTRODUCTION

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The objective of this report is to provide Polokwane local government (LEDET and LED) with advice around best practice green rating for tourism. The report explains the concept **Responsible Tourism** and introduces the **NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM** developed by the National Department of Tourism which is used as the framework for analysis of the “greening” of tourism. A list of South African Responsible Tourism Certification Systems is provided and then the report highlights the benefits of investing in the responsible tourism e.g. employment, local economic development, poverty reduction, environmental benefits (energy, water, waste, biodiversity) and cultural heritage.

The report concludes with suggestions for Polokwane municipality that can be used by the municipality to support the tourism and hospitality sector in the municipality to become greener through capacity building and providing support where necessary. Further the report provides useful documents that the municipality can use for more details about green tourism. A key resource that has been developed by Sustainable Energy Africa for greening tourism and hospitality businesses is included. The document can be used by the municipality as a guiding handbook for tourism and hospitality business in the city and can be made available on website for easy access.

The document fits within the SAMSET project as ‘greening’ of tourism facilities includes a strong focus on energy efficiency and clean energy. In fact energy costs are also often a key driver for engagement by the tourism industry in such greening, as electricity costs in particular have been rising fast in South Africa, with associated adverse business impacts in the sector.

# NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

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In 1996, the National Department of Tourism (NDT) adopted responsible tourism as the guiding principle for tourism development in South Africa. NDT later developed the *South African National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism* (NMSRT) to:

- Establish a common understanding of the minimum criteria for responsible tourism.
- Establish the minimum criteria to be used for accrediting the certification schemes which assess and certify the sustainability of tourism facilities.
- Promote responsible tourism as the guiding principle in the South African tourism sector.

There are in total 41 criteria, which are grouped under the following four headings:

1. Sustainable operations and management.
2. Social and cultural criteria.
3. Economical criteria.
4. Environmental criteria.

The value of this voluntary standard is that it provides tourism facilities with a set of minimum requirements for responsible tourism which can be used to:

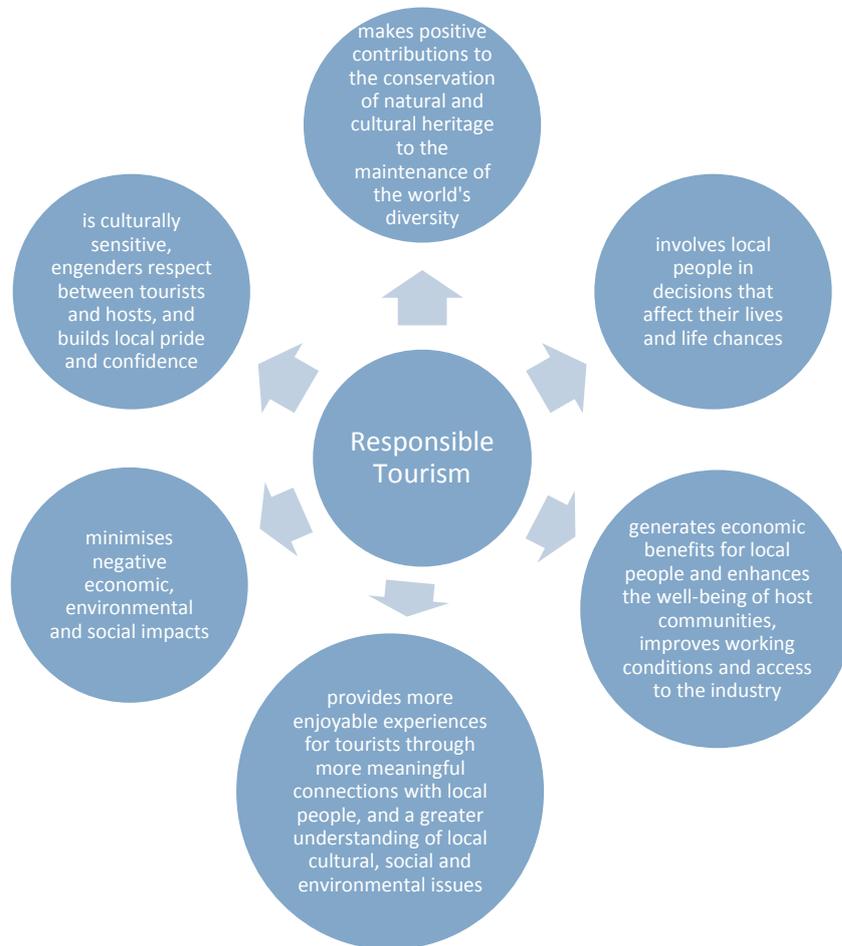
- Implement, maintain and enhance sustainable practices in their operations.
- Screen their facilities in accordance with the requirements of this standard.
- Prepare for certification under this standard by a third-party certification scheme

The intention is to use the NMSRT as the standard for certification schemes seeking accreditation from the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) in the future. Certification schemes will therefore have to include this standard in their own criteria in order to be accredited. This means tourism facilities will also need to meet this standard in order to be certified by one of the accredited certification schemes.

## WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM?

Responsible Tourism is defined as a tourism management strategy in which the **tourism sector** and **tourists take responsibility** to protect and conserve the natural environment, respect and conserve local cultures and ways of life, and contribute to stronger local economies and a better quality of life for local people. **(Source: Responsible Tourism Requirements - SANS 1162:2011).**

Separated they live in Bookmarks grove right at the coast of the Semantics, a large language ocean. A small river named Dudeen flows by their place and supplies it with the necessary truth.



# SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSIBLE TOURISM CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

## 3 'green' certification organisations in South Africa:

### Green Leaf Environmental Standard – established in 2008

- The Green Leaf™ Environmental Standard is an internationally recognized responsible and sustainable tourism certification body established in 2007 by the Wilderness Foundation.
- Assesses hotels, game lodges and country estates in the tourism sector. It aims to reduce the effects of consumption on our environment and improve upon environmental management and awareness in an eco-friendly manner.
- The Green Leaf™ Environmental Standard focuses on ethical education, increased awareness, reducing operating savings, responsible tourism best practice, continual improvement, enhanced brand image, sustained profitability and carbon neutrality.
- Green Leaf™ Environmental Standard has three spheres of measurement; core, responsible and restorative. A minimum 75% level of compliance is required to be certified silver under the core sphere, with 95% compliance certifying gold and platinum in responsible and restorative spheres respectively.

[www.greenleafecostandard.net](http://www.greenleafecostandard.net)

### Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) – established in 2002

- Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable tourism development, through awareness raising, research and advocacy, capacity building and by facilitating the world's first tourism Fair Trade certification programme.
- Business travellers who stay in FTTSA-certified establishments, are assured their travel is benefiting local communities and economies, and that the tourism business is operating ethically and in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.
- FTTSA's Certification Programme
  - FTTSA encourages and publicises fair and responsible business practice by South African tourism establishments by offering a certification programme (and supporting activities) that endorses tourism establishments that meet stringent criteria.
    - Fair wages and working conditions, fair operations, purchasing and distribution of benefits
    - Ethical business practice
    - Respect for human rights, culture and the environment

[www.fttsacertification.org.za](http://www.fttsacertification.org.za)

### Heritage Environmental Rating Programme - established in 2003

- The Heritage Environmental Certification Programme® has been developed to provide operators of all types of tourism-based businesses with an effective environmental management system (EMS) designed to reduce and limit the impact that their operations have on the environment. Heritage incorporates the standards of seven international programmes in a three tiered approach to sustainability certification. Depending on levels of compliance with the Heritage® EMS, businesses are graded as either: Silver, Gold or Platinum.
- Provides businesses with effective environmental management and certification solutions
- Provide certification solutions to all facets of the service industry including hotels and accommodation; game lodges and resorts; zoos and aquaria; meetings and events; golf courses; residential estates, banking, retail businesses and business services.
- Standards are based on internationally recognised sustainability and responsible business initiatives including ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 20121 and others.
- All members of the Heritage network undergo an on-site review at least every twelve-months and are awarded one of three levels of recognition according to their performance, sustainability and responsible business practices.

- In 2010, the Heritage Environmental Management Company introduced the GreenLine Programme which is based completely on the National Standard and is aimed at accommodation facilities of less than 20 rooms.
- The Heritage Standard addresses the following key environmental indicators:
  - a. Purchasing and Procurement
  - b. Business Partnerships
  - c. Transport and Vehicle Maintenance
  - d. Fauna, Flora and Game
  - e. Communications and Marketing
  - f. Resource Management
  - g. Community Involvement
  - h. General

<http://www.heritagesa.co.za/>

#### Other organizations

##### Green Wilderness - established in 2007

- assess the current status of tourism operations & determine critical changes required to offset the residual carbon footprint without compromising on quality
- includes job creation and investments in local green technologies

##### Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards - established in 2002

- Recognizes tourism and hospitality businesses that make a sustained and measurable contribution to responsible tourism
- The awards are in line with the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism, the Responsible Tourism guidelines for the South African hospitality industry and the UN World Tourism Organisation's code of ethics
- is an annual ceremony to reward the greenest establishments for going the extra mile
- Criteria for the awards are in line with the UN World Tourism Organizations Code of Ethics
- run by the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA)
- supported by the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme - a programme of the Heritage Environmental Management Programme

<http://www.imveloawards.co.za/>

# BENEFITS OF GREENING THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Benefits associated with certifying accommodation facilities through a recognized certification programme

1. reduce environmental impact (energy, water, waste, biodiversity)
2. cost savings; reducing energy and water bills
3. create jobs, stimulate entrepreneurship and boost regional economic growth
4. boosts branding/marketing image
5. Access to the diversity of networking and supporting services offered by certification programmes
6. Improved management of staff, contractors, and suppliers leading to enhanced staff morale, greater staff retention, and better overall business operations.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR POLOKWANE

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Develop a **Polokwane Responsible Tourism Action Plan** that will

1. Create awareness about Responsible Tourism within Polokwane for tourism businesses, citizens, tourist and public officials.
1. Provide information resources/best practices documentation via website, logo, booklet and exhibitions/ Responsible Tourism week.
2. Conduct information sessions and training to tourism businesses or create a **Responsible Accommodation Forum**. The purpose of the forums will be to increase the environmental awareness of the owners/managers of accommodation facilities in and around Polokwane.
3. Provide incentives to tourism businesses such as awards for businesses and staff members with greatest progress and contribution.
4. The IDP could mention Responsible Tourism as an approach to destination management.
5. Establish Responsible Tourism Barometer to assess performance and progress within the City.
6. Compel tourism businesses providing goods and services to the city to demonstrate actions and progress towards responsible tourism.
7. Local tourism organizations funded by local government should be required to demonstrate their commitment to and implementation of Responsible Tourism.

# APPENDIX

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## OTHER USEFUL DOCUMENTS:

1. [Responsible Tourism handbook: A guide to good practice for tourism operators](#)

This handbook uses South Africa's National Responsible Tourism Guidelines as a basis for providing practical examples and tips on how to operate more responsibly. It is aimed at owners and operators of tourism establishments e.g. hotels, B&Bs, guest lodges, game lodges and tented camps, self-catering resorts, cultural villages and other establishments. We also encourage tourism associations to distribute the handbook to their members. (DEAT (2002), Responsible Tourism Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice for Tourism Operators, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria.)

2. [DEAT \(2002\), Responsible Tourism Manual for South Africa, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria](#)

This manual aims to provide established as well as community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) with information about "responsible tourism" and the opportunities that it presents for improving business performance. Specific to South Africa, and in line with current international best practice, the authors have collected a range of practical and cost-effective **responsible actions** available to tourism businesses and tourism associations. The manual refers to many useful sources of information and examples of best practice that can help to guide users' implementation of responsible business activities.

3. [DEAT \(1996\), White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria](#)

4. [NDT \(2011\), National Tourism Sector Strategy, National Department of Tourism, Pretoria.](#)

5. [NDT \(2011\), South African National Standard: Responsible Tourism Requirements, SANS 1162, National Department of Tourism, Pretoria.](#)

6. [DRAFT NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STRATEGY VERSION 5 FIVE YEAR PLAN 2012 – 2016](#)

The National Department of Tourism (NDT) has developed a draft of the Responsible Tourism Strategy that would promote sustainable development, growth and promotion of tourism in South Africa. This strategy is aimed at the development of a process leading to a comprehensive National Strategy for Responsible Tourism in South Africa which would have the support and endorsement of a cross-section of stakeholders. The strategy contains proposed action plans which would guide the implementation of the strategy and allow for mechanisms to measure progress.

7. **Cleaner production in the tourism and hospitality industry**

This is a guide to reducing the environmental impact of hotels and other hospitality facilities through water and energy efficiency and waste reduction measures.

8. **Manual on Greening of the hospitality sector (FREE - developed by Sustainable Energy Africa)**

This was developed to support the greening of the tourism and hospitality industry. The manual provides step by step guidelines on how to green a tourism/hospitality business; including energy use, general environmental management, waste and chemicals management, as well as water use.

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