



GSTC Food and Beverage Standard v.1.0

**with
Performance Indicators and SDGs**

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Preamble

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) establishes and manages global baseline standards for sustainable tourism. These standards offer a clear and common understanding of what responsible and sustainable tourism practices entail and define the minimum expectations for tourism providers committed to sustainability. This standard has been developed specifically for food and beverage service providers, including restaurants, cafés, catering services, food halls, and similar operations. It follows the same four-pillar structure as other GSTC standards and outlines core practices across sustainability management; social and economic benefits; cultural heritage; and environmental stewardship.

How the Standard Works

The standard is organized into four sections—each representing a key pillar of sustainable practice:

Section A: Demonstrate Effective Sustainable Management. This section focuses on building a solid foundation: having a clear sustainability policy, planning actions, monitoring progress, training staff, communicating honestly, and managing facilities responsibly. It helps businesses put sustainability into daily practice in a structured and practical way.

Section B: Maximizing Social and Economic Benefits to the Local/Regional Community and Minimizing Negative Impacts. Food businesses can have a direct impact on local livelihoods. This section encourages hiring and supporting local workers, partnering with local suppliers and farmers, creating safe and fair workplaces, celebrating diversity, and strengthening relationships with nearby communities. The goal is simple: ensure that everyone touched by the business benefits from it.

Section C: Maximizing Benefits for Cultural Heritage and Minimizing Negative Impacts. Food is culture, memory, and identity. This section encourages businesses to celebrate local culinary traditions thoughtfully, work respectfully with communities, protect cultural heritage, and avoid misusing cultural elements. Whether preparing traditional dishes or global cuisine, businesses should honor the stories, knowledge, and people behind the food.

Section D: Maximizing Environmental Benefits and Minimizing Negative Impacts. From farm to fork, food systems shape the planet. This section encourages responsible sourcing, reducing waste and pollution, using energy and water wisely, lowering carbon emissions, and protecting biodiversity and animal welfare. The emphasis is on practical improvements that reduce harm and support healthier ecosystems.

Together, the standard consists of 36 criteria and 215 indicators, each supported by guidelines to help businesses understand how to apply them ([Annex: Guidelines](#)).

This standard aims to:

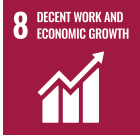
- Define sustainability in a holistic manner and increase awareness of its breadth and nature.
- Operational Guidance: Guide food and beverage businesses of all sizes toward more sustainable operations by providing practical guidance.
- Supply Chain & Market Access: Provide guidance for identifying sustainable suppliers and service providers, thereby creating greater market access within the growing market for sustainable businesses.
- Help consumers, diners, and travelers identify credible food and beverage businesses, giving them confidence in responsible dining choices.
- Certification & Education: Provide a foundational reference point for training, education, and sustainability certification for businesses, universities, hospitality schools, and associations.
- Provide a common reference point for information media recognizing food and beverage businesses or providers.
- Offer both the public and private sectors foundational guidance for developing sustainable food and beverage requirements, while supporting government, industry, and community programs.
- Demonstrate leadership that inspires others to act, helping to create a fairer, greener, and more resilient food service sector.

This standard was created in line with the GSTC Standard-Setting Manual (v3.0) and the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability System (v1.1), ensuring credibility and inclusive development. It reflects input from experts, industry practitioners, community voices, researchers, and organizations working across sustainability and responsible tourism.

The standard is reviewed at least every five years, and updates — along with opportunities for public input — are shared on www.gstc.org.

Standard Application: It is recommended that all criteria be applied to the greatest extent possible. In cases where a criterion is not applicable due to local regulatory, environmental, social, economic, or cultural conditions, this must be justified. For micro and community-owned tourism businesses with a limited footprint, limited resources may prevent the comprehensive application of all criteria.

GSTC Food and Beverage Standard

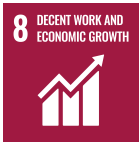
Criteria	Indicators	SDGs
SECTION A: DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT		
A1. Sustainability Management System The organization has a system to plan, implement, monitor, and continuously improve its sustainability policy, targets, and actions. The system matches the organization's size, capacity, and activities, and addresses social, cultural and environmental sustainability aspects as well as service quality, labor, and human rights.	1. The organization has a written sustainability policy. (See Guidelines) 2. The organization has documented sustainability targets linked to the policy. (See Guidelines) 3. The organization has documented actions to implement the policy and reach the targets. (See Guidelines) 4. The sustainability policy and targets are proportionate to the organization's size, staff capacity, and activities. (See Guidelines) 5. The sustainability policy addresses at least the following: environmental matters; social matters; cultural matters; economic matters; service quality; labor and human rights. 6. The organization reviews the implementation and effectiveness of its sustainability policy and actions at least once a year. (See Guidelines) 7. The annual review includes an assessment of progress toward the organization's sustainability targets. 8. The organization maintains an ongoing process to monitor sustainability performance throughout the year. (See Guidelines) 9. The organization updates its actions or targets when monitoring shows a need to support continuous improvement. (See Guidelines)	
A2. Food Safety and Operational Risk Control The organization implements effective food safety and operational risk-management practices, as a baseline requirement, to ensure food quality, guest and employee safety, and operational continuity.	1. The organization complies with all applicable local food safety and hygiene regulations. (See Guidelines) 2. The organization provides clear allergen information to guests. 3. The organization maintains documented hygiene procedures. 4. The hygiene procedures are communicated to all relevant employees. 5. Relevant employees receive food safety and hygiene training at least annually. (See Guidelines) 6. Where food safety risks warrant it, training includes scenario-based exercises. (See Guidelines)	 

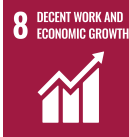
A3. Legal Compliance The organization follows all applicable laws and regulations and maintains the documentation needed to demonstrate compliance.	1. The owner or a designated employee regularly checks compliance with all legal requirements applicable to the organization, including updates and new laws. 2. The organization maintains up-to-date permits and licenses required by applicable regulations. (See Guidelines) 3. Employees who handle food have the certifications and qualifications required for their roles. 4. All food handlers hold valid applicable hygiene certificates.	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 
A4. Reporting and Communication The organization shares its sustainability policy, actions, and the results of those actions with stakeholders.	1. The organization collects data on its sustainability actions and progress toward time-bound targets, over a monitoring period appropriate to its operational capacity. (See Guidelines) 2. The organization shares its sustainability actions and progress toward time-bound targets with guests, suppliers, employees, and local communities. 3. The information shared is presented in clear, easy-to-understand language. 4. If the organization has a website, it shares its sustainability policy, actions, and target achievements there. 5. If the organization has social media accounts, it shares its sustainability policy, actions, and target achievements there.	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION  17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 
A5. Employee Engagement Employees are actively engaged in implementing the organization's sustainability policy and actions, and receive role-appropriate guidance and training.	1. The organization demonstrates that employees are aware of its sustainability policies and practices. 2. The organization demonstrates employee engagement in its sustainability policies and practices. (See Guidelines) 3. Employees receive role-appropriate training to help them carry out the organization's sustainability policies, actions, and targets. (See Guidelines) 4. Employees receive rights-based training, including child rights.	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 
A6. Service Quality and Guest Experience The organization ensures high service quality and guest satisfaction through clearly assigned responsibility for sustainability and service-quality coordination, consistent practices, employee training, and effective response to guest feedback.	1. The organization designates a person or team, appropriate to its size and complexity, who is responsible for coordinating, overseeing, or supporting the implementation of sustainability and service-quality actions. (See Guidelines) 2. The designated person or team is knowledgeable about the organization's sustainability policy and targets. (See Guidelines)	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 

	- The organization takes appropriate action in response to guest feedback, complaints, or comments. - Upon request, the organization provides examples of how it has addressed guest concerns.	
A7. Accurate Promotion and Information Promotional materials, marketing communications, and information accurately and transparently represent the organization's products, services, and sustainability practices. No promises or implications are made beyond what can realistically be delivered.	- All services, food, beverages, and facilities shown in promotional materials, marketing communications, and information reflect only what is genuinely available to guests - Sustainability-related information about menu items is communicated clearly and transparently to guests, on menus, boards, or digital platforms. (See Guidelines) - Diet-related information about menu items (e.g., gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, plant-based, or equivalent descriptions) is communicated to guests,, in simple, accurate, and widely understood language appropriate to the local context. (See Guidelines) - All sustainability claims by the organization are backed by reasonable evidence, such as past performance, supplier information, documents, or certifications. (See Guidelines) - The organization uses clear, defined terms on what it meant by "local" (e.g., community-based, regional, national, cross-border), tailored to its geographical context and availability. (See Guidelines) - The organization's definitions of "local" are shared transparently with guests. (See Guidelines) - Where packaging or non-food materials are provided to guests (e.g., takeaway containers, cups, napkins), the organization clearly communicates the correct disposal or handling methods, in line with the local waste-management system. (See Guidelines)	 
A8. Buildings and Infrastructure New construction, expansion, and renovation projects follow sustainable and responsible design and building principles. Existing facilities and signage are operated and presented in ways that minimize negative impacts on people, neighbors, and natural and cultural heritage.	- The organization's signage is designed and placed to respect local, cultural, and natural heritage. (See Guidelines) - The organization's buildings, construction, or renovation activities avoid harm to sensitive natural areas. - The organization's buildings, construction, or renovation activities avoid harm to sensitive cultural areas. - Paints, varnishes, polishing materials, and similar finishes used in food preparation, service, and dining areas are selected from low-VOC (low-Volatile Organic Compound),	

	non-toxic, or certified products to minimize harm to human health. (See Guidelines)	
A9. Sustainable Practices and Materials The organization uses sustainable practices and materials appropriate to its local or regional context, prioritizing environmentally responsible choices for furnishings, temporary structures, and any new construction or renovation under its control.	- Where possible, the organization demonstrates sustainable practices in the sourcing of furnishings (e.g., tables, chairs, service materials, uniforms). - When furnishings are newly acquired or replaced, items are prioritized from sustainability-certified products, environmentally responsible materials, second-hand sources, or upcycled materials. - The retention and maintenance of existing furnishings in good condition is recognized as a sustainable practice. - Where temporary structures (e.g., event stalls or pop-ups) are used, the organization selects materials that can be reused, recycled, or disposed of responsibly, when available. - Where the organization has direct control over new construction or renovation, it applies sustainability measures appropriate to the project's scale and context. - Where the organization has direct control over new construction or renovation, it considers third-party green-building certification when appropriate to the project's scale and context.	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 
A10. Menu The organization's menu (food and/or beverages) is provided in a sustainable format and communicates the relevant sustainability characteristics, allergens, dietary suitability, cultural sensitivities, origins, and, where applicable, the traditional or cultural significance of food and beverage offerings, in a way that is accessible to guests.	- Physical menus use durable, reusable, or responsibly sourced materials, or the organization provides digital menus to reduce environmental impact. - Menu information includes sustainability-related characteristics of menu items (See A7.2). - Menu information includes allergen information for menu items. - Menu information includes dietary suitability for menu items (e.g., vegan, vegetarian, plant-based). - Menu information includes cultural- or belief-sensitive elements where applicable to menu items. - Menu information is provided in languages suitable for local inhabitants and key guest demographics. - Menus are available in formats that support guests with visual impairments. - Where the organization offers food, it demonstrates a clear commitment to reducing reliance on animal-based ingredients. (See Guidelines) - When offering national, regional, or traditional food and/or beverages, the organization highlights the use of	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 

	local products or ingredients where applicable, using menu-appropriate or supplementary communication methods. (See Guidelines)	
A11. Land, Water, and Property Rights The organization ensures that any land, property, or water it uses is accessed and operated legally, with documented usage rights, and without contributing to forced relocation, community displacement, or harm to ecosystems.	1. Where the organization owns, leases, or operates on public land, property, or water resources, the legal usage rights (e.g., ownership, lease agreements, permits, licenses) are clearly documented. (See Guidelines) 2. Documentation of legal usage rights is available for verification. 3. Where the organization owns or controls land or property and its activities may directly affect the local community or environment, it engages appropriately with local communities, environmental NGOs, or authorities to address concerns and support positive relationships. (See Guidelines) 4. Where the organization directly uses or benefits from natural water bodies (e.g., for water extraction, discharge, or location-dependent activities), it takes measures to avoid harm to ecosystems. 5. Where the organization directly uses or benefits from natural water bodies, it complies with all relevant local environmental regulations.	

Criteria	Indicators	SDGs
SECTION B: MAXIMIZING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL/REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND MINIMIZING NEGATIVE IMPACTS		
B1. Local Community Development The organization fosters active communication and collaboration with the local community, considers local needs, and supports initiatives that enhance local infrastructure and social development.	1. The organization considers local community needs through informal feedback, dialogue with local groups, or working with local authorities, in ways that fit its size, activities, and context. 2. The organization supports local community initiatives or responds to local concerns. 3. The organization actively contributes to social-responsibility initiatives, either by implementing its own community projects or by supporting existing programs. (See Guidelines)	  
B2. Local Employment The organization supports access to employment and career-advancement opportunities for local residents, including in supervisory and management positions.	1. The organization provides employment opportunities to local residents. 2. The organization implements practices to attract local talent. (See Guidelines) 3. The organization provides opportunities for local employees to develop skills relevant to their roles. (See Guidelines)	 
B3. Local and Inclusive Procurement The organization prioritizes the procurement of goods and services produced locally — from local suppliers, smallholder farmers, and small-scale producers — applying fair, sustainable, and inclusive procurement practices, while maintaining quality.	1. The organization has a written local and inclusive procurement policy. (See Guidelines) 2. The procurement policy prioritizes purchasing from local farmers, small-scale producers, cooperatives, or community-based suppliers, while maintaining quality. 3. The organization regularly reviews its supply chain to increase local and inclusive sourcing, considering availability, seasonality, and sustainability performance. 4. Upon request, the organization reports the proportion of goods and services purchased or sourced locally and/or inclusively, in terms of spend value or weight. (See Guidelines) 5. When local ingredients are used, their origin is clearly shared with guests in an appropriate way (e.g., on menus, boards, or websites), in line with the organization's other communication practices (See A7).	  

B4. Supporting Local Entrepreneurs The organization supports local entrepreneurs and small businesses, including those from marginalized communities, by providing opportunities to supply products or services or to collaborate in ways that foster local economic development.	1. The organization identifies local farmers, cooperatives, and/or service providers. 2. The organization engages local farmers, cooperatives, and/or service providers, prioritizing those that align with its sustainability targets and can benefit from local collaboration or support. 3. Beyond direct purchasing, the organization provides capacity building, training, or mentorship opportunities for local small-scale suppliers, farmers, cooperatives, and entrepreneurs. 4. Beyond direct purchasing, the organization supports local farmers, small-scale suppliers, cooperatives, or entrepreneurs through knowledge-sharing on business development, sustainability, or quality standards.	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 
B5. Community Services and Livelihoods The organization ensures that its activities and operations do not compromise essential community services or access to local livelihoods, integrating community needs into decision-making and impact mitigation.	1. Where the organization undertakes new investments, growth, or development, the organization conducts and documents a local livelihood impact assessment. 2. The organization maintains a culturally appropriate, multilingual feedback and grievance mechanism that allows community members to submit resource access concerns, submit complaints, or propose proactive improvements. 3. If the organization's development or activities limit access to essential services or local livelihoods (for example, by blocking access routes or public spaces), it works collaboratively to identify solutions.	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 
B6. Access for All The organization makes efforts to provide equitable access and clear information for individuals with diverse needs.	1. The organization is in compliance with local accessibility regulations. 2. Where specific accessibility regulations are not available, the organization makes efforts to provide amenities or services that support the diverse needs of guests and employees, appropriate to its size and facilities (e.g., wheelchair support, audio or visual support, support for breastfeeding, pet-friendly areas). 3. Clear and accurate information regarding accessibility is transparently presented through the organization's website, social-media platforms, or onsite communications.	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 
B7. Exploitation and Harassment The organization implements and enforces policies and procedures to prevent any	1. The organization maintains a zero-tolerance policy against exploitation and harassment, including forced labor and child labor.	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 

form of sexual or labor exploitation, forced labor, harassment, trafficking, and child begging, particularly affecting protected and vulnerable groups.	- The organization clearly communicates this policy to all employees, contractors, and supply chain partners - The organization takes appropriate measures to prevent harm to children and vulnerable persons within its operations and sphere of influence. - The organization provides clear guidance on how to report concerns related to exploitation, including anonymous reporting. - The organization maintains verifiable employee records—including age verification, signed employment contracts, and working conditions—in alignment with ILO standards. - Records demonstrating the absence of child labor and forced labor are made available to stakeholders upon request. - Where the organization provides spaces, activities, or services involving children, it implements child-safeguarding measures to ensure a safe and protective environment. (See Guidelines)	
B8. Equal Opportunity The organization ensures equal employment opportunities — including in management positions — for all individuals, without discrimination, and actively fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion in its workplace.	- The organization maintains a documented non-discrimination policy. (See Guidelines) - The non-discrimination policy applies to all employees regardless of gender, age, nationality, ethnic origin, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or family status, genetic characteristics, disability, or any other non-merit-based factor. - The organization periodically reviews and updates its non-discrimination and equal-opportunity practices. (See Guidelines) - Employees receive training or guidance, appropriate to their roles, on recognizing, preventing, and addressing discrimination, bias, and harassment in the workplace. (See Guidelines) - Career advancement, promotion, and training opportunities are based on merit and qualifications. - Career-advancement, promotion, and training decisions are managed through fair and transparent processes ensuring equal access for all employees. (See Guidelines) - Where relevant, the organization implements measures to address gender inequity and barriers to women's participation and career progression, including access to leadership roles. (See Guidelines)	

	8. The organization monitors the implementation of equal employment opportunities across all positions, including management roles.	
B9. Human Rights and Decent Work The organization respects human rights and labor rights, ensures a safe and secure working environment, provides fair wages, and puts measures in place to foster employee well-being, satisfaction, and a culture of continuous improvement.	1. The organization conducts documented human rights due diligence across its own operations and supply chain, specifically assessing and mitigating risks related to forced labor and child labor. (See Guidelines) 2. The organization provides all employees with fair, legally binding contracts that clearly define employment terms and comply with local job-security regulations. 3. Where feasible, the organization provides or facilitates access to appropriate additional employee benefits or support to enhance well-being and security, taking into account the national healthcare and social-security context. (See Guidelines) 4. Employees work reasonable hours in line with national labor laws and industry best practices. 5. The organization makes efforts to prevent excessive working hours. 6. The organization ensures fair rest periods and days off for employees. 7. Overtime hours are compensated in line with local labor laws and regulations. 8. Adequate facilities for drinking water, food access, sanitation, and hygiene are provided for employees. (See Guidelines) 9. Adequate facilities for drinking water, food access, sanitation, and hygiene are provided for guests. 10. Appropriate areas for dressing and resting are provided for employees. (See Guidelines) 11. Adequate locker or secure storage facilities are provided for employees. 12. All employees are paid at least the applicable legally recognized minimum wage for the location, whether established by law, collective agreement, or sectoral wage-setting mechanism. (See Guidelines) 13. Foreign and migrant workers have the same fair working conditions, rights, and protection as all other employees. (See Guidelines) 14. Employees have a safe and confidential way to raise concerns or complaints (e.g., an employee feedback box) without fear of retaliation.	

Criteria	Indicators	SDGs
SECTION C: MAXIMIZING BENEFITS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MINIMIZING NEGATIVE IMPACTS		
C1. Presenting Cultural Heritage The organization respects intellectual-property rights when using cultural elements in its operations, design, decoration, food, or retail. This applies to both local culture and to world cuisines when shared outside their place of origin.	1. The organization reflects and respects local culture in its spaces or operations. (See Guidelines) 2. The organization observes copyright and intellectual-property rights when using works of art and cultural symbols. 3. Where works of art or cultural symbols are used in operations, marketing, or product development, the organization obtains the necessary permissions.	
C2. Safeguarding and Promoting Food Traditions The organization helps preserve and promote food traditions by using local or regional culinary knowledge, ingredients, or techniques where relevant. It respects the authenticity of these traditions while encouraging innovation that builds on them.	1. Where local agricultural products and traditional ingredients are part of the organization's offerings, the organization maintains documented materials. 2. The organization ensures that kitchen and service staff understand the cultural significance, origins, and respectful preparation of local ingredients and traditional dishes. 3. The organization collaborates with local community members or culinary experts to ensure traditional recipes are accurately preserved and that culinary knowledge is actively transferred. (See Guidelines)	
C3. Artifacts and Symbols The organization ensures that any cultural or historical artifacts or symbols used in its decor, displays, menus, or branding are presented respectfully and comply with local and international laws.	1. Where cultural or historical artifacts, symbols, or designs are used in decor, menus, or branding, they are presented respectfully. 2. Where cultural or historical artifacts, symbols, or designs are used in decor, menus, or branding, the organization complies with local and international laws regarding their use. 3. Where artifacts or replicas are displayed, they are accompanied by accurate information about their cultural or historical significance.	

Criteria	Indicators	SDGs
SECTION D: MAXIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AND MINIMIZING NEGATIVE IMPACTS		
Conserving Resources		
D1. Responsible Sourcing The organization follows responsible sourcing practices by prioritizing environmentally and socially sustainable suppliers and products, ensuring ethical procurement of food, beverages, construction materials, and consumables, with particular attention to seafood and animal-welfare considerations.	1. The organization has a written responsible-sourcing policy. 2. The organization has annual targets to improve supplier compliance with its sustainability policy or standards. 3. Under its responsible-sourcing policy, the organization prioritizes products, producers, and suppliers with recognized environmental certifications. (See Guidelines) 4. Under its responsible-sourcing policy, the organization prioritizes products, producers, and suppliers with recognized animal-welfare certifications. (See Guidelines) 5. The organization prioritizes local and small-scale producers using documented sustainable or regenerative practices, unless documented local supply constraints prevent doing so. 6. The organization implements responsible seafood sourcing by prioritizing products certified by credible schemes. (See Guidelines) 7. The seafood offered on the menu complies with applicable fishing bans. (See Guidelines) 8. Animal-protein ingredients used in menu items are sourced from producers that avoid the use of cages or crates, subject to documented regional availability. (e.g., battery cages, veal crates, gestation crates, poultry cages). 9. Animal-protein ingredients are sourced from producers that apply basic animal-welfare practices appropriate to the species, verifiable through supplier documentation. (See Guidelines) 10. The organization maintains a procurement preference for animal products from suppliers with recognized animal-welfare practices, (particularly poultry, eggs, and seafood) such as improved living conditions, reduced stocking densities, environmental enrichment, or humane handling and slaughter, unless lack of commercially viable alternatives is formally justified.	 

D2. Efficient Purchasing The organization works to reduce the purchase and use of consumables and single-use items, including takeaway packaging, in order to minimize waste, prioritize sustainable materials, and promote responsible consumption.	1. The organization works to identify and eliminate single-use items, such as packaging, disposable cutlery, cups, sachets, and printed menus. 2. The organization implements a documented plan to phase out non-biodegradable materials (e.g., plastics, PFAS), prioritizing areas where viable alternatives exist. 3. The organization prioritizes reduction, reuse, and returnable options over recycling for single-use items. (See Guidelines) 4. The organization engages suppliers in reducing packaging. 5. The organization monitors its use of consumable and single-use products. 6. The organization sets targets to reduce its use of consumable and single-use products and to transition to more sustainable alternatives where appropriate. 7. The organization considers the balance between reducing food waste and reducing packaging waste to achieve the best overall environmental outcome. 8. Compostable and biodegradable packaging is used in locations where proper waste-processing infrastructure exists, avoiding environmental harm from non-compatible materials.	13 CLIMATE ACTION 
D3. Energy Conservation The organization monitors and manages its energy consumption to minimize total usage, takes practical steps to improve energy efficiency, and incorporates renewable energy where feasible.	1. The organization measures its total energy consumption by type (e.g., electricity, gas, petroleum). 2. The organization periodically reports on its total energy consumption by type. (See Guidelines) 3. The organization actively works to reduce overall energy consumption across its operations. 4. The organization actively works to improve energy efficiency across its operations. (See Guidelines) 5. Idle energy consumption in kitchen equipment is minimized through proper operation protocols, automatic shut-off systems, or energy-saving settings. 6. When equipment reaches the end of its life cycle or becomes inefficient beyond repair, it is replaced with a higher energy-efficiency model. (See Guidelines) 7. Renewable-energy options (e.g., solar-powered appliances or renewable-energy credits) are integrated into the organization's energy use, unless technical or regulatory constraints are formally documented. (See Guidelines)	13 CLIMATE ACTION 

	8. Employees are trained in energy-efficient practices, including proper equipment usage, turning off idle appliances, and optimizing heating and cooling systems. (See Guidelines)	
D4. Water Conservation The organization monitors and manages its water consumption to minimize total usage, ensures sustainable water sourcing, and implements practical steps to improve water efficiency in its own operations and, where feasible, in its supply chain.	1. The organization regularly monitors its total water consumption in kitchen operations, sanitation and stewarding, and service areas. 2. The organization regularly reports on its total water consumption. (See Guidelines) 3. Equipment that minimizes water consumption is implemented (e.g., water-efficient dishwashing equipment). 4. Operational practices that minimize water consumption are implemented, including leak prevention and optimized cooking and cleaning processes. 5. Water used by the organization is sourced legally and sustainably. 6. The organization's water sourcing does not negatively impact environmental flows or deplete local water supplies. 7. Employees are trained in responsible water use to promote awareness and conservation efforts within the organization. 8. The organization integrates water-management criteria into its supplier evaluation process, aligned with its purchasing influence. (See Guidelines) 9. The organization conducts a documented risk review to avoid sourcing water-intensive products from areas experiencing severe water stress. (See Guidelines)	 
Reducing Pollution		
D5. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions from procurement, menu design, customer-facing offerings, and operations within the organization's control are identified, targeted for measurable reduction, mitigated, and transparently communicated.	1. The organization takes practical steps to limit the use of carbon-intensive ingredients (e.g., certain animal products). (See Guidelines) 2. The organization increases the use of lower-emission ingredients in its menu offerings. (See Guidelines) 3. The organization adopts purchasing practices that reduce food waste (e.g., improved forecasting, use of off-spec produce, or collaboration with suppliers to prevent food loss). 4. The organization designs menus and offerings that promote plant-based and low-emission options.	 

	- The organization offers reusable containers to support lower-carbon guest choices. - Where appropriate, the organization communicates the carbon impact of menu items to guests. - The organization transparently communicates its GHG-reduction efforts in reports or customer-facing materials.	
D6. Liquid Waste Management The organization ensures that all forms of liquid waste — including wastewater, fats, oils, and grease — are effectively treated, safely reused or discharged, and managed in ways that do not negatively affect the local community or the environment.	- Where municipal or public wastewater treatment is available, the organization discharges wastewater into that approved system to ensure compliance with local regulations and environmental standards. - Where appropriate municipal wastewater treatment is not available, the organization operates an on-site treatment system subject to regular water-quality testing to ensure discharges meet local environmental safety thresholds and prevent adverse effects on the local population. - The organization installs and regularly maintains commercial grease traps in all kitchen facilities to prevent fats, oils, and grease from entering the wastewater system. - Used cooking oil is collected and stored carefully to prevent leakages. - Used cooking oil is disposed of responsibly through authorized vendors capable of repurposing or recycling it. - Records of used-cooking-oil collection and disposal are maintained, except where local authorized vendors do not provide manifest documentation.	 
D7. Solid and Food Waste Management Solid waste — including food waste — is measured, and mechanisms for prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling are implemented. Disposal is conducted in a manner that does not negatively impact the local community or the environment, with priority placed on waste prevention before disposal solutions.	- The total amount of solid waste, including food waste, packaging, and other non-food materials, is measured. - Solid waste is categorized (e.g., organic, recyclable, non-recyclable). (See Guidelines) - Solid-waste data is reported at a frequency appropriate to the size and operations of the business (e.g., through periodic audits) and tracked to improve waste-management efforts. (See Guidelines) - The organization has a comprehensive solid-waste-management plan in place, detailing strategies for waste prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling.	 

	5. Procurement practices prioritize waste prevention through inventory management and planning techniques to avoid over-ordering. (<i>See D2</i>). 6. The organization sources foods that are appropriately seasonal and/or aligned with shorter, more reliable supply chains to reduce spoilage. 7. Menus and recipes are designed to promote reuse of ingredients. (<i>See Guidelines</i>) 8. The organization engages suppliers that use minimal and sustainable packaging (<i>See D2</i>). 9. Where feasible, the organization prevents surplus edible food from becoming waste by prioritizing redistribution for human consumption through donation or resale. (<i>See Guidelines</i>) 10. Where feasible, the organization uses environmentally responsible disposal methods for unavoidable organic waste, such as composting, bioenergy conversion, anaerobic digestion, or animal food (only if non-toxic and appropriate for animal consumption). 11. Waste disposal and treatment are handled in accordance with local regulations, either through facilities operated or approved by relevant authorities or through legally permitted on-site treatment methods (e.g., composting) managed to prevent environmental or health risks.	
D8. Hazardous Substances Management The use of hazardous substances — including pesticides, paints, disinfectants, and cleaning materials — is minimized and replaced with non-harmful or environmentally friendly alternatives wherever possible. Hazardous substances are managed appropriately throughout their lifecycle, including storage, use, transport, and disposal, to protect biodiversity, human health, and the environment.	1. An up-to-date inventory of hazardous substances used by the organization is maintained. 2. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are available and accessible for all hazardous substances. 3. Hazardous substances (e.g., cleaning agents, pest-control chemicals, maintenance products) are used sparingly. 4. Preference is given to alternatives and processes that minimize airborne particles (e.g., avoiding aerosols). 5. The organization ensures that hazardous substances and chemicals do not come into contact with food and beverages, including food-service items such as plates, utensils and cutlery. 6. Actions are taken to identify and source environmentally friendly alternatives to hazardous substances used in painting, cleaning, disinfecting, and pest control. 7. Hazardous substances are stored according to appropriate safety standards to prevent leaks, contamination, or exposure.	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 

	- All hazardous disposal follows legal and environmental guidelines, ensuring safe removal through authorized and certified disposal vendors. - The organization has procedures to manage the lifecycle of hazardous substances, including employee training on safe storage, handling, spill response, and disposal.	
D9. Minimizing Pollution The organization implements practices to identify, monitor, and minimize pollution affecting humans, animals, air, water, and soil from its operations.	- The organization identifies potential sources of pollution from its operations (e.g., noise, artificial lighting, and other impacts on air, water, and soil) through internal reviews or stakeholder consultations appropriate to its size and type. - The organization minimizes identified pollution sources through appropriate operational measures. (See Guidelines) - All chimneys, ventilation systems, and filtration equipment are regularly inspected, maintained, and verified to comply with legal emissions and environmental regulations. - The organization regularly monitors identified pollution sources - Where monitoring identifies issues, the organization implements appropriate corrective actions to maintain compliance and minimize environmental harm. - The organization applies measures to minimize pollution, such as using low-emission appliances and eco-friendly or dimmed lighting.	 

Conserving Biodiversity and Ecosystems

D10. Biodiversity Conservation The organization supports biodiversity conservation through its sourcing, menu, and land-management practices, in ways that minimize harm to ecosystems and, where relevant, actively contribute to their protection.	- When operating within or adjacent to high-biodiversity areas, the organization shall collaborate with or support local conservation authorities or civil society organizations to monitor, enhance, or rehabilitate ecosystem health. (See Guidelines) - If the organization maintains a garden, park, or cultivable land, it prioritizes the use of local, non-invasive plants, fruits, and vegetables. (See Guidelines) - Where the organization maintains cultivable areas, it supports biodiversity by planting heirloom varieties and promoting local, regionally significant crops. (See Guidelines) - The organization supports biodiversity through its procurement and menu by incorporating products from heirloom plant varieties, heritage or rare-breed meat	 
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	and dairy, or native or local seafood and plant species. (See Guidelines) 5. The organization avoids overreliance on a narrow range of widely used commercial species in its menu offerings. (See Guidelines)	
D11. Land and Wildlife Management Where the organization manages outdoor areas under its control, it takes measures to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, prioritizes native species for landscaping and restoration, and ensures that any interactions with wildlife are non-invasive, responsible, and protective of animal welfare.	- Where the organization owns or manages land (e.g., gardens or outdoor areas), it monitors these areas for the presence of invasive species. (See Guidelines) - The organization takes appropriate action to prevent the spread of invasive species. (See Guidelines) - Invasive species are not used in landscaping and restoration efforts (the only exception being where invasive species are intentionally used in menu offerings as part of biodiversity-conservation efforts). - Pest control is conducted using environmentally friendly methods that do not harm local biodiversity or disrupt natural ecosystems. (See Guidelines) - Where the organization hosts animals on-site or operates in locations where direct contact with animals is possible, direct contact between animals and employees is prohibited. (See Guidelines)	 
D12. Animal Health and Welfare All wild and domestic animals under the organization's direct care are managed according to high animal-welfare standards.	- The organization complies with all relevant legal regulations and adheres to recognized international frameworks, such as the Five Domains of Animal Welfare or the WAZA Code of Ethics, to provide species-specific care. (See Guidelines) - All instances of close contact with animals align with recommended, science-based guidelines. (See Guidelines) - Where animals are housed on-site, the organization implements documented protocols to continuously monitor their physical health, living conditions, and behavioral well-being to prevent stress, harm, or distress. (See Guidelines) - Where animals are housed or kept within the facility, their living conditions are continuously monitored to prevent harm, distress, or unethical treatment. (See Guidelines) - Where animals are housed or kept within the facility, their well-being is continuously monitored to prevent harm, distress, or unethical treatment. (See Guidelines)	 

	6. The organization does not use any animals, whether wild or domestic, for entertainment, performances, or other non-welfare-based purposes. (See Guidelines)	
D13. Wildlife Sourcing The organization ensures that any wildlife species served (e.g., game, wild-caught species, foraged foods) are sourced legally and sustainably, in compliance with local and international laws, and without contributing to over-exploitation or harm to biodiversity.	1. The organization evaluates the conservation risks of species used on its menu, referring to regularly updated, credible sources. (See Guidelines) 2. Accurate information regarding wildlife hunting, fishing, harvesting, trade, and products derived from wildlife species is transparently provided. (See Guidelines) 3. Endangered species are not used or sold by the organization, following the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) guidelines.	 

Annex: Guidelines

A1. Management System of Sustainability

1, 2 & 3. The sustainability policy and related actions are expected to be integrated into daily operations and communicated to relevant employees so they can effectively support implementation in their roles.

4. For micro and small food and beverage businesses, this may be a short, simple policy statement with a limited number of clear and achievable targets. Larger or more complex organizations are expected to have more detailed documentation and structured targets reflecting their broader activities and impacts.

6. For micro and small organizations, the review may be simple and informal, such as an annual management discussion, checklist, or brief written or verbal assessment of what has worked well, what has not, and what actions should be adjusted. Larger organizations shall conduct more structured internal reviews or self-assessments using documented procedures, performance data, or internal reporting.

8 & 9. Monitoring is expected to be an ongoing activity that helps the organization identify opportunities for improvement and adjust actions as needed throughout the year. This may include regularly checking progress, identifying challenges or successes, and updating practices, targets, or actions to support continuous improvement across the organization's sustainability performance.

A2. Food Safety and Operational Risk Control

1. Where such regulations do not exist or are insufficient, the organization maintains a documented Food Safety Risk Management Plan (e.g., based on HACCP principles) defining clear procedures and responsibilities to ensure food safety.

5. Food safety and hygiene training is expected regardless of whether such training is formally required under national legislation. The content, depth, and format of training may be proportionate to the organization's size, risk profile, and local context. In countries or contexts with limited regulatory requirements, training may be delivered through basic internal briefings, toolbox talks, online modules, or recognized external resources.

6. Scenario-based exercises are encouraged where food safety risks are higher or where incident preparedness is critical.

A3. Legal Compliance

2. The organization shall make evidence of compliance available to relevant authorities or competent parties when required. Relevant parties may include government authorities and authorized certification bodies. Evidence may include permits, licenses, training certificates, employment records, or other official documentation appropriate to the local context.

A4. Reporting and Communication

1. The monitoring period and level of detail should reflect what is reasonable for the organization. For micro and small businesses, this may involve simple tracking over a year or season (e.g., reductions in waste, increased local sourcing, changes to menu offerings) rather than continuous measurement. Larger organizations may use more frequent or detailed data collection.

A5. Employee Engagement

2. In larger organizations, this may include documented participation in consultations, meetings, or workshops. In micro and small organizations, employee engagement may be demonstrated through regular communication, on-the-job discussions, or practical involvement in sustainability actions.

3. Sustainability-related training is expected to be integrated into the employee onboarding process and to be refreshed periodically for all employees. Training content and depth may be adapted to different roles and responsibilities and may be delivered through internal briefings, workshops, digital modules, or other appropriate formats.

A6. Service Quality and Guest Experience

1 & 2. In micro and small organizations, this role may be fulfilled by the owner, manager, or a senior staff member as part of their existing responsibilities. In larger or more complex organizations, responsibility may be shared among a small team or integrated into existing management, quality, or operations functions.

A7. Accurate Promotion and Information

2 & 3. Sustainability-related characteristics” refer to sustainability attributes of food and beverage items served by the organization. Clear communication of such characteristics helps guests make informed choices and supports transparency and credibility in sustainability-related claims. Sustainability-related characteristics are referenced throughout this standard and may include: local and inclusive procurement attributes (see B3), responsible sourcing attributes (see D1), and biodiversity-related attributes (see D10 and D13), such as locally sourced ingredients, products from small-scale producers or cooperatives, Fair Trade-certified products, sustainably or regeneratively produced ingredients, heirloom varieties, heritage breeds, sustainably sourced seafood, and ingredients that support biodiversity conservation.

Organizations are encouraged to use simple and familiar descriptions that help guests make informed choices, while avoiding technical, legal, or overly detailed explanations. The terminology used may vary by market, culture, or concept, and organizations may choose alternative or equivalent wording where this better suits their guests (for example, “no animal products” instead of “vegan”). Regardless of the terms used, information should be truthful, consistent, and not misleading.

4. If formal certification isn't available, the organization clearly explains trusted sources (like direct farm or fishery partnerships) to stakeholders upon request.
5. The organization shall define what it considers "local" in a manner appropriate to its geographical context and product availability. This definition shall be documented and applied consistently in procurement and communication practices. Where uncertainty exists, the organization may refer to the GSTC definition and guidance under B3 (Local and Inclusive Procurement). Any definition used shall be transparent and justifiable.
6. The organization should explain its definition of "local" to guests, including the geographical scope used. This may be communicated through simple means such as menu notes, signage, website information, QR codes, or staff explanations. The level of detail should be proportionate to the organization's size. For micro and small organizations, a simple statement (e.g., "Local products are sourced within X km or from the surrounding region/from Y Village") is sufficient.
7. Information should be clear, accurate, and aligned with the local waste management system, taking into account what can realistically be recycled, composted, or disposed of as general waste in the location. Communication may use symbols, labels, signage, brief text, or digital information, as appropriate to the business format. Organizations should exercise caution when making sustainability claims about packaging materials. Any such claims should be factual and consistent with locally available disposal options, as well as with the organization's overall sustainability policy and practices.

A8. Buildings and Infrastructure

1. This may include using existing structures, keeping signs small and discreet, and strictly following local rules where they apply.
4. Where low-VOC, non-toxic, or certified materials are not currently in use, the organization is expected to demonstrate a reasonable transition approach. This may include prioritizing such materials during renovations, maintenance, or repainting cycles; avoiding the introduction of high-VOC products in new applications; and selecting safer alternatives when replacing or repairing finishes. In leased or shared spaces, the organization should make reasonable efforts to collaborate with property owners or contractors to promote the use of low-impact materials. Full replacement of existing materials is not required immediately, but a clear commitment to improvement over time should be demonstrated.

A10. Menu

5. Cultural or belief-based sensitive elements refer to food characteristics that may influence guests' dietary choices due to cultural, religious, or personal beliefs. Examples include information on religious preparation methods (e.g., halal preparation or the avoidance of pork or alcohol), vegetarian or vegan suitability, the use of animal fats, or preparation methods associated with specific cultural traditions or fasting practices. Such information may be communicated through menu notes, symbols, legends, QR codes, or verbal explanations, and does not require formal religious certification unless explicitly claimed.

8. Organizations are expected to demonstrate a clear and credible effort to reduce reliance on animal-based ingredients over time. “Plant-based” refers to dishes that contain no animal-derived ingredients. “Predominantly plant-based” refers to dishes in which at least 95% of ingredients by weight are plant-derived. Small amounts of animal-based ingredients (e.g., dairy, eggs, animal fats, or minor seasoning components) may be present, provided they do not exceed 5% of total ingredient weight and do not constitute the primary protein component of the dish.

- 1) For à la carte and buffet-style restaurants, compliance is demonstrated by ensuring that a substantial share of core food offerings (e.g., main dishes or complete meal options) are plant-based or predominantly (more than 95% plant-derived by weight) plant-based, which is no less than 30%.
- 2) For single-dish concepts, fixed degustation menus, street food vendors, or very small operations, where menu structure limits the ability to adjust item proportions, compliance may be demonstrated through alternative approaches, such as: reformulating recipes to increase the proportion of plant-based ingredients and reduce animal protein content per serving, adjusting portion balance so that animal protein plays a smaller role within the overall dish, or offering optional plant-based or plant-forward variations of the core dish where feasible.
- 3) In culturally specific food traditions, compliance may be demonstrated by considering the entire meal composition rather than the main protein alone. For example, where meals are customarily served with a wide range of plant-based side dishes, mezes, salads, grains, or vegetables, these may be taken into account in assessing whether the overall offering meaningfully reflects a plant-forward balance.
- 4) For operations where none of the above approaches can reasonably achieve a menu-based threshold, the organization is expected to demonstrate a documented transition pathway focused on reducing animal protein use per guest meal over time, through recipe design, purchasing practices, or portion adjustments. Drinks, condiments, and minor garnishes alone do not qualify as plant-based offerings.
- 5) For menus offering multiple dishes, compliance is demonstrated when at least 30% of core food offerings (main dishes or complete meal options) are plant-based or predominantly plant-based. Drinks, condiments, garnishes, and minor sides are excluded.
- 6) Where menus are based on shared plates, buffet formats, or culturally specific meal structures, assessment may be based on a typical guest meal, provided the approach is documented. Ingredient weight or nutritional calculations are not required.
- 7) Organizations should be able to explain, in a clear and credible manner, how their chosen approach reflects their concept, cultural context, and operational reality, while still contributing to reduced environmental impact and continuous improvement.

10. Information about local or traditional ingredients does not need to be provided for every item or in extensive detail on the menu itself. Communication may be adapted to the format and concept of the business and may include brief menu references, symbols, boards, digital menus, QR codes, or verbal explanations. Organizations are encouraged to balance sustainability information with other menu communication goals, such as taste descriptors and cultural storytelling, to support informed and appealing guest choices.

A11. Land, Water, and Property Rights

1. In cases such as mobile vendors (e.g., food trucks) or informal settings, acceptable evidence may include municipal vending permits, designated trading area permissions, event authorizations, or other forms of local approval.
3. Compliance may be demonstrated through measures to prevent and manage disturbance (e.g., appropriate open-close times, communication with neighbors, and response to complaints). The approach should be proportionate to the organization's size.

B1. Local Community Development

1. For defining "local", the organization may refer to the GSTC definition and guidance under B3 (Local and Inclusive Procurement). Any definition used shall be transparent and justifiable.
3. Contributions may include supporting local communities or producer communities in other regions or countries. Contributions should be appropriate to the organization's size, role, and capacity and may include financial support, in-kind contributions, staff time, partnerships, or participation in recognized programs. Examples are projects on child protection, family well-being, or community development objectives. One-off or symbolic actions alone are not sufficient unless they form part of a broader, ongoing commitment.

B2. Local Employment

2. Attracting local talent may include building relationships with local communities, schools, or training institutions. Measures should be appropriate to the organization's size and context. This refers to situations where the organization actively recruits. In very small or family-run operations with limited hiring needs, this may not be applicable. For small organizations, if documents do not exist, auditors should verify whether the organization prioritizes local recruitment channels (e.g., local job boards, community centers) when advertising open positions.
3. In micro or family-run organizations with very small teams, career advancement may not involve formal promotions. In such cases, progression may be shown by helping employees learn new tasks, giving them more responsibility over time, providing opportunities to learn on the job, offering more stable employment where possible, or improving pay as skills and experience grow. In owner-operated or family businesses, this criterion mainly applies to any non-family employees.

B3. Local and Inclusive Procurement

1. Inclusive procurement refers to procurement practices that enable small-scale, local, or underrepresented producers and service providers, as well as those supported by national public systems, to access supply opportunities. This may include fair payment terms, reasonable order sizes, transparent selection processes, or efforts to work with cooperatives, family businesses, or community-based suppliers. Formal policies or quotas are not required.

2. Definition of local: The proportion of local sourcing should be appropriate to the availability of products and the organization's context. Local farmers are producers located within a reasonable proximity to the organization. Local suppliers provide products or services produced within a reasonable proximity to the organization, taking into account its location and context. Where formal definitions of "local" exist from national authorities, development agencies, or procurement bodies, these should be applied. In the absence of a formal definition, "local" may generally be defined as within 50 km to 200 km of the business, or a larger radius where local production is limited (e.g., in city-states, islands, or dense urban areas).

5. "Upon request" refers to requests from authorized parties such as certification bodies, auditors, or regulatory authorities for the purpose of verifying compliance. The organization is not required to publicly disclose this information or share commercially sensitive details such as supplier identities, pricing, or contractual terms. Reporting may be provided in aggregated or percentage form (e.g., proportion of local sourcing by spend or volume) without revealing confidential business information.

B7. Exploitation and Harassment

9. Examples may include safeguarding policies and procedures, codes of conduct, staff training on appropriate behavior and boundaries, and clear guidance on responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns.

B8. Equal Opportunity

1. In micro and small organizations, the policy may take the form of a short written statement communicated to employees and applied in hiring and workplace decisions. Larger organizations should maintain more detailed policies integrated into human resources procedures and employee handbooks.

3. In micro and small organizations, periodic review may be informal (e.g., annual discussion or simple checklist). Larger organizations are expected to review policies through structured HR processes and update documentation where needed.

4. Training should be proportionate to the organization's size. In smaller organizations, this may include internal discussions, onboarding conversations, or simple guidance shared with staff.

6. In small organizations with limited hierarchical structures, equal access may be demonstrated through fair hiring practices, equal pay for equal work, and equal access to training or opportunities for increased responsibility.

7. Measures may include targeted training or mentoring, flexible working arrangements, transparent promotion criteria, return-to-work support, or initiatives to increase women's representation at different levels of the organization. Actions should be proportionate to the organization's size, context, and workforce structure.

B9. Human Rights and Decent Work

1. The organization is expected to undertake human rights due diligence in a manner proportionate to its size, capacity, and level of control. Where the organization lacks the resources to conduct standalone due diligence, it shall demonstrate proactive engagement in joint assessments with relevant stakeholders and/or the use of credible, publicly available human rights risk assessments applicable to its operations or supply chain.

Assessment approaches may be proportional to the organization's size, leverage, and supply chain complexity and may include supplier self-assessments, contractual requirements, risk screening, or the use of credible sector or country risk information. Where direct engagement with suppliers is limited, the organization may demonstrate reasonable efforts to promote supplier alignment with the Child Rights and Business Principles.

3. While all legally mandated employment benefits and social protection requirements must be met as a baseline, organizations are expected to provide or facilitate access to additional benefits or support, where feasible. Additional benefits or support may include, for example, employer-contributed health or accident insurance, paid sick leave beyond statutory minimums, mental health or wellbeing support, transportation or meal benefits, childcare support, access to healthcare services, or other measures appropriate to the local context and size of the organization. Formal benefit schemes are not required for micro or small enterprises.

5. The organization should offer stable employment arrangements (e.g., permanent or longer-term contracts) rather than relying predominantly on casual or short-term arrangements. Repeated use of short-term or informal contracts for ongoing core functions should be avoided. Employment terms should be transparent, predictable, and clearly communicated to employees, taking into account the organization's size and the seasonal or demand-driven nature of food service operations.

8 & 10. Where employees identify the need for separation to ensure privacy, dignity, or safety (e.g., based on gender identity), the organization makes reasonable efforts to provide suitable arrangements, taking into account the size, space, and operational context of the business.

Where appropriate to the size and facilities of the organization, employee facilities are separate from those provided for guests.

12. Where no such minimum exists, the organization ensures wages meet or exceed a credible local benchmark reflecting the cost of living and basic needs. Where a recognized living wage benchmark exists, the organization is encouraged to meet or exceed that level.

Credible wage benchmarks may include nationally recognized poverty thresholds, government-published subsistence wage estimates, cost-of-living indices, or benchmarks developed by recognized institutions such as labor ministries, statistical offices, trade unions, employer federations, academic institutions, or reputable international organizations. Organizations are not required to calculate wages themselves.

13. This includes preventing exploitative practices like recruitment fees and clearly communicating labor rights, safety rules, and employment terms.

C1. Presenting Cultural Heritage

1. This may include the use of local materials, art, craft, design, or architectural elements that reflect the local cultural context. Organizations offering world or non-local cuisines are expected to demonstrate cultural sensitivity in their design, atmosphere, storytelling, and communication, ensuring that both local cultural elements and the cultural origins of the cuisine are represented respectfully and accurately. This includes avoiding stereotypes, misrepresentation, or misleading naming and descriptions of dishes (for example, using authentic dish names and providing accurate descriptions of their cultural origin where appropriate).

C2. Safeguarding and Promoting Food Traditions

3. When presenting fusion or international cuisine, the organization documents the cultural origins of the dishes and ensures presentation avoids misrepresentation or disrespect of food traditions.

D1. Responsible Sourcing

3. The organization is expected to track the proportion of responsibly sourced products and make reasonable efforts to improve or maintain high standards over time. Products of animal origin are held to higher sustainability standards to minimize environmental impact.

Tracking responsibly sourced products may be qualitative or approximate but should be measurable and repeatable. Examples include tracking the proportion of responsibly sourced products by purchase value, purchase volume, or number of suppliers; maintaining supplier lists and certifications; or monitoring key product categories (e.g., chemicals, textiles, wood and paper, packaging materials, fruits, vegetables, grains, beverages, oils, herbs, spices, coffee, cocoa). The same tracking method should be used consistently over time to demonstrate progress.

Higher standards for products of animal origin may be demonstrated by prioritizing suppliers with recognized animal welfare, environmental, or sustainability certifications; maintaining purchasing records showing preferred sourcing choices; or applying procurement guidelines that set additional requirements for animal products compared to plant-based products. Progress may be demonstrated through increasing use of certified or verified suppliers, improved sourcing policies, or documented supplier engagement.

4. Recognized animal-welfare certifications refer to independent, third-party schemes that verify humane treatment of animals and responsible farming or fishing practices. Examples include RSPCA Assured, Certified Humane, Global Animal Partnership (GAP), Animal Welfare Approved, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), and equivalent regional or national schemes.

6. Examples of credible schemes include Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), Ocean Wise, or equivalent regional programs, where relevant. Where seafood certification is unavailable, sourcing from sustainable fisheries or fisheries improvement projects should be documented.

7. Fishing bans may be established at national, regional, or international levels and can include seasonal closures, protected species lists, catch restrictions, marine protected areas, and trade restrictions such as those under CITES. The organization is expected to ensure that seafood is sourced in compliance with all applicable fishing regulations and seasonal restrictions in the country or region of origin. This may be demonstrated through supplier declarations, invoices, certifications, or other credible sourcing information.

9. Animal welfare practices may be demonstrated through supplier information, direct sourcing relationships, credible third-party animal welfare certifications (e.g., cage-free egg standards, higher-welfare poultry or seafood schemes), or other appropriate assurance mechanisms. Certification is encouraged but not required, particularly for small-scale or direct suppliers. For seafood, animal welfare considerations may include capture or farming methods, handling practices, and humane slaughter where relevant. Organizations are encouraged to engage suppliers on these issues where information is available.

D2. Efficient purchasing

3. This criterion is intended to support progressive reduction of single-use packaging. At initial certification, the organization is expected to demonstrate implemented measures and a clear commitment to prioritizing reduction, reuse, and returnable options. For continued certification, the organization is expected to show ongoing improvement over time, such as expanding reusable or returnable solutions, further reducing single-use items, or strengthening collaboration with suppliers. The pace and scale of improvement should be proportionate to the organization's size, operating context, and takeaway volume.

D3. Energy Conservation

2. Public reporting is not required, but periodic internal reporting is expected. Reports should be available to stakeholders upon request. Where direct consumption data is not accessible, the organization shall make reasonable efforts to obtain or estimate it, including through collaboration with landlords, utility providers, or other parties.

4. Common energy-efficiency measures include the use of high-efficiency lighting, such as LED technology, which offers lower energy consumption and longer service life; energy-efficient kitchen equipment; smart or programmable controls (e.g., timers, sensors, thermostats); regular maintenance to ensure optimal equipment performance; improved insulation and sealing of cold storage and heated spaces; efficient ventilation and heat-recovery systems, where applicable; and operational practices that reduce idle energy use. Organizations are encouraged to track energy consumption over time (e.g., year-to-year or season-to-season) to identify trends, support reduction efforts, and demonstrate continuous improvement.

6. Energy efficiency labels alone do not guarantee high performance. Organizations are expected to actively consider the efficiency class or rating level when purchasing new appliances or electrical equipment and to prioritize options within the higher efficiency ranges available in the relevant market. Where multiple efficiency classes exist, selection of lower-performing classes should be avoided unless justified by technical or operational constraints. Staff responsible for procurement should be informed about how to interpret energy efficiency labels to support effective decision-making.

7. In leased spaces, efforts are made to collaborate with property owners to transition to renewable energy sources.

8. Energy-efficient practices may include routine checks and basic maintenance to support optimal equipment performance, such as ensuring refrigerator and freezer doors seal properly, avoiding overloading, maintaining appropriate temperature settings, and regular defrosting where applicable. Training may also cover recognizing signs of inefficient operation and reporting maintenance needs. The frequency and scope of such practices should be proportionate to the organization's size, equipment type, and operational risk.

D4. Water Conservation

2. Public reporting is not a must, but periodic and consistent internal reporting is expected. The organization should make the reports available for stakeholders upon request. Where direct consumption data is not fully accessible, the organization shall make reasonable efforts to obtain or estimate relevant data, including through collaboration with landlords, utility providers, or other relevant parties.

8. Supply-chain water considerations may include engaging suppliers on responsible irrigation and water stewardship practices, prioritizing seasonal or rain-fed products, reducing reliance on water-intensive ingredients from water-stressed regions, or favoring suppliers with credible water management commitments or certifications where available. Expectations should reflect the organization's size, purchasing leverage, and access to information.

9. Water stress refers to situations where water demand exceeds available supply or where water resources are under significant pressure. Organizations are not expected to conduct detailed assessments but may rely on credible, publicly available sources to identify water-stressed regions. Such sources include national government publications, local water authorities, or internationally recognized tools such as the World Resources Institute Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas or similar regional assessments.

D5. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1 & 2. Given the variability of food and beverage production methods, regions, and data availability, compliance is demonstrated through practical, evidence-based actions known to reduce emissions and resource intensity. Carbon-intensive ingredients commonly include certain animal-based products. Organizations are not required to calculate product-level emissions but should demonstrate reasonable efforts to reduce emissions through menu design, sourcing choices, and waste prevention. Organizations may use recognized qualitative

frameworks, sector guidance, or publicly available resources to inform decision-making, but detailed life-cycle assessments are not expected. Organizations are encouraged to review their practices over time (e.g., year-to-year or season-to-season comparisons) to identify opportunities for progressive reduction of food-related emissions.

D7. Solid and Food Waste Management

2 & 3. Public reporting is not a must, but periodic and consistent internal reporting is expected. The organization should make the reports available for stakeholders upon request.

7. This refers to designing menus and recipes in a way that minimizes food waste by enabling efficient use and safe reuse of ingredients. This may include using the same ingredients across multiple dishes. This may also include designing portion sizes to minimize food waste, such as offering different portion options (e.g., half portions, small/large sizes, or shared plates) to better match guest appetite and reduce plate waste.

9. This may include partnerships with food banks, charities, community organizations, or resale initiatives (e.g., in-house resale or third-party platforms). Where food is not suitable for human consumption, it may be redirected for use as animal feed, in accordance with local regulations. Transparency is ensured by publicly sharing information about food redistribution or resale partners where applicable.

D9. Minimizing Pollution

2. Organizations are encouraged to review potential pollution sources periodically and implement improvements over time to further reduce impacts where feasible.

D10. Biodiversity Conservation

1. This collaboration aims to protect biodiversity, minimize potential impacts of operations, and support conservation initiatives. The organization demonstrates regular communication, joint activities, or contributions (financial or in-kind) as part of this collaboration.

Monitoring may be simple and proportionate to the organization's size and location and may include observing changes in vegetation, soil, water use, waste discharge, or local wildlife presence. Restoration may include supporting local tree planting, habitat restoration projects, soil improvement, or similar initiatives appropriate to the scale of the organization's impact. In urban or indoor settings (e.g., shopping malls, dense city locations, or premises without outdoor land), organizations may demonstrate compliance through cooperation with landlord or other stakeholders, appropriate to their size and context.

2. Historically local plants are species traditionally grown in the region and adapted to local climate and conditions. Organizations are not expected to conduct scientific research but may consult local nurseries, farmers, gardening associations, or agricultural authorities to select appropriate plants and crops.

3 & 4. Heirloom plant varieties are traditional crop varieties that have been cultivated and preserved over generations, often locally adapted and not widely used in industrial agriculture. Heritage or rare livestock breeds refer to traditional animal breeds that help

preserve genetic diversity and regional farming traditions. In that respect, supporting biodiversity may include sourcing seasonal and regionally diverse ingredients, using lesser-known local varieties, or working with suppliers who provide heritage or traditional products. Organizations are not expected to maintain detailed biodiversity records; the focus is on diversifying sourcing and avoiding reliance on a narrow range of high-volume commercial species.

5. This refers to avoiding menus that depend heavily on a limited number of widely produced or commonly used species (e.g., certain meats, fish, or crops). Organizations are encouraged to diversify their menu offerings by incorporating a wider range of ingredients, including seasonal, local, or lesser-known species, where feasible. This supports biodiversity, reduces environmental pressure on specific species, and enhances resilience in sourcing.

D11. Land and Wildlife Management

1 & 2. Where the organization owns or manages land (e.g., gardens or outdoor areas), it monitors these areas for the presence of invasive species. Invasive species are plants or animals that can spread rapidly and harm local ecosystems. Organizations are not expected to be experts but should avoid intentionally planting or introducing species known to be invasive in their region. Using invasive species as food may be encouraged where it supports responsible removal and biodiversity protection.

4. Environmentally friendly pest control may include preventive measures, improved hygiene, physical barriers, or targeted treatments that reduce risks to wildlife and ecosystems. The aim is to minimize harmful chemicals in food environments and avoid unnecessary impacts on non-target species.

5. Direct contact includes feeding, touching, or handling wildlife or free-roaming animals. This may also include feeding street animals, fish, or birds with food leftovers or bread. Exceptions may apply for trained professionals (e.g., veterinarians or authorized experts). The goal is to prevent stress, behavioral change, or dependency on humans.

D12. Animal Health and Welfare

1. This criterion applies only to animals kept on-site or under the direct care of the organization. Animal welfare considerations related to food, beverages, or ingredients are addressed elsewhere.

Equivalent standards may include nationally recognized animal welfare regulations, farm animal welfare standards, or internationally recognized animal welfare frameworks appropriate to the species and context.

The Five Domains of Animal Welfare is a widely recognized framework that considers animal well-being across five areas: nutrition, environment, health, behavior, and mental state. Organizations keeping animals are expected to ensure appropriate feeding and water, suitable living conditions, proper health care, opportunities for natural behavior, and conditions that minimize stress and promote overall well-being.

2. Science-based guidelines may include internationally recognized animal welfare and wildlife interaction standards, such as those developed by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and public health or veterinary authorities. These guidelines generally discourage direct contact with wild animals and emphasize minimizing stress, preventing behavioral disruption, and reducing risks of disease transmission.
3. The focus here is where the organization keeps animals on-site or under its direct care (e.g., farm-to-table restaurants, on-site gardens with animals, aquaculture tanks, pets kept on premises, or similar settings). Monitoring may include ensuring appropriate food, water, shelter, space, hygiene, veterinary care where needed, and daily observation of animal health and behavior. Expectations should be proportionate to the number and type of animals kept.
6. Animals should not be used for performances, shows, or guest interaction activities that may cause stress or behavioral disruption. This includes activities such as animal shows, staged feeding demonstrations for entertainment, or handling animals for guest amusement.

D13. Wildlife Sourcing

1. Credible sources may include Marine Conservation Society Good Fish Guide, regional seafood or wildlife sustainability guides, national conservation lists, or internationally recognized resources. Organizations are not expected to conduct scientific assessments but should make reasonable efforts to consult available guidance relevant to their sourcing region.
2. Information may be provided through menu notes, symbols, boards, websites, or verbal explanations and may include species names, sourcing methods (wild or farmed), or sustainability messages where relevant. Detailed scientific information is not required.