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**Adventure tourism — Good practices  
for sustainability — Requirements  
and recommendations**

*Tourisme d'aventure — Bonnes pratiques de durabilité — Exigences  
et recommandations*

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# Contents

Page

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>1 Scope</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>4 Understanding sustainability in the context of organization</b> .....	<b>2</b>
4.1 General.....	2
4.2 Sustainability within adventure tourism.....	2
<b>5 Sustainability practices in adventure tourism</b> .....	<b>3</b>
5.1 General.....	3
5.2 Environmental aspects.....	3
5.2.1 General.....	3
5.2.2 Natural resource use.....	3
5.2.3 Pollution of land, water and air.....	4
5.2.4 Energy use.....	4
5.2.5 Protection of biodiversity and natural habitats.....	5
5.2.6 Proactive approach.....	5
5.3 Social aspects/matters.....	5
5.3.1 General.....	5
5.3.2 Social awareness/respect (equity).....	6
5.3.3 Involvement.....	7
5.4 Economic aspect.....	8
5.4.1 General.....	8
5.4.2 Fair business practices.....	8
5.4.3 Financial risk management.....	9
5.4.4 Employment.....	9
<b>6 Other practices for sustainability</b> .....	<b>9</b>
6.1 Participant and local community satisfaction.....	9
6.2 Legal and other requirements.....	9
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>10</b>

## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The provision of adventurous activities is one of the fastest growing segments within the tourism industry. Due to its characteristics, the direct interaction with the environment and the consequent intrinsic dependency on natural resources represent essential elements in the adventure tourism sector. Along with the environment, social and economic factors should be taken into consideration in the routines of adventure tourism providers so their activities can be developed in a sustainable manner.

This document intends to serve as a source of good sustainability practices related to adventure tourism in order to provide guidance to adventure tourism activity providers that wish to develop their activities in a sustainable way. The goal is to help adventure tourism activity providers to minimize or mitigate the negative environmental, economic or social impacts and enhance the positive ones in their operational routines.

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# Adventure tourism — Good practices for sustainability — Requirements and recommendations

## 1 Scope

This document provides requirements and recommendations for adventure tourism activity providers on good practices for sustainability (environmental, social and economic aspects) for adventure tourism activities.

This document can be used by all types and sizes of adventure tourism activity providers, operating in different geographic, cultural and social environments.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

— IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>  
ISO 20611:2018  
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### 3.1

#### **adventure tourism activity**

adventure activity for tourism purposes that involves a degree of instruction or leadership and a deliberate accepted element of risk

Note 1 to entry: Accepted element of risk means that the participant has a minimum understanding about the risk involved.

Note 2 to entry: Adventure tourism activity usually includes physical activity, cultural exchange and interaction with the environment.

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.35, modified — Note 2 to entry added.]

### 3.2

#### **adventure tourism activity provider**

individual or organization having overall responsibility for all aspects of the provision of *adventure tourism activities* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: *Adventure tourism activities* (3.1) can be provided free of charge or in return for payment.

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.36]

### 3.3

#### **carrying capacity**

maximum number of people that can visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and social-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitor satisfaction

**3.4  
disability**

physical, sensory, psychic or mental deficiency, total or partial, permanent or temporary, that affects a person in their daily development and in their relationship with the physical and social environment, resulting in a limitation on the activity and restriction on participation

**3.5  
interested party**

person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.2]

**3.6  
participant**

person taking part in an *adventure tourism activity* (3.1) but not a member of the leadership team

Note 1 to entry: A participant might also be referred to as 'client', 'customer' or similar.

Note 2 to entry: Leadership team comprise of several leaders.

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.37]

**3.7  
sustainability**

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The environmental, social and economic aspects interact, are interdependent and are often referred to as the three dimensions of sustainability.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainability is the goal of *sustainable development* (3.8).  
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[SOURCE: ISO Guide 82:2014, 3.1]

**3.8  
sustainable development**

development that meets the environmental, social and economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: Derived from the Brundtland Report.

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 82:2014, 3.2]

## 4 Understanding sustainability in the context of organization

### 4.1 General

Sustainability is a term used to define human actions or activities that aim to address the current human needs without compromising the needs of future generations. That includes three pillars: environmental, social and economic aspects.

NOTE Social aspects include cultural aspects.

### 4.2 Sustainability within adventure tourism

**4.2.1** In order to promote the conservation of the environment and maintenance of the planet's natural resources, and also in the best quality of life for all the people involved and the population living in the locations where the activities take place, the adventure tourism activity provider should apply and promote good practices for these environmental, social and economic aspects.



**4.2.2 Sustainability within adventure tourism involves:**

- a) informing people in a responsible, transparent and honest way, including providing participants with relevant information about the adventure tourism activities before, during and after they take place;  
NOTE For additional information, see ISO 21103.
- b) respecting the environment, natural and cultural heritage;
- c) respecting the cultures of local communities;
- d) encouraging the development of quality tourism for an authentic experience of the host region;
- e) ensuring that economic benefits are distributed fairly between the adventure tourism activity provider and the local community in order to contribute to sustainable development in the host region;
- f) respecting diversity and the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

**5 Sustainability practices in adventure tourism****5.1 General**

**5.1.1** The adventure tourism activity provider shall have an active role in the adoption of good practices for sustainability.

**5.1.2** The adventure tourism activities shall be planned and implemented to provide sustainable practices that:

- a) reduce the environmental impact of activities, including minimization of the negative impacts on ecosystems (e.g. fauna, flora, geological formations, soil and water resources), and also contribute to the conservation of natural environments and their characteristics;
- b) encourage a world which is just, equitable and inclusive, promoting social sustainability and thereby benefitting all interested parties regardless of culture, ethnicity, origin, migratory status, religion, economic status or disabilities;
- c) develop economic activities to provide the means to achieve the multiple aspirations of sustainable development for today and secure the assets of future generations;
- d) contribute to the host region from an environmental, social and economic point of view.

**5.2 Environmental aspects****5.2.1 General**

The adventure tourism activity provider should consider sustainable practices to protect the environment and minimize the impact of the activities, with special reference to natural resources that are used, pollution that can be produced, energy consumed and the necessity of protecting biodiversity and natural habitats.

**5.2.2 Natural resource use**

**5.2.2.1** The adventure tourism activity provider shall:

- a) be aware of the regulations and special concerns of the area to be visited (e.g. fire, permits, waste disposal);