

Sustainable Tourism

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Mauritius Standards Bureau

- ▶ The Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB) is a corporate body which has been set up under the Mauritius Standards Bureau Act 1993.
- ▶ It operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives.
- ▶ The Mauritius Standards Bureau is mandated to develop standards and provide conformity assessment services such as testing, calibration and certification of products and management systems.
- ▶ MSB operates a certification marking scheme for products and a national management system certification scheme.
- ▶ (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO/IEC 27001, ISO 22000, HACCP, **MS 165**)

Published Standards

- ▶ MS 189 - Ecolabel Criteria for Indoor and Outdoor Paints and Varnishes
- ▶ MS 195 - Ecolabel Criteria for Laundry Detergents
- ▶ **MS 165 - Sustainable Tourism - requirements**

Why Standards?

- ▶ It provides a basis for mutual understanding among stakeholders
- ▶ It acts as a tool to facilitate communication and business interaction
- ▶ It enables companies to comply with relevant laws and regulations
- ▶ It helps speeding up the introduction of innovative products/services to market

How far is a standard recognized and accepted?

MSB has sought recognition of its MS 165 standard with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

Certification/Accreditation

- ▶ MSB provides third-party certification to Hotels and Tour Operators



- ▶ MSB is in the process of being accredited by the Assurance Services International (ASI) for its National Sustainable Tourism Management System Certification Scheme.

Promoting demand for sustainable tourism products

- ▶ Understand who the customers are and what they want.
- ▶ Or what they will accept to want.
- ▶ Should sustainable tourism be driven by customers' needs and expectations or be driven by the supply side?
- ▶ Where should the Government draw the line?

- ▶ For Mauritius, mostly concentrated on international tourists due mainly to its small size and isolated location.

Promoting demand for sustainable tourism products...(contd)

- ▶ Easier to target B2B penetrations rather B2C. (MS 165 is a locally developed standard)
- ▶ Strong collaboration between MSB and other key stakeholders:
 - ▶ Ministry of Tourism
 - ▶ Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority
 - ▶ Tourism Authority
 - ▶ SME Mauritius Ltd
- ▶ Awareness, training
- ▶ With the recognition of GSTC, B2C penetrations through partnerships with online promotional portals (Booking.com, agoda.com, trivago.com...)

Hurdles to overcome

- ▶ Too many different international ecolabel schemes
- ▶ Multinational certifying agencies (with existing portfolios)
- ▶ Second-party certification by large multinational firms
- ▶ MSME's are not on the same level playing field as big conglomerates
- ▶ Certification has cost implications

Overview of MS 165:2019 - *Sustainable Tourism - requirements*

- ▶ The standard specifies the requirements for a management system for sustainable tourism that can be used by any tourism business or any tourism related activity to enhance its suitability performance.
- ▶ The requirements are organised around the following themes:
 1. Social and economic benefits
 2. Benefits to cultural heritage
 3. Environment aspects
- ▶ In preparing the standard, assistance was made from:
 - ISO 9001:2015
 - ISO 14001:2015
 - Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria 2012
 - European Ecotourism Labelling Standard - EETLS (2009)

Requirements of MS 165:2019

- ▶ Context of the organisation (clause 4)
- ▶ **Sustainability issues (clause 5)**
- ▶ Leadership (clause 6)
- ▶ Planning (clause 7)
- ▶ Support (clause 8)
- ▶ Operation (clause 9)
- ▶ Performance evaluation (clause 10)
- ▶ Improvement (clause 11)

Sustainability issues (clause 5)

- ▶ Social and economic benefits to the community
- ▶ Cultural heritage
- ▶ Environmental aspects
- ▶ Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscape
- ▶ Building and infrastructure

Steps towards certification

1. Establish the sustainable policy, strategies and objectives
2. Compile the documented information necessary to support the sustainable management system
3. Implement the system
4. Apply for certification
5. Stage 1 audit - Desk audit
6. Address nonconformities (if applicable)
7. Stage 2 audit - full system audit
8. Address nonconformities (if applicable)
9. Certification
10. Maintaining certification

Suggestions

- ▶ There should be a stronger public-private partnership in the setting up and promotion of sustainable schemes.
- ▶ There could be a holistic approach. Sometimes it is better to consider promoting a 'sustainable tourism destination' instead of individual 'sustainable tourism operators'. This would bring all players in the field to work towards common sustainable goals.
- ▶ Special attentions should be paid to avoid MSMEs to be dropped along the road.
- ▶ Sustainability and Quality should be complementary.
- ▶ To what extent should sustainable tourism be voluntary?

Thank you for your attention