



Sustainable Tourism Certification Checklist



Appendices Included

Additional information available online at www.hawaiiecotourism.org

This checklist does not include diacritical markings for Hawaiian words because not all computers and/or word processing programs are able to reproduce these markings or true fonts in normal text.

Updated May 2018

Sustainable Tourism Certification Checklist

To achieve Sustainable Tourism Certification, operators must follow the instructions listed under each section. When completed, please submit the checklist and supporting materials to: certification@hawaiiecotourism.org.

Upon submission of the completed checklist, a HEA Evaluator will review your application and contact you to schedule a site visit.

ACHIEVING CERTIFICATION

There are **3 steps** to becoming a Certified Sustainable Tour Operator:

1. **Self-Evaluation:** Submit a completed Sustainable Tour Operator Checklist **and** a Section 7 checklist to certification@hawaiiecotourism.org. As part of your submission, Tour Operators will pay a Certification Fee (based on company size). **Section 7 Checklists** are specific to different tour types (e.g. snorkel, hiking, van tours, etc.) and can be downloaded online.
2. **Third-Party Evaluation:** A trained HEA Evaluator will contact the Applicant to review the checklist and schedule an in-person evaluation. The Evaluator participates in a tour, verifies components of the self-assessment checklist, and rates the applicant on the various operating principles. Evaluations are conducted during 2 periods each year (see below for more details).
3. **Reporting & Certification:** The HEA Evaluator will submit their findings and all supporting documentation to HEA for final approval. HEA will then contact the Applicant regarding their certification award status. Tour operators will also be recognized at the HEA Annual Luncheon held in November.

The checklist is divided into seven (7) scored sections (see table below). Each Section is weighted as shown. Section 7 is specific to each type of tour operation and can be downloaded separately online. To become certified, **operators must achieve a minimum score of 40 points out of a possible 100 points** (scoring is completed after the Third-Party Evaluation).

Section	Total Points Possible
1. Environmental Management	20
2. Staff Management	20
3. Interpretation Management	20
4. Customer & Employee Evaluation	10
5. Marketing Execution	5
6. Community Engagement	15
7. Section 7	10
Total Score	100

CERTIFICATION COSTS

Certification requires payment of an Annual Certification Fee that depends on company size (see below). Newly Certified Operators pay this fee after their completed checklist is accepted by HEA and before the final in-person evaluation.

Number of Full Time Employees (or equivalent)	Certification Fee
1-4	\$250
5-14	\$400
15+	\$550

THIRD-PARTY EVALUATIONS

A trained HEA Evaluator will contact the Applicant to review the checklist and schedule an in-person evaluation. The Evaluator participates in a tour, verifies components of the self-assessment checklist, and rates the applicant on the various operating principles.

Evaluations are conducted during two (2) periods each year, depending on when a completed checklist is submitted. Checklists submitted between September 1 – April 31 are evaluated in May or June, and checklists submitted between May 1 – August 31 are evaluated in September or October (in time for recognition at HEA's annual awards luncheon in November).

Checklist Submitted	Evaluations Conducted
Period 1: September 1- April 30	May/June
Period 2: May 1 – August 31	September/October

For those that do not attain certification, a report detailing key metrics that were not satisfied will be returned to the tour operator and are offered the opportunity to be **reevaluated at no additional cost within six months.**

RECERTIFICATION

Certification is valid for 1 year. Yearly recertification is based upon the initial certification checklist, a phone interview with HEA's Program Manager, and participation in Pono Traveler assessments. For more detailed information about recertification and Pono Traveler assessments, please see **Appendix F: Recertification.**

SECTION A: BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Contact Email: _____

SECTION B: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

1. Commercial Tour Operator Engaged in Guided Activities

The principle: Operation is a commercial endeavor primarily engaged in providing guided tours and/or activities.

Operator must:

- ☐ Engage in commercial activity.
- ☐ Primarily engage in guided tours and/or activities.
- ☐ Have guests engage in experiences with nature and/or culture.
- ☐ Educate guests about respectful interaction with nature and/or culture.
- ☐ Operator offers no excursions that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources, or which are socially/culturally unacceptable.

2. Legal Compliance

The principle: Operation is in compliance with all Federal, State, and Local regulations for all products/services, and commits to abide by all necessary permit conditions.

**** Please note that HEA reserves the right to immediately revoke Sustainable Tour Operator Certification if proper or necessary permits are not maintained and/or it comes to our attention that operations violate local, state, and/or federal laws/regulations.****

Operators must:

- ☐ Have all the necessary licenses, permits and approvals to tour each destination.
- ☐ Maintain valid permits to be in compliance with relevant Federal and State environmental, public and occupational health and safety, hygiene, and employment regulations.
- ☐ Be able to provide licenses, permits, approvals, etc. to HEA if necessary.

3. Sustainability Commitment Statement

The principle: Operation has a written Sustainability Commitment Statement that guides its operations and demonstrates commitment to HEA Sustainable Tourism principles (see Appendix C for an example).

The Sustainability Commitment Statement must:

- ☐ Define the tour operator's commitment to the natural and cultural resources of Hawai'i and briefly outline the company's sustainable principles and practices.
- ☐ Is adopted by the operation's senior management and is subject to periodic review.
- ☐ Is publicly displayed on the company website.
- ☐ Includes a link to HEA's website.

SECTION C: OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

The Sustainable Tour Operator checklist is based on six (6) operating principles and practices. Certified Sustainable Tour Operators demonstrate their commitment to sustainability by incorporating these principles into their day-to-day activities and operations. Tour operators are evaluated and scored on each of the following principles:

- **Environmental Management** – Operator employs environmentally sustainable practices to ensure that our activities do not degrade the environment. For example, they take actionable steps to minimize water use, greenhouse gas emissions, noise pollution, waste generation, and hazardous materials.
- **Staff Management** – Operators hire guides and staff based on their knowledge and qualifications in the field of sustainable tourism, provide accurate and appropriate training to ensure quality of ecotourism experience to guests, and encourage staff professional development.
- **Interpretation Management** – Operators provide all guests with accurate information and foster a better understanding and appreciation of the ecological and cultural heritage of Hawai'i and the places being visited.
- **Customer and Employee Evaluation** – Operators continuously monitor and analyze their operations and act upon the feedback provided by guests and employees to ensure that tour products meet or exceed consumer expectations.
- **Marketing Execution** - Operators provide accurate and complete information in promotional materials before the tour to ensure that guest expectations are appropriate and allow for pre-departure learning. They avoid marketing that misrepresents or disrespects the resources.
- **Community Engagement** – Operators extend aloha and kokua to support the community and assist with local efforts to protect the natural and cultural resources of Hawai'i.

Please complete the following checklist as it relates directly to your tour operation(s). If you have any questions, please email certification@hawaiiecotourism.org.

1. Environmental Management

The principle: Tour operator employs environmentally sustainable practices to ensure that their activities do not degrade the environment. Note: Sustainable practices should be employed at the operation's storefront, headquarters and/or base of operations and during each tour. Pictures or evidence should be provided to demonstrate that operator has fully met the requirements of each category.

1.1 Environmental & Sustainability Management Overview

The principle: Tour operators strive for maximum energy-efficiency and reduced usage of fossil fuels/non-renewable energy.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Operator maintains an updated sustainability commitment statement on website.
 - ☐ Operator takes actionable steps on a yearly basis to review and reduce its environmental impacts.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ In addition to sustainability commitment statement, operator clearly details (on website and/or print materials) how it meets sustainability commitments.
 - ☐ Operator can demonstrate annual reviews and/or improvements of environmental performance.
 - ☐ Operator has a dedicated Sustainability Coordinator (or equivalent) to review and monitor company's environmental performance on an ongoing basis.
 - ☐ Operator communicates its sustainability objectives and requirements to the public (guests and community) and vendors.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for "Adequate" and "Good" categories, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator has developed and maintains a written Sustainability Action Plan and/or Environmental Management System (<https://www.epa.gov/ems/guide-developing-environmental-management-system-plan>) that details actionable steps to address the Energy Efficiency, Water Usage, Transportation and Air Quality, Waste Management, and Hazardous Materials.
 - ☐ Operator has systems in place to identify the sustainability performance of key suppliers and vendors.
 - ☐ Operator reviews key environmental metrics on an annual basis and takes steps to actionably improve environmental performance (must be able to show how metrics are developed and measured).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.2 Energy Efficiency

The principle: Tour operators strive for maximum energy-efficiency and reduced usage of fossil fuels/non-renewable energy.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Operator selects **appliances and equipment** based on energy efficiency (Energy Star Appliances/Automatic Sleep Modes/After-Hour Timers/etc.)
 - ☐ Operator selects **lighting** based on energy efficiency (Natural Light/ CF Bulbs/Occupancy Sensors/Daylight Dimmers/ Task Lighting/etc.)
 - ☐ Offices, storefronts, baseyards, etc. include signage (or other reminders) reminding staff and guests to turn off lights, etc. when not in use.
 - ☐ Computer monitors and other applicable equipment is set by default in the energy saving mode and programmed to enter a low-power “sleep mode” after a set time of inactivity.
 - ☐ Office lighting is switched off after office hours (exceptions made for security lighting).
 - ☐ Equipment (including air conditioning) is, whenever feasible, switched off after office hours or during lunch breaks (not on ‘standby’).
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least five** of the following:
 - ☐ Written purchasing policy requiring all purchased equipment to be as energy efficient as possible.
 - ☐ Natural light sources are optimized to minimize need for artificial light.
 - ☐ Employees are educated about energy saving features of lighting, appliances, air conditioners, printers, computers, etc. and the importance of energy efficiency.
 - ☐ Direct sunlight is controlled with blinds or other window coverings.
 - ☐ Light fixtures use dimmers to manually adjust the intensity of light.
 - ☐ HVAC filters are cleaned every month during peak cooling and/or heating periods.
 - ☐ Air conditioners and other energy consuming appliances are managed to take account of peak loads.
 - ☐ Offices, baseyards, and/or storefronts utilize fans in addition to and/or in place of central air conditioning system.
 - ☐ Weather stripping and caulking are properly maintained to prevent air leaks and improve energy efficiency.
 - ☐ Offices use ENERGY STAR-qualified EXIT signs.
 - ☐ A system for monitoring energy consumption has been implemented.
 - ☐ At least 75% of lighting in offices, baseyards, and/or storefronts is energy efficient (KLLs, LEDs, T-8s, or T-5s).
 - ☐ Offices, baseyards, and/or storefronts utilize laptop computers [laptops consume 90% less energy than desktop computers].
 - ☐ Offices, baseyards, and/or storefronts utilize inkjet printers [inkjet printers use 90% less energy than laser printers].
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for “Adequate” and “Good” categories, must be able to check **at least three** of the following:
 - ☐ Motion detectors, occupancy sensors, timers, or other automatic controls have been installed to control lighting, air conditioners, and/or other energy consuming appliances.
 - ☐ Operator has installed onsite renewable energy systems (e.g., PV, Wind, Solar) that offset at least 75% of company’s energy consumption.
 - ☐ Buildings are designed to take into account climatic conditions (e.g., use of passive solar heating and/or open ventilation techniques to minimize energy use for heating, ventilation

and air conditioning; insulated roofs and walls; low heat absorption siding and roofing materials).

- ☐ 100% of lighting in offices, baseyards, and/or storefronts is energy efficient (KLLs, LEDs, T-8s, or T-5s).
- ☐ Landscaping is efficiently utilized to minimize heat gain [e.g. shade trees are planted near building and windows].
- ☐ Office-based employees are encouraged to work remotely for all or part of the work week.
- ☐ Offices, baseyards, and/or storefronts utilize a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature of workspace during occupied vs. unoccupied hours.
- ☐ Operator has completed a third-party energy audit.
- ☐ Operator has conducted an internal energy audit using EPA's Portfolio Manager <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/existing-buildings/use-portfolio-manager>.
- ☐ Management sets clear and attainable energy-saving goals that are revisited on an annual basis (must be able to show goals and process to meet goals).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.3 External Lighting

The principle: External illumination and lighting does not disrupt or alter the natural environment and/or does not change wild animal behavior.

- ☐ N/A - Do not have, or unable to control, external lighting
- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ External illumination system(s) is limited to that necessary for orientation, security and safety.
 - ☐ External illumination only lights the area that is needed
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Lights are not pointing above the horizontal.
 - ☐ External illumination system minimizes blue light emissions
 - ☐ External illumination utilizes energy-efficient lighting sources and fixtures [e.g. LED, solar powered, etc.]
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ External illumination utilizes only "Acceptable" lighting fixtures that shield the light source to minimize glare and light trespass are used for external lighting [for a list of "Acceptable" fixtures, see <http://www.darksky.org/lighting/lighting-basics/>]

- ☐ Pathways corridors and external areas are illuminated by lights governed with motion sensors.
- ☐ Only use lighting sources with correlated color temperature (CCT) no higher than of 3000K.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ NA ☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.4 Landscaping

The principle: Landscaping is done in a manner that preserves native species and has minimal impact to the surrounding environment and resources [e.g. freshwater, etc.].

- ☐ N/A - Do not have, or unable to control, landscaping (e.g. lease store front in a complex, etc.)
- ☐ [Adequate] Must check all of the following:
 - ☐ Avoid the use and propagation of invasive species
 - ☐ Native and Polynesian introduced plants are to be left undisturbed and/or incorporated into the landscape.
 - ☐ Irrigation system is set to water early in the morning to reduce evaporation
 - ☐ Sprinklers are adjusted so they are not spraying water on paved surfaces.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least three** of the following:
 - ☐ >50% of species used in landscaping are Native and/or Polynesian introduced plants and appropriately sited for the climate zone.
 - ☐ Operator utilizes low-volume irrigation [e.g. soaker hoses vs. sprinklers].
 - ☐ Irrigation systems shut off via automated timers.
 - ☐ Irrigation is adjusted depending on rainfall amounts.
 - ☐ Operator utilizes natural [in place of chemical] fertilizers.
 - ☐ <50% of landscaped area is conventional grass lawn.
 - ☐ Landscaping does not integrate water features such as waterfalls and fountains.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least three** of the following:
 - ☐ >75% of species used in landscaping are Native and/or Polynesian introduced plants and appropriately sited for the climate zone.
 - ☐ Fertilizers are 100% natural and/or organic.
 - ☐ Rainwater catchment system and/or gray water are utilized for irrigation.
 - ☐ Automated irrigation system includes a rain sensor.

- ☐ Operator utilizes mulch to decrease ground covers and retain moisture content.
- ☐ Operator controls pests utilizing organic or nonchemical-based methods.
- ☐ Operator controls weeds utilizing organic or nonchemical-based methods.
- ☐ Utilize backyard composting or locally produced compost to fertilize landscaped areas.
- ☐ Greenwaste and tree debris is appropriately recycled via greenwaste disposal services.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ NA ☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.5 Water Conservation and Usage

The principle: Tour operators strive to minimize water consumption and wasteful practices that impact fresh water resources.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Office, baseyard, and/or storefronts include signage (or other reminders) to remind staff and guests about best water management practices.
 - ☐ Water meters are regularly read to track potential leaks.
 - ☐ Employees are educated about the importance of water conservation.
 - ☐ [If applicable] Landscaping with native plants and xeriscaping consistent with the location and climate of the area, to minimize water use.
 - ☐ [if applicable] Hoses are equipped with automatic shut-off nozzles.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, must be able to check **at least three** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator maintains a written and active policy to conserve water and minimize water usage throughout operations.
 - ☐ Operations use low-flow faucets/taps/showerheads.
 - ☐ Operations use dual- or low-flow toilets and/or waterless urinals.
 - ☐ Operator uses water-efficient appliances (e.g.; dish-washers, laundry washing machines, etc.).
 - ☐ Vehicles are washed only when needed.
 - ☐ Operator avoids hosing off walkways, driveways and entrances.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Appropriate use of rainwater and reuse of grey water.
 - ☐ Utilizes low-volume irrigation for landscaping.
 - ☐ Installed automatic faucets/taps.

- ☐ Wastewater is captured or filtered before being discharged to the environment.
- ☐ Conduct a water audit for offices, baseyard, and/or tour activities.
- ☐ Installed sub-meters to track potential leaks.
- ☐ Management sets water conservation goals that are reviewed on an annual basis.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.6 Noise Management

The principle: Noise and noise pollution is minimized to reduce impact on the natural environment, provide guests the opportunity to hear the natural sounds, and for staff safety.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Operator minimizes the time that motorized vehicles (including both cars, trucks, vans, and ocean vessels) are left idling.
 - ☐ Guides appropriately adjust the volume of their voice in natural and culturally sensitive areas [e.g. Haleakala crater, visiting culturally significant sites, etc.].
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator ensures that noise pollution (human or mechanical) is appropriately located (or isolated) and meets local regulations and guidelines where applicable.
 - ☐ Reduction of machine and equipment noise shall be guaranteed with the proper maintenance and buffering when possible.
 - ☐ Operator guarantees appropriate/adequate noise levels in all environments through adopting the appropriate practices by personnel and visitors, establishing periods of silence, telephone limiters, etc.
 - ☐ Operator minimizes the use of amplified noise and PA systems.
 - ☐ Operator does not operate in, through, or around residential areas between the hours of 6pm – 6am.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator controls noise from machinery, generators, and air conditioners by using sound insulation.
 - ☐ Operator has undertaken an audit of noise impacts from tour operations.
 - ☐ Operator has developed unique methods to minimize noise from tour operations [please describe_____].

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.7 Transportation and Air Quality

The principle: Tour operation has a minimal impact on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Vehicles are filled to capacity whenever possible.
 - ☐ Vehicles have a maintenance plan to ensure proper operation and control of emissions. [operator must be able to show a verifiable maintenance plan]
 - ☐ Operator prohibits smoking and fires of any kind in natural areas.
 - ☐ [if applicable] Engines for outboard motors and small motorized vehicles are maintained according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator maintains written policy limiting corporate travel.
 - ☐ Operator maintains written policy to give preference to transport options for transfers and excursions that are more sustainable (e.g. lower GHG emissions, fueled by sustainable alternatives, etc.)
 - ☐ 25-50% of operator's main suppliers are located within 200 miles of company's offices/baseyard.
 - ☐ All routes and schedules for tour and support vehicles are arranged to minimize distance traveled, avoid congestion and peak traffic periods.
 - ☐ Operator offsets 25-50% of annual emissions through carbon offsets.
 - ☐ Operator has taken actionable steps to increase employee use of public transportation, carpooling, and/or walking/biking to work [e.g. Operator organizes company carpooling system, installed bike racks, etc.].
 - ☐ Some tour and company-owned (land-based) vehicles are electric/clean fuel [e.g. biodiesel, electric, etc.].
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator utilizes a carbon calculator to consistently monitor and track total carbon output (e.g. <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator1.html> or similar method).
 - ☐ All land-based tour and company-owned vehicles are electric/clean fuel [e.g. biodiesel, etc.].
 - ☐ Operator offsets >50% of annual emissions through carbon offsets.
 - ☐ Employees are subsidized/incentivized for use of public transportation, carpooling, or biking to work.
 - ☐ >50% of operator's main suppliers are located within 200 miles of company's offices/baseyard
 - ☐ Employees are subsidized/incentivized to purchase energy efficient vehicles for personal use.

- ☐ Employees are encouraged to use virtual meeting technology to reduce in-person meetings
- ☐ Staff has been trained in fuel-efficient driving practices (<https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.jsp>).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.8 Waste Management

The principle: The waste management hierarchy of REFUSING single-use plastics, REDUCE, REUSE, and RECYCLE underpins operations of the tour product.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Operator has implemented a recycling program and encourages all staff and guests to recycle [Hi-5, Plastics #1 and #2, cardboard, aluminum cans, and glass]
 - ☐ Operator keeps all protected natural areas and culturally significant areas visited clean and unspoiled including by collecting and removing all litter generated and litter encountered.
 - ☐ Operator has actively taken steps to reduce single-use plastic service items (including cutlery, straws, to-go containers, water bottles, etc.) both for office use and during excursions.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least five** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator has replaced the sale or use of **some** single-use disposable items with **reusable items**. Examples include bottled water and food service items [e.g. cutlery, plates, cups, straws, to-go containers, napkins, etc.].
 - ☐ Operator has actionably reduced the amount of (non-refillable) plastic bottles and/or single-use cups it consumes for office use.
 - ☐ Operator has actively taken steps to minimize the use of single-use disposable items [e.g. polystyrene food containers] utilized by **outside vendors**.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a written purchasing policy to avoid over-packaged goods.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a written purchasing policy to purchase materials in bulk and/or reusable containers.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a written policy to reduce printing and paper waste by encouraging a paperless office and/or printing double-sided if printing is required.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a comprehensive recycling program undertaken at both offices and on tour, and includes white paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, and aluminum recycling.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a written policy statement documenting the operator's commitment to the environment.
 - ☐ Packing peanuts and other re-usable packaging items are donated to FedEx or mailing stores.
 - ☐ 25-50% of food items used on tour are locally produced, sustainably produced, Seafood Watch Compliant, and/or USDA organic products.

- ☐ Operator is enrolled in paperless billing and/or banking.
- ☐ Recycled/environmentally preferred office supplies are utilized [paper, pens, notebooks, etc.].
- ☐ Safety releases, liability forms, and/or release forms (e.g. Molokini Conservation form) are provided to guests electronically and for electronic signature.
- ☐ Operator has implemented measurements to reduce brochure wastage (e.g. avoiding overproduction, “internet only” policy, etc.)
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least three** of the following:
 - ☐ Efforts are made to keep food waste out of the landfill (e.g. office composting, food scrapes/waste are donated to local farmers, etc.).
 - ☐ Operator has eliminated the use or sale of **all** single-use disposable items, including bottled water/drinks and food service items [e.g. cutlery, plates, cups, etc.].
 - ☐ >50% of food items are locally produced, sustainably produced, Seafood Watch compliant, and/or USDA organic products.
 - ☐ More than 90% of paper use in the office (for internal and administrative use) consists of sustainable paper (Recycled, FSC or sustainably produced).
 - ☐ Operator has completed a waste audit.
 - ☐ Outside catering is conducted by certified Ocean Friendly Restaurants Hawai'i (a full list can be accessed here: http://www.oceanfriendlyrestaurantshawaii.org/full_list.html).
 - ☐ Work environment has eliminated or greatly reduced [>75%] the use of office paper.
 - ☐ Operator undertakes annual assessment of the environmental impact of company's tour and business activities.
 - ☐ Corporate offices, baseyards, etc. utilize automated hand dryers instead of paper towels.
 - ☐ Tours have achieved zero waste status [e.g. no rubbish is generated while on tour].
 - ☐ Operator has worked directly with outside caterers and restaurants to reduce single-use plastics throughout a company's operations.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.9 Risk Management

The principle: Tour operator has demonstrated increased awareness and a shared responsibility for resources conservation and risk management within its field operations.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must check all of the following:
 - ☐ Operator maintains valid permits and is in compliance with relevant Federal and State environmental, public and occupational health and safety, hygiene, and employment regulations.
 - ☐ Emergency rescue/safety protocols and plans are in place and regularly reviewed by

management.

- ☐ Policies are in place to minimize the destruction of natural resources [e.g. no going off trail, no touching marine life, no anchoring on coral, etc.].
- ☐ Every tour includes at least one guide who is certified in CPR/AED and First Aid.
- ☐ Operator maintains contact lists of critical and emergency numbers that includes easily accessible hard copies [must be able to provide a copy upon request].
- ☐ Safety and emergency equipment is checked, reviewed, and maintained on a regular basis.

☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must check **at least three** of the following:

- ☐ All guides who directly interact with guests are certified in CPR/AED and First Aid.
- ☐ Operator subsidizes all or part of the cost of CPR/AED and First Aid certifications for guides and/or staff who lead tours.
- ☐ Written policies are adopted by management and shared with employees to minimize the destruction of natural resources [e.g. no going off trail, no touching marine life, no anchoring on coral, etc.].
- ☐ Operator conducts in-service safety/emergency response training to review company's emergency protocol on an annual basis for all guides.
- ☐ Operator conducts in-service resource conservation training on an annual basis for all guides [e.g. review wildlife encounter protocols, protocols to prevent introduction and spread of invasive species, anchoring protocols, etc.].

☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for both Adequate and Good categories, must check **at least one** of the following:

- ☐ Operator offers and/or subsidizes advanced safety/emergency rescue certifications for guides [e.g. Wilderness First Responder, American Canoe Association guide certification, Wilderness First Aid certification, Free diver, Navigation course, Commercial Driver License].
- ☐ Operator has a written Environmental Watch Plan to: 1) prevent introduction and spread of invasive species, e.g., vehicles and gear are inspected and cleaned before each tour to ensure that weeds (terrestrial or aquatic) or their seeds or propagules are not being spread; 2) monitor the displacement and /or destruction of natural features in the operating area; and 3) create a way to report violations to the proper authorities.
- ☐ Office space, storefronts, and/or baseyards are properly prepared for natural disasters or emergencies [e.g. maintain provisions/emergency supplies, staff can turn off utilities, etc.].
- ☐ Operator has a written Emergency Action Plan for natural disasters that includes a contact list, meeting place and evacuation plan, communications plan, emergency alert sources, and considerations for individuals with disabilities and/or mobility issues.
- ☐ Operators have a written Risk Assessment for each excursion that identifies and analyses the dangers associated with each excursion and likelihood of accidents.
- ☐ Operator maintains a written Responsible Travel Policy that is sent to all guests prior to the trip and encourages guests to read and sign the policy before the excursion.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.10 Chemical and Hazardous Waste Reduction

The principle: Tour operator is committed to reducing and properly disposing of hazardous and chemical-based wastes.

- ☐ [Adequate] Must check all of the following:
- ☐ Use only non-toxic, non-hazardous janitorial products at headquarters or in office spaces [e.g. bathroom/shower, countertop, tile, and/or window cleaners, etc.].
 - ☐ Company-wide hazardous waste recycling program to recycle some or all of the following: batteries, paint, print cartridges, CFL-bulbs, oil or lubricants, and/or E-waste.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, must be able to check **at least five** of the following:
- ☐ Operator maintains a written policy to minimize and substitute the use of hazardous substances and chemicals including pesticides, paints, and cleaning materials by harmless products and processes.
 - ☐ Operator utilizes unbleached/chlorine free paper products [toilet paper, paper towels, etc.].
 - ☐ Soy-based inks or other low VOC inks are used for at least 50% of printed materials [including in-house office printing and marketing materials].
 - ☐ Company vehicles and/or vessels are cleaned using non-toxic, environmentally preferable cleaners.
 - ☐ Single-use batteries have been replaced with rechargeable batteries.
 - ☐ Green certified cleaners are used for cleaning gear/equipment (e.g. Green Seal, Ecologo).
 - ☐ Operator recycles all batteries.
 - ☐ Operator recycles all print cartridges.
 - ☐ Operator recycles all e-waste and CFL-bulbs.
 - ☐ Operator recycles all oil or lubricants.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for both Adequate and Good categories, must check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Soy-based inks or other low VOC inks are used for **all** print materials [including in-house office printing and marketing materials].
 - ☐ Operator maintains a comprehensive hazardous waste recycling program for **all** of the following hazardous wastes [as applicable]: batteries, print cartridges, CFL-bulbs, oil or lubricants, E-waste, and paint.
 - ☐ Operator avoids the use of **all** toxic or chemical-based cleaners for **all** aspects of tour operation [e.g. gear disinfecting (do not use bleach), vehicle washing, janitorial, etc.].

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

1.11 Facility Improvement with Landlord

If you lease your facilities, have you worked with your landlord to implement/maintain any of the following? [Select N/A if you do not lease your building/storefront/baseyard] *

- ☐ Energy efficiency improvements
- ☐ Water efficiency improvements
- ☐ Waste reduction programs [including recycling]
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ N/A – Company does not lease majority of facilities

*Question not graded

2. Staff Management

The principle: Tour operators hire guides and staff based on their knowledge and qualifications in the field of sustainable tourism, provide accurate and appropriate training to ensure quality of ecotourism experience to guests, and encourage staff professional development.

* Please refer to **Appendix D: Natural and Cultural Resources Education and Training** for more information on staff development and training opportunities.

2.1 New Guide Training

Please answer the following questions only as they relate to new employees (hired within 6 months).

2.1.1 New Guide Training: Overview

The principle: Operator has developed an accurate and formal training plan for new guides.

- ☐ [Adequate] New guides receive a general employee orientation and broad information related to ecological and/or cultural resources of the area.
- ☐ [Good] New guides complete a series of training courses/modules that are specific to safety preparedness, ecological resources, cultural resources, sustainable tourism practices, and environmental management issues related to the area. *[To qualify, operator must show evidence. For example, course/module outlines, curriculum, hours spent on each topic, or details about the information covered in each module.]*
- ☐ [Excellent] New guides complete a series of **skills and/or knowledge-based training** courses/modules specifically related to safety preparedness, ecological resources, cultural resources, sustainable tourism practices, and environmental management issues related to the area. *[To qualify, operator must show evidence [e.g. quiz, test, or practicum scores] of employees demonstrating their skills or knowledge.]*

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.1.2 New Guide Training: Safety & Emergency Preparedness

The principle: New guides are properly trained in safety/emergency preparedness and protocols and demonstrate their ability to properly handle emergency situations.

- ☐ [Adequate] All new guides receive and maintain CPR/First Aid/AED Certifications.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to CPR/FIRST AID/AED Certifications, all new guides receive additional safety and emergency preparedness training that includes drills and simulations. *[To qualify, operator must show evidence of drills and simulations].*

- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, new guides receive structured safety and emergency preparedness trainings and/or certifications that include drills and simulations and are **led by a certified professional or expert.**

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.1.3 New Guide Training: Ecological Heritage & Natural Resources

The principle: Operator provides accurate and appropriate training for new guides with regards to relevant ecological and natural resources.

- ☐ [Adequate] Ecological and natural resource information is provided to new guides via shadowing senior employees and/or other types of on-the-job training
- ☐ [Good] In addition to shadowing and on-the-job training, ecological and natural resource information is provided via in-house trainings in a structured (classroom or in the field) setting.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, ecological and natural resource in-house trainings are led by experts in their fields and include written training documents (e.g. resource manuals, info sheets, handouts, etc.). *[To qualify, operator must be able to verify the credentials of experts and provide supporting training documentation].*

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.1.4 New Guide Training: Hawaiian Cultural Heritage

The principle: Operator provides accurate and appropriate training for new guides with regards to relevant cultural resources. Examples include Hawaiian place or animal/plant names, language, music, dance navigation, sustainability concepts, legends/folklore, chants, etc. NOTE: Cultural trainings should be conducted by Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners.

- ☐ [Adequate] General information of Hawaiian language and cultural heritage is provided to new guides via shadowing senior employees and/or other types of on-the-job training.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, cultural resource information is provided via in-house trainings in a structured setting and led by Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners.

- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, cultural training includes written training documents (e.g. resource manuals, info sheets, handouts, etc.). *[To qualify, operator must be able to provide supporting training documentation].*

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.1.5 New Guide Training: History and Historical Resources

The principle: Operator provides accurate and appropriate training for new guides with regards to historical resources and the history of Hawai'i. Historical resources training may include topics such as Native Hawaiian settlement and history, sugarcane production, historic sites of buildings, Western contact, World War II in Hawai'i, etc.

- ☐ [Adequate] Historical resource information is provided to new guides via shadowing senior employees and/or other types of on-the-job training.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to shadowing and on-the-job training, historical resource information is provided via in-house trainings in a structured (classroom or in the field) setting.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, historical resource in-house trainings are led by experts in their fields and include written training documents (e.g. resource manuals, info sheets, handouts, etc.). *[To qualify, operator must be able to verify the credentials of experts and provide supporting training documentation].*

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.2 Continuing Education

When considering employees who are involved in this type of training, exclude any training that is provided strictly for new employees as part of their initial training.

2.2.1 Continuing Education: General

The principle: Operator encourages and supports/provides continuing education.

- ☐ [Adequate] Operator encourages all employees to undertake regular and relevant professional development. (e.g. multicultural communication, cultural sensitivity training, responsible environmental and/or ecosystem training).
- ☐ [Good] Operator provides in-house training related to ecological, cultural, and/or historical trainings in the last 12 months (e.g. multicultural communication, cultural sensitivity training, responsible environmental and/or ecosystem training), **and** encourage employees to undertake regular and relevant professional development.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator pays employees for attendance at in-house trainings, educational workshops, and/or seminars.
 - ☐ Operator provide full or partial funding to attend external educational or professional classes [e.g. Hawaiian Language and Culture classes].
 - ☐ Operator provides full or partial funding to attend and obtain industry-recognized credentials (e.g. professional certifications, college credits, academic degree).
 - ☐ Operator provides employees paid time off to attend educational or professional classes.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.2.2 Continuing Education: Staff Resources

The principle: Operator provides access to accurate resources related to relevant environmental and cultural resources.

- ☐ [Adequate] Operator maintains a resource library that is accessible to all employees [either online or hardcopy literature].
- ☐ [Good] In addition to a resource library, all guides receive a manual and/or supplementary resource information kits for staff which addresses ecological, historical, and cultural resources.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, operator provides opportunities throughout the year for staff to access and interact with environmental professionals, historical professionals, and/or cultural

practitioners [e.g. guest speakers, staff development days, in-house training etc.]. NOTE: professionals or experts may be either in-house or external to the tour operator.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.2.3 Continuing Education: Ecological Heritage and Natural Resources

The principle: Operator encourages and supports/provides continuing education for guides specific to relevant environmental and natural resources.

- ☐ [Adequate] Ecological Heritage and Natural Resources information is provided to staff on an **annual basis**, and operator must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Information is provided via hard copy documents, online documents, or webinars.
 - ☐ Staff attend in-house or external lectures or events (e.g. environmental festivals or events).
 - ☐ Staff participate in natural resource restoration activities.
- ☐ [Good] Ecological Heritage and Natural Resources information is provided to staff on a **biannual basis**, and must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Trainings are provided via a structured lecture, classroom or field setting (either in-house or external). (Staff not paid for attendance)
 - ☐ Provide partial funding to attend external educational or professional classes [e.g. Hawaiian Ecology or Biology classes].
- ☐ [Excellent] Ecological Heritage and Natural Resources information is provided to staff on a **monthly or quarterly basis**, and must check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Refresher and/or training courses include quizzes (or other ways to measure staffs' retention).
 - ☐ Internal or external trainings, lectures, or events are led by experts in their fields.
 - ☐ Paid attendance at in-house trainings, topic related events, outside lectures, or demonstrations.
 - ☐ Provide full funding to attend external educational or professional classes.
 - ☐ Staff training hours and attendance at courses are tracked and recorded.
 - ☐ Operator works with other companies to share training resources and information.
 - ☐ Trainings include supporting, written documents (e.g. informational sheets, handouts, etc.).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.2.4 Continuing Education: Hawaiian Cultural Heritage

The principle: Operator encourages and supports/provides continuing education for guides specific to Hawaiian cultural resources.

- ☐ [Adequate] Cultural Resources information is provided to staff on an **annual basis**, and operator must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Information is provided via hard copy documents, online documents, or webinars.
 - ☐ Staff attend in-house or external lectures or events (for example, environmental festivals or events).
 - ☐ Staff participate in restoration or maintenance activities of cultural sites or areas.
- ☐ [Good] Cultural Resources information is provided to staff on a **biannual basis**, and must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Trainings are provided via a structured lecture, classroom or field setting (either in-house or external).
 - ☐ Provide partial funding to attend external educational or professional classes [e.g. Hawaiian Language classes].
- ☐ [Excellent] Cultural Resources information is provided to staff on a **monthly or quarterly basis**, and must check **at least two** of the following:
 - ☐ Refresher and/or training courses include quizzes (or other ways to measure staffs' retention of knowledge).
 - ☐ Internal or external trainings, lectures, or events are led by experts in their fields.
 - ☐ Paid attendance at in-house trainings/topic related events, outside lectures, demonstrations, etc
 - ☐ Provide full funding to attend external educational or professional classes [e.g. Hawaiian Language classes].
 - ☐ Staff training hours and attendance at courses are tracked and recorded.
 - ☐ Operator works with other companies to share training resources and information.
 - ☐ Trainings include supporting, written documents (e.g. informational sheets, handouts, etc.).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.2.5 Continuing Education: History and Historical Resources

The principle: Operator encourages and supports/provides continuing education for guides specific to relevant historical resources.

- ☐ [Adequate] History and/or historical resources information is provided to staff on an **annual basis**, and operator must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Information is provided via hard copy documents, online documents, or webinars.
 - ☐ Staff attend in-house or external lectures or events (for example, historical festivals or events)

- ☐ [Good] History and/or historical resources information is provided to staff on a **biannual basis**, and must check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Trainings are provided via a structured lecture, classroom or field setting (either in-house or external).
 - ☐ Provide partial funding to attend external educational or professional classes [e.g. relevant history courses].
- ☐ [Excellent] History and/or historical resources information is provided to staff on a **monthly or quarterly basis**, and must check **at least two** of the following:
- ☐ Refresher and/or training courses include quizzes (or other ways to measure staff retention).
 - ☐ Internal or external trainings, lectures, or events are led by experts in their fields.
 - ☐ Paid attendance at in-house trainings or topic related events, outside lectures, demonstrations, etc.
 - ☐ Provide full funding to attend external educational or professional classes [e.g. relevant history classes].
 - ☐ Staff training hours and attendance at courses are tracked and recorded.
 - ☐ Operator works with other companies to share training resources and information.
 - ☐ Trainings include supporting, written documents (e.g. informational sheets, handouts, etc.).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

2.2.6 Continuing Education: Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The principle: Operator encourages and supports/provides continuing safety and emergency preparedness training.

- ☐ [Adequate] Safety or emergency preparedness information is provided to staff on an **annual basis**, and operator must check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Hands-on, refresher CPR/AED/First Aid training.
 - ☐ Review of company's emergency procedures.
 - ☐ Utilize online or hard copy documents/webinars to keep staff informed of recent safety/emergency preparedness updates.
- ☐ [Good] Safety or emergency preparedness information is provided to staff on a **biannual basis**, and must check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Safety/emergency preparedness refreshers are provided via a structured classroom or field setting (either in-house or external).
 - ☐ Staff participate in safety/emergency preparedness drills and simulations.
 - ☐ Provide partial funding to attend external safety/emergency preparedness trainings and/or obtain relevant certifications beyond those required for job performance (e.g. CPR/AED/First Aid, Lifeguard, Dive Master Certifications, etc.).

- ☐ [Excellent] Safety or emergency preparedness information is provided to staff on a **monthly or quarterly basis**, and must check **at least two** of the following:
- ☐ Refresher and/or training courses include quizzes (or other ways to measure staffs' retention).
 - ☐ Internal or external trainings, lectures, or events are led by experts in their fields.
 - ☐ Provide full funding to attend external safety/emergency preparedness trainings and/or obtain relevant certifications beyond those required for job performance (e.g. CPR/AED/First Aid, Lifeguard, Dive Master Certifications, etc.).
 - ☐ Paid attendance at in-house trainings or topic related events, outside lectures, demonstrations.
 - ☐ Staff training hours and attendance at courses are tracked and recorded.
 - ☐ Operator works with other companies to share training resources and information.
 - ☐ Trainings include supporting, written documents (e.g. informational sheets, handouts, etc.).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3. Interpretation Management

The principle: Tour operators provide all guests with accurate information and foster a better understanding and appreciation of the ecological and cultural heritage of the place being visited.

3.1 Accuracy

The principle: Content used for interpretive materials and activities is accurate according to credible, authoritative references and is relevant to both the site and audience.

3.1.1 Cultural Resources Accuracy

- ☐ [Adequate] Operator verifies cultural information and interpretive narratives through cross checking with secondary source materials such as reference books, published biographies, dictionaries, documentary films and television documentaries, etc.

○ Please provide a list of cultural reference materials utilized by your company: _____

- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, operator verifies cultural information and interpretive narratives through cross checking with first person source materials such as professional persons, organizations, and/or cultural practitioners (e.g. Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, cultural resource managers, cultural practitioners, cultural advisors, etc.).

○ Please provide name(s) and contact information for individuals and/or organizations who review and inform your company's Native Hawaiian cultural narratives: _____

- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, cultural information and interpretive narratives are regularly reviewed and/or updated by a credible and authoritative source(s) (e.g. Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, cultural resource managers, cultural advisors, cultural practitioners, etc.) (please list):

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3.1.2 Natural Resources Accuracy

- ☐ [Adequate] Operator verifies natural resource information and interpretive narratives through cross checking with secondary source materials such as reference books, scientific journals, scholarly film and television documentaries, etc.

○ Please provide a list of key reference materials: _____

- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, operator verifies natural resource information and interpretive narratives through cross checking first person source materials such as professional persons, scientists/researchers, natural resource managers, academics, biologists, botanists, conservation organizations, etc.

○ Please provide name(s) and contact information for individuals and/or organizations who review and inform your company's natural resource narratives: _____

- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, natural resource information and interpretive narratives are regularly reviewed and/or updated by a credible and authoritative source (e.g. professionals, scientists, academics, natural resource managers, etc.) (please list):

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3.2 Personal and Non-personal Interpretation

The principle: Tourism products include effective interpretation opportunities which allow visitors to learn more about the natural and cultural resources of the area being visited.

3.2.1 Face-to-face Interpretation

- ☐ [Adequate] Guides provide accurate information about the natural and cultural resources encountered on tour.

- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, guides clearly engage and involve guests throughout tour.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to all the above, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Tours/Guides address multiple learning styles [e.g. auditory, visual, tactile, verbal].
 - ☐ Tours/guides incorporate other interactive educational activities [e.g., music, food, crafts, storytelling, cultural rituals, hula, role-plays, theater activities].
 - ☐ Tours/Guides incorporate static/non-personal interpretation opportunities [utilize and interpret signage, maps, handouts, brochures, etc.].

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3.2.2 Static/Non-personal Interpretation

- ☐ [Adequate] Reference material[s] is held on location and is accessible to guests upon request.
- ☐ [Good] – In addition to the above, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Guides properly interpret and/or utilize interpretive signage displays, brochures, handouts, or other forms of static interpretation.
 - ☐ During the tour, provide guests recommendations for follow up resources and references.
- ☐ [Excellent] – In addition to meeting the requirements for Adequate and Good categories, tour programs are supplemented with **at least two** of the following:
- ☐ Pre-travel educational materials are provided and accessible to guests (e.g., printed, electronic or web-based FAQ pages, reference resources, blog posts, etc.).
 - ☐ Printed materials including brochures, educational fact sheets, and/or interpretive leaflets
 - ☐ Audio-visual presentations
 - ☐ SmartPhone Apps
 - ☐ Displays with interpretive signage
 - ☐ Species identification cards and/or infographics
 - ☐ Artifacts, photos, and/or interactive items [e.g. kukui nut, ti leaf, whale model, etc.] are utilized and made available to guests.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3.3 Natural Resources Interpretation

- ☐ [Adequate] Tours incorporate all of the following practices [must be able to check all the following]:
- ☐ Guides accurately identify and provide information about wildlife encountered on tour.
 - ☐ Guides guests with information about proper behavior and their responsibilities when visiting natural areas and encountering wildlife.
 - ☐ Wildlife is observed from an appropriate distance that doesn't disturb wildlife or disrupt behaviors such as mating, resting and nesting.
 - ☐ Removal, extraction, and/or alteration of natural artifacts and objects such as rocks, native plants, etc. by guests and employees is not permitted.
 - ☐ Tours promote constructive interactions between guests and nature while minimally disturbing wildlife.
 - ☐ Tours do not promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species.
 - ☐ Tours avoid fragile terrain and areas that are critical to wildlife.
 - ☐ Guests and employees are prevented from feeding wild animals.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all of the above, tours incorporate **at least two** of the following:
- ☐ Operators share sustainable practices with guests and ensure activities don't impact the environment.
 - ☐ Operators Provide information about each officially established protected natural area visited.
 - ☐ Operators minimize the introduction or transportation of native species through inspections and cleanings of vehicles and gear prior to each trip.
 - ☐ Guides discuss company's commitment to eco-tourism and the importance of reducing company's environmental footprint during tour.
 - ☐ Guides share Native Hawaiian sustainability concepts and connect them to the resources presented on tour (e.g. ahupua'a system, mauka to makai, mālama 'aina, etc.).
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good, tours incorporate **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Provide guests with information about environmental issues and initiatives in each of the regions in which it operates.
 - ☐ Regularly rotate viewing routes to help protect wildlife.
 - ☐ Regularly provide feedback to area manager for any natural areas that are utilized as part of the company's programs and/or services.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a professional level position [internal or external] to oversee the dissemination of natural resources information to staff and guests [individual should hold appropriate credential, degree, and/or experience].

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3.4 Cultural Resources Interpretation

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Ensure that cultural protocols, practices and sensitivities are respected.
 - ☐ Advise guests on appropriate behavior so as not to offend or break kapu when visiting a culturally significant site or region.
 - ☐ Integrate appropriate Hawaiian words, place names, plant/animals names, etc. into tours.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Provide detailed information about each officially established protected cultural site visited [if applicable].
 - ☐ Tours do not promote souvenirs which contain historic, cultural, and/or archaeological artifacts.
 - ☐ Incorporate Native Hawaiian legends, history, music, cultural practices, and/or sustainability concepts into tours.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for Adequate and Good, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Management has integrated Hawaiian cultural values into their business philosophy and practices (please be prepared to demonstrate how cultural values are incorporated).
 - ☐ Operator maintains a Hawaiian Cultural Advisor position [internal or external] who advises on proper protocols, oversees the dissemination of cultural resources information to staff and guests, etc. [individual should hold appropriate credential, degree, and/or experience].

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

3.5 Formal guide training *

*** For a complete list of interpretive training materials, online courses, Hawai'i-based trainers, etc. please visit Appendix E: Interpretation Resources**

- ☐ [Adequate] Interpretation tools, skills, and updated information are provided to staff, and operator must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Information related to guiding and interpretation is provided via hard copy documents, online documents, or webinars.
 - ☐ Staff attend in-house or external lectures, workshops, or professional development events related to building skills as a guide and interpreter.
- ☐ [Good] Interpretation tools, skills, and updated information are provided to staff and operator must check **at least one** of the following:

- ☐ Trainings are provided via a structured lectures, on-line courses, classroom or field setting (either in-house or external).
- ☐ Staff are provided partial funding to attend external lectures, workshops, on-line courses, or professional development classes [e.g. customer service classes].
- ☐ [Excellent] Guides hold a valid third-party Certified Interpretive Guide certification [or equivalent]* **and** must check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Staff attend internal or external hands-on trainings, lectures, or on-line courses related to guiding/interpretive skills at least once per calendar year.
 - ☐ Staff attend customer service or other related professional development courses at least once per calendar year.
 - ☐ Staff are evaluated by management on an annual basis related to program delivery and interpretation skills.

* For a complete list of valid third-party interpretation certifications, please see **Appendix E: Interpretation Resources**.

For Evaluator Use Only:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate (0pts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate (1pt)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good (3pts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent (5pts)
Score (total points): _____			
Notes:			

4. Customer and Employee Evaluation

The principle: Tour company continuously monitors and analyzes all operations and acts upon the feedback provided by guests and employees to ensure that tour products meet or exceed consumer expectations.

4.1 Employee Overview

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ All employees have employment contracts, including labor conditions and a job description.
 - ☐ Operator complies with all relevant national laws protecting the rights of employees.
 - ☐ Operator maintains a liability insurance of all employees (e.g. in case of work related accidents).
 - ☐ The company ensures that people are not discriminated against with regards to recruitment, conditions of employment, access to training and senior positions, or promotion in terms of gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion/beliefs or sexual orientation.
 - ☐ Operator does not violate child labor laws and ensures that the rights of children are respected.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Tour operator has a written Human Resources Policy and Manual.
 - ☐ Operator has a healthy and safety policy for employees which complies to legal standards/best practices.
 - ☐ Operator offers Employee Retirement Plan with partial or full matching of 2%-4%.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Operator pays employees and/hourly workers at least a living wage (use the Living Wage Calculator to determine living wage in your area <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>).
 - ☐ Operator offers Employee Retirement Plan with partial or full matching greater than 4%.
 - ☐ Managers complete leadership development courses and/or training on an ongoing basis.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

4.2 Employee Evaluation and Feedback

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
 - ☐ Management reviews operations on an annual basis.
 - ☐ Management solicits feedback from staff on an annual basis.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:

- ☐ Management reviews operations on an annual basis [please submit a copy/copies of evaluations or reports, for example safety evaluations or customer feedback reports].
 - ☐ Management solicits feedback about operations from staff on an annual basis [please submit copy of staff feedback form or report].
 - ☐ Management conducts annual employee reviews or regularly touches base with employees regarding performance.
 - ☐ Operator has conducted a formal employee satisfaction or engagement survey (must be able to show results of survey. Anecdotal information does not count. Example of formal survey can be found at http://www.gallup.com/poll/189071/little-change-employee-engagement-january.aspx?g_source=EMPLOYEE_ENGAGEMENT&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles).
 - ☐ Operator has developed a procedure through which employees may raise grievances and that appropriate and timely follow up procedures are in place.
 - ☐ Operator has documented disciplinary procedures in place and staff are aware of these procedures.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for Adequate and Good categories, must be able to check **at least one** of the following:
- ☐ Management has proactively implemented changes to operations based on staff and/or customer feedback [must provide specific examples].
 - ☐ Operator has implemented a consistent process for providing performance feedback to all tenured employees which includes peer and subordinate input, clearly identifies chievable goals, and is conducted on at least an annual basis.
 - ☐ Board of Directors includes non-management representation.
 - ☐ Company has a process through which all staff may make representation to senior management about key employment issues and management actively follows up on issues.
 - ☐ Management regularly asks employees for feedback regarding existing and/or updated policies and procedures [please describe your process].

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

4.3 Guest Feedback

- ☐ [Adequate] Must be able to check all of the following:
- ☐ Operator monitors **and** appropriately responds to guest remarks or feedback on electronic media (e.g. Yelp, TripAdvisor, Facebook, etc.).
 - ☐ Operator has discussions with booking agents, retailers, and wholesalers.

- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, must be able to check **at least two** of the following:
- ☐ Guides encourage guests to provide feedback via electronic media channels.
 - ☐ Operator has clear, written procedures in case of complaints from clients.
 - ☐ Operator distributes automated emails requesting guest feedback via third-party sites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, Facebook, etc.
 - ☐ Operator utilizes response cards and/or suggestion forms to receive, document, and respond to claims and suggestions from clients. [Must provide a copy of response card or suggestion form].
 - ☐ Operator distributes surveys or automated emails to booking agents, retailers, and wholesalers on a regular basis.
 - ☐ Operator distributes and collects customized surveys or questionnaires immediately after the trip (electronic or hardcopy, for example Survey Monkey or Google Forms).
 - ☐ Operator conducts structured interviews of guests (phone calls or in person) at regular intervals (e.g. monthly or weekly).
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for Adequate and Good categories, operator conducts **at least one** of the following on a regular basis:
- ☐ Operator synthesizes results from informal feedback into reports that are analyzed at regular intervals (e.g. monthly, bi-annually, annually).
 - ☐ Operator has implemented a written policy to regularly record, review, and respond to informal guest feedback (must provide a copy of the policy).
 - ☐ Operator has a recognition program for employees who receive positive customer reviews via informal feedback mechanisms (e.g. Yelp, TripAdvisor, Facebook, etc.).
 - ☐ Operator seeks and receives written feedback through peer review or advisory group review.
 - ☐ Operator has taken actionable steps in response to informal guest feedback (please provide specific examples): _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

5. Marketing Execution

The principle: The operator provides accurate and complete information in their promotional materials to ensure that guest expectations are appropriate and allow for pre-departure learning.

5.1 Marketing Execution

- ☐ [Adequate] Marketing materials [must check all of the following]:
 - ☐ Images, trip descriptions, etc. are of actual experiences offered and places visited by customers.
 - ☐ Do not promise sightings or promote expectations which cannot be guaranteed.
 - ☐ Avoid promoting activities that negatively affect the social, cultural, and/or environmental sustainability of a place, and encourages guests to behave respectfully. The operation will not promote any images, activities, etc., that disrespect nature and/or culture or are not accurate.
 - ☐ Avoid inappropriate use of images/photoshop/etc. Images will not be digitally manipulated or enhanced to promote unrealistic or inappropriate experiences or expectations by guests relative to nature and culture (e.g., wildlife interactions, species encountered, cultural imagery, etc.).
 - ☐ Clearly describe the number of people in a typical group.
 - ☐ Clearly describe the formal status, if any, of the site (e.g., National Park, etc.).
 - ☐ Clearly describe the operator's commitment to sustainable tourism.
 - ☐ Respect international privacy policies.
 - ☐ Obtain photo release forms from guests and respect copyright laws [if applicable].
- ☐ [Good] In addition to all the above, marketing materials provide information about [must check **at least one** of the following]:
 - ☐ The range and style of interpretive services provided.
 - ☐ Qualifications of guides and experts.
 - ☐ The natural and cultural resources of the area or site (e.g., rare species, geological formations, anthropological evidence, etc.).
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements of Adequate and Good categories, marketing materials include **at least one** of the following:
 - ☐ Frequently asked questions webpage detailing more exact expectations (e.g. tours do not interact with wildlife, swim in waterfall pools, etc.).
 - ☐ Printed or web-based materials detailing the principles of sustainable tourism.
 - ☐ Printed or web-based material detailing the steps that the operator has taken to improve company's environmental impact.
 - ☐ The benefits of Sustainable Tour Operator certification to the environment and community.
 - ☐ Print or web-based materials detailing key sustainability aspects and issues in the area and guest recommendations on how to make a positive contribution (e.g. illegal souvenirs, cultural habits).

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

6. Community Engagement

The principle: Tour operators extend aloha and kokua to support the community and assist with local efforts to protect the natural and cultural resources of Hawai'i.

6.1 Civic Engagement and Giving

6.1.1 Advocate for Socially and Environmentally Responsible Behaviors

The principle: Tour operator works with policymakers and/or stakeholders, including competitors to increase adoption of social and environmental standards or voluntary practices within the tourism sector.

- ☐ [Adequate] In the past 2 years, tour operator has:
- ☐ Offered support of social or environmental legislation and/or efforts in name and/or signed petitions.
- ☐ [Good] In addition to the above, in the last 5 years, operator has [must check **at least one** of the following]:
- ☐ Provided active staff time or financial support to social/environmental legislation or efforts.
 - ☐ Worked with other members of the industry on a cooperative initiative.
 - ☐ Actively participated in or facilitated community discussions (e.g. holds Board positions with local non-profits or community groups).
 - ☐ Shared experiences and best practices concerning sustainable tourism within the industry and to stakeholders.
- ☐ [Excellent] In addition to satisfying the requirements for Adequate and Good categories, in the past 5 years, operator has [must check **at least one** of the following]:
- ☐ Directly introduced, testified, made recommendations, or provided expertise to advance standards.
 - ☐ Played a key role in efforts that have resulted specific institutional, industry, or regulatory reform.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

6.1.2 Supporting Charitable Organizations

[Required] Please describe how your organization has supported nonprofit organizations, agencies, and/or activities that promote the host culture and/or local environmental efforts in the past 12 months (e.g. cash or in-kind donations, volunteer time, etc.). _____

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0 pt)

☐ Adequate (5 pt)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

6.1.3 Total Number of Volunteer Service Hours

[Optional – Not Scored] Please report (estimates are acceptable) the total number of hours that were volunteered by employees of the organization during the last fiscal year.

Total number of hours volunteered: _____

6.2 Local Involvement

6.2.1 Local Ownership

The principle: Business owners who live and work in the community where their business operates are responsive to the needs of employees, the community, and the environment.

☐ [Adequate] 10-25% of the company's ownership is located locally within the state of Hawai'i.

☐ [Good] 25-50% of the company's ownership is located locally within the state of Hawai'i.

☐ [Excellent] 50%+ of the company's ownership is located locally within the state of Hawai'i.

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts)

☐ Adequate (1pt)

☐ Good (3pts)

☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

6.2.2 Spending on Local Products

What percentage of your company's expenditures on products was spent on products produced in Hawai'i?

- ☐ [Adequate] 5-24%
- ☐ [Good] 25-49%
- ☐ [Excellent] 50-100%

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

6.2.3 Spending on Local Services

Sustainable tourism supports a local workforce. What percentage of your company's expenditures on services (e.g. staff and/or employees) was spent on Hawai'i-based labor, Hawai'i-based service contracts, or Hawai'i-based businesses that provide labor services?

- ☐ [Adequate] 25-49%
- ☐ [Good] 50-79%
- ☐ [Excellent] 80-100%

For Evaluator Use Only:

☐ Inadequate (0pts) ☐ Adequate (1pt) ☐ Good (3pts) ☐ Excellent (5pts)

Score (total points): _____

Notes:

Acknowledgment Page

I acknowledge that:

1. Our business complies with all federal, state and city permits and laws.
2. All the measures identified on this checklist are currently implemented by our business.
3. All the information contained herein and information attached to this application is true and correct.
4. I have read and understand the Process for Receiving and Addressing Complaints Brought Against Certified Tour Operators policy (see **Appendix B**).

I hereby certify that the statements and information in this application form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and agree that the Hawaii Ecotourism Association reserves the right to immediately and automatically revoke Certification if our operation is found to be in violation of the HEA Checklist standards and any fees paid will not be eligible for refund.

Please sign and print your name

Signature

Date

Print Name

Title

Please upload and email completed checklist and supporting materials to
certification@hawaiiecotourism.org.

Upon submission, an HEA Evaluator will review your application and contact you
to schedule a site visit.

Appendix A: Suggested List of Items to Submit with Application

All items submitted to HEA will be kept confidential and are only intended for verification purposes. Photographic evidence will often suffice.

Mandatory

- ✓ Completed and Signed Checklist
- ✓ Sustainability Commitment Statement (website url)
- ✓ Proof of commitment of 2 (minimum) hands-on, in-kind, and/or financial contributions to statewide and/or local community based environmental conservation outcomes over the previous 12 months.
- ✓ Proof of commitment of 2 (minimum) hands-on, in-kind, and/or financial contributions to the local community and have attempted to reduce economic leakage out of the community over the previous 12 months.
- ✓ Marketing materials (i.e., brochure, pre-arrival handouts, print out of website, etc.).
- ✓ Proof of reference material for interpretation provided to guests (i.e., journal articles, professional references, etc.)
- ✓ List and/or copy of Tour Permits, Licenses, Permits

Recommended

- ✓ Any company policies and procedures relating to the company's environmentally sustainable practices (lighting, landscaping, water consumption & usage, noise management, air quality, waste management, energy management, or transportation)
- ✓ Fire Prevention and Management Plan
- ✓ Emergency/Rescue Management Plan
- ✓ Other Risk Management Documents
- ✓ Guide Training Manuals and Sign-in Sheets
- ✓ List of First Aid Certified Employees, and certificates
- ✓ Safety and Emergency Preparedness Manuals
- ✓ Information provided to guests regarding proper behavior and their responsibilities when visiting natural areas and encountering wildlife, and any other handouts or signage provided to guests regarding natural resources management
- ✓ Information provided to guests regarding cultural protocols, practices, and sensitivities
- ✓ Training that staff has attended regarding Hawaiian cultural training
- ✓ Training Manuals and sources for cultural and environmental trainings
- ✓ Customer Satisfaction Survey
- ✓ Copies or evidence of Certification/Recognition by other 3rd party organizations (i.e. B Corporation, LEED Certification, EnergyStar, Hawaii Green Business Program, Kuleana Green Business Program, ISO 14000)
- ✓ Company Sustainability Plan

Appendix B: Process for Receiving and Addressing Complaints Brought Against Certified Tour Operators

Certified Tour Operators (CTO's) that have achieved Sustainable Tour Operator Certification and utilize the Sustainable Tour Operator Certification Seal are expected to adhere to the operator standards laid forth in Sustainable Tourism Certification Program Checklist (hereinafter "Checklist").

Although these standards are clearly stated in the Checklist, Hawai'i Ecotourism Association (HEA) recognizes that complaints may be brought against CTO's by the public, other tour operations, and/or local authorities.

To appropriately and fairly address any complaints that are brought against CTO's, HEA adheres to processes outline below. If a Tour Operator is found to be in direct violation of Federal, State, or County laws, or is participating in activities that put their guests and/or staff in immediate danger, HEA reserves the right to immediately and automatically revoke Certification and any fees paid are not eligible for refund.

Complaints Filed by Members of the Public or Tour Operators

- 1) Complainant contacts HEA with a notification of complaint.
- 2) Program Manager contacts complainant directly and completes **Form 2: Complaint Form** per conversation(s) with complainant.
 - a) Program Manager sends completed form to complainant for final review and signature.
 - b) Along with completion of **Form 2**, complainant is requested to submit supplemental information which substantiate the complaint (e.g. photos, videos, etc.).
 - c) HEA respects the privacy of complainants. Complainants' names will not be released outside of the Board of Directors unless necessary and required by the circumstances.
- 3) Program Manager contacts CTO to discuss complaint and completes **Form 3: Tour Operator Rebuttal to Complaint**. Program Manager sends completed **Form 3** to CTO for final review and signature.
- 4) Program Manager submits completed **Form 2** and **Form 3** to HEA Board of Directors for review. If the complaint concerns issues related to licensing, permitting, or similar violations, HEA will follow up with the appropriate authorities.
- 5) **Non-Violations:** If the Board of Directors determines that the CTO is **not** in violation of HEA Checklist standards, the following actions will be taken:
 - a) Program Manager will complete and file **Form 4** with "Finding of No Violation" in the Tour Operator's file.
 - b) Program manager will follow up with regarding the decision with both the Tour Operator and complainant regarding the final decision.
- 6) **Gross Violations:** If the Board of Directors determines that the CTO is in gross violation of the HEA Checklist standards, the following actions will be taken:
 - Program Manager discusses complaint in detail with Tour Operator.
 - Tour Operator is issued a "Notice of Certification Revoked."
 - Notice of revocation of Tour Operator's Certification (**Form 4**) is included in the Tour Operator's file.
 - Any fees paid will are not eligible for refund.

- Tour Operator must remove all marketing related to certification, including marketing related to certification in prior year,
- Tour Operator is not eligible for new Certification for a twenty-four (24) month period following a final determination.
- To again obtain a new Certification, the Tour Operator must complete the Certification Process in its entirety.

Gross violations may include, but are not limited to, Operating Illegally (permits, etc.), Intentional Evaluator deception, Gross Safety Negligence, etc.

7) **Standard Violations:** If the violation is considered to be in violation of HEA Checklist standards, the following actions will be taken:

- **Offense 1:**
 - Program Manager discusses complaint in detail with CTO.
 - CTO is issued a “Notice of Warning” and is requested to remedy the complaint immediately.
 - Notice of Warning (**Form 4**) is included in Tour Operator’s HEA file.
- **Offense 2:**
 - Program Manager discusses complaint in detail with Tour Operator.
 - Tour Operator is issued a second “Notice of Warning” and is requested to remedy the complaint immediately.
 - The second Warning (**Form 4**) is included in Tour Operator’s HEA file
 - Tour Operator is notified that are no longer eligible for basic “recertification” and instead must complete a full “recertification” when their annual certification comes up for review.
 - Tour Operator is notified that a third complaint will result in revocation of Tour Operator’s certification.
- **Offense 3:**
 - Program Manager discusses complaint in detail with Tour Operator.
 - Tour Operator is issued a “Notice of Certification Revoked.”
 - Notice of revocation of Tour Operator’s Certification (**Form 4**) is included in the Tour Operator’s file.
 - Any fees paid will are not eligible for refund.
 - Tour Operator must removed all marketing related to certification, including marketing related to certification in prior year.
 - Tour Operator is not eligible for new Certification for a twelve (12) month period following a final determination.
 - To again obtain a new Certification, the Tour Operator must complete the Certification Process in its entirety.
- **Violation Calendar:**
 - Violations are accumulated on a rolling twenty-four (24) month revolving calendar basis.
 - Violations more than twenty-four (24) months old will be held on file, but will not count towards the “Offense” count.

- 8) **Non-Violations:** If the Board of Directors determines that the CTO is **not** in violation of HEA Checklist standards, the following actions will be taken:
 - a) Program Manager will complete and file **Form 4** with “Finding of No Violation” in the Tour Operator’s file.
 - b) Program manager will follow up with regarding the decision with both the Tour Operator and complainant regarding the final decision.

Complaints Filed by State, County and/or Federal Authorities

- 1) Complainant contacts HEA with a notification of complaint. Depending on nature of complaint, HEA reserves the right to revoke Tour Operator’s Certification immediately. Certification may be reinstated once the Complaint Process has been completed and a Finding of No Violation is determined or Board of Directors (with the consent of the agency) determine that issuing a Warning to Tour Operator is sufficient.
- 2) Program Manager contacts complainant directly and completes **Form 2: Complaint Form** per conversation(s) with complainant. Program Manager sends completed form to complainant for final review and signature. Along with completion of **Form 2**, complainant is requested to submit supplemental information which substantiate the complaint (e.g. photos, videos, etc.).
- 3) Program Manager contacts Tour Operator to discuss complaint and completes **Form 3: Tour Operator Response to Complaint**. Program Manager sends completed **Form 3** to Tour Operator for final review and signature.
- 4) Program Manager submits completed **Form 2** and **Form 3** to HEA Board of Directors for review.
- 5) Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Board of Directors will work with agency representatives to determine if Tour Operator will be issued a “Notice of Warning,” or if it is considered a Gross Violation resulting in the immediate revocation of their Certification.
- 6) If a Tour Operator receives a Standard Violation, the will violation will be handled according the the process identified in Section 6: Standard Violations above.
- 7) **Non-Violations:** If the Board of Directors determines that the CTO is **not** in violation of HEA Checklist standards, the following actions will be taken:
 - a) Program Manager will complete and file **Form 4** with “Finding of No Violation” in the Tour Operator’s file.
 - b) Program manager will follow up with regarding the decision with both the Tour Operator and complainant regarding the final decision.

Appendix C: Sample Sustainability Commitment Statement

*Note: Operators may choose where to include their Sustainability Commitment Statement on their website. Many operators include it on their “About” page, while others have chosen to create a separate page dedicated to detailing the operator’s sustainable initiatives.

Sustainability Commitment Statement

_____(Insert Company Name)_____ promotes the sustainability of our island environments and communities. We are committed to protecting, preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of Hawai‘i by adhering to the following sustainability principles:

- **Environmental Management** – We employ environmentally sustainable practices to ensure that our activities do not degrade the environment. For example, we take steps to minimize our water use, greenhouse gas emissions, noise pollution, waste generation, and hazardous materials.
- **Staff Management** – We hire guides and staff based on their knowledge and qualifications in the field of sustainable tourism, provide accurate and appropriate training to ensure quality of ecotourism experience to guests, and encourage staff professional development.
- **Interpretation Management** – We provide all guests with accurate information and foster a better understanding and appreciation of the ecological and cultural heritage of Hawai‘i and the places being visited.
- **Customer and Employee Evaluation** – We continuously monitor and analyze our operations and act upon the feedback provided by guests and employees to ensure that our products meet or exceed consumer expectations.
- **Marketing Execution** - We provide accurate and complete information in promotional materials before the tour to ensure that guest expectations are appropriate and allow for pre-departure learning. We avoid marketing that misrepresents or disrespects the resources.
- **Community Engagement** – We extend aloha and kokua to support the community and assist with local efforts to protect the natural and cultural resources of Hawai‘i.

For more information about Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association’s Certified Sustainable Tour Operator program, visit www.hawaiiecotourism.org.

Appendix D: Natural and Cultural Resources Education and Training

Cultural Interpretation and Training

- **Statewide**
 - **Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association**
<https://www.nahha.com/>
2 to 4-hour cultural sensitivity training for managers and staff.
Type: In-house, personalized workshops. NaHHA will travel to any island to host training.
Cost: FREE
Contact: Malia Sanders at malia@nahha.com

Natural Resources Interpretation and Training

- **Kauai**
 - **Kauai Community College**
<http://kauai.hawaii.edu/programs.html>
Offers various courses related to marine science, botany, hospitality, and Hawaiian studies.
Type: College courses
Cost: Varies
Contact: 808-245-8311
 - **Ocean Awareness Training**
<https://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/education/oceanawareness.html>
<http://www.cosee-ie.net/programs/oat/>
Participants are required to take part in all training sessions (~15 hours of instruction), and a three-hour field project in order to receive C.O.R.A.L. certification (Care of our Culture, Oceans, Reefs and Animal Life). Training topics include marine ecology of the Hawaiian Islands, protected species, threats to coastal and marine environments, marine life identification and more.
Type: Public Workshop
Cost: FREE
Contact: Online Registration and further details are available at:
<http://www.oceanawarehawaii.org/>
 - **Eyes on the Reef**
www.eorhwaii.org
2 to 3-hour public workshops designed to help the public recognize coral bleaching, disease, and invasive species and where to report.
Type: Public Workshop
Cost: FREE
Contact: Please check the Eyes of the Reef website (www.eorhwaii.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/eyesofthereef) for an upcoming training in your area.
- **Oahu**
 - **Hawai'i Marine Animal Stewards**
h-mar.org/get-involved/become-a-corporate-sponsor-or-partner/

1 to 2-hour training for owners, operators and their employees on basic natural history, behavior and interaction guidelines for 5 key species – Hawaiian monk seals, Green turtles, Hawksbill turtles, Spinner dolphins and Humpback whales.

Type: In-house, personalized workshops

Cost: FREE

Contact: Jon Gelman (808) 626-5295 or email jon.gelman@h-mar.org

Book a Training: <http://h-mar.org>

- **Ocean Awareness Training**

<https://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/education/oceanawareness.html>

<http://www.cosee-ie.net/programs/oat/>

Participants are required to take part in all training sessions (~15 hours of instruction), and a three-hour field project in order to receive C.O.R.A.L. certification (Care of our Culture, Oceans, Reefs and Animal Life). Training topics include marine ecology of the Hawaiian Islands, protected species, threats to coastal and marine environments, marine life identification and more.

Type: Public Workshop

Cost: FREE

Contact: Online Registration and further details are available at:

<http://www.oceanawarehawaii.org/>

- **Eyes on the Reef**

www.eorhwaii.org

2 to 3-hour public workshops designed to help the public recognize coral bleaching, disease, and invasive species and where to report.

Type: Public Workshop

Cost: FREE

Contact: Please check the Eyes of the Reef website (www.eorhwaii.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/eyesofthereef) for an upcoming training in your area.

- **Numerous courses and classes related to environmental and natural resources are offered through Oahu's many college campuses and associated organizations.**

- **Maui**

- **Maui Mauka Conservation Awareness Training**

www.mauimauka.org/

3-hour training that provides tour operators and guides with an effective way to communicate information to Maui visitors about the species and environments of Hawai'i.

Type: Public courses scheduled throughout the year and in-house, personalized trainings

Cost: FREE

Contact: Laura Berthold (808) 573-0280 or email laura@mauiforestbirds.org

Book a Training: <https://www.mauimauka.org/trainings>

- **WaterStory Workshop**

West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership

2-hour, interactive and participatory session that is designed to educate Maui residents about the history of water in Maui, current issues, factors affecting supply and demand, and planning efforts to address the future.

Type: In-house, personalized workshops

Cost: FREE

Contact: Kim Thayer (808) 661-6600 or email thayer@westmauiwatershed.org

- **Eyes on the Reef**

www.eorhwaii.org

2 to 3-hour public workshops designed to help the public recognize coral bleaching, disease, and invasive species and where to report.

Type: Public Workshop

Cost: FREE

Contact: Please check the Eyes of the Reef website (www.eorhwaii.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/eyesofthereef) for an upcoming training in your area.

- **Hawai'i Island**

- **Ocean Awareness Training**

<https://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/education/oceanawareness.html>

<http://www.cosee-ie.net/programs/oat/>

Participants are required to take part in all training sessions (~15 hours of instruction), and a three-hour field project in order to receive C.O.R.A.L. certification (Care of our Culture, Oceans, Reefs and Animal Life). Training topics include marine ecology of the Hawaiian Islands, protected species, threats to coastal and marine environments, marine life identification and more.

Type: Public Workshop

Cost: FREE

Contact: Online Registration and further details are available at:

<http://www.oceanawarehawaii.org/>

- **Eyes on the Reef**

www.eorhwaii.org

2 to 3-hour public workshops designed to help the public recognize coral bleaching, disease, and invasive species and where to report.

Type: Public Workshop

Cost: FREE

Contact: Please check the Eyes of the Reef website (www.eorhwaii.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/eyesofthereef) for an upcoming training in your area.

Appendix E: Interpretation Resources

HEA believes that proper interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of Hawai'i is a critical aspect of sustainable tourism. Staff trainings and workshops are available both in-person and online. There are also options to receive internationally recognized certifications for interpretation.

Industry Recognized Guide and Interpretation Certifications

- **Certification for Professional Tour Guides (Hawai'i)**
<https://continuinged.kapiolani.hawaii.edu/certification-for-tour-guides/>
This certification recognizes that a professional tour guide has met the required knowledge, skills, and competencies that align with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority's Professional Standards. The Certification program was developed by Kapi'olani Community College and offered at the following college campuses (please contact campuses directly for course offerings and more information):
 - Kapi'olani Community College (808) 734-9000
 - University of Hawai'i, Maui College's EdVenture Program (808) 984-3231
 - Kaua'i Community College (808) 245-8311
 - Hawai'i Island (808) 934-2500
- **National Association for Interpretation offers multiple interpretation certifications. Certification courses are currently offered through UH Maui College, public courses, and in-house trainings with Hawai'i-based independent trainers (see below).** More information about Certified Interpretive Guide and Certified Interpretive Host courses can be found at:
www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Overview/nai/certification/NAI_Certification.aspx?hkey=fa8b1be4-ee12-436d-ac61-7cdd7efd3926
 - **Certified Interpretive Guide (tour guides)**
This course is designed for anyone who delivers interpretive programs to the public or guests. It combines both theoretical foundations of the profession with practical skills and tools. The Certification is internationally recognized and utilized by tour operators, National Park Rangers, State Parks, aquariums, zoos, and nature centers across the world.
 - **Certified Interpretive Host (front-desk, retail staff, receptionists, greeters, etc.)**
This course is designed for staff and volunteers at interpretive sites who have public contact but don't usually deliver interpretive programs. The course combines customer service with informal interpretation to help participants improve their responses to guests, while also helping achieve stewardship goals of the organization.
- **Professional Interpretation Certificate Program**
Offered by the Eppley Institute: <https://eppley.org/news-2/part-one-of-professional-interpretation-certificate-program-now-available/>

Hawai'i-based Interpretation Trainers

- Lauren Blickley
Lauren@swellconsultingservice.com
808-280-4736
Offering in-house and customized interpretive and customer service trainings, with the option of industry recognized certifications.

National Association for Interpretation Certification course options:
 - Certified Interpretive Guide
 - Certified Interpretive Host

Online Interpretation Courses and Workshops

- **The Heritage Interpretation Training Center**
Offers 39 college level heritage interpretation courses, from basic introductory for tour guides to courses to advanced interpretive training for managers.
http://www.heritageinterp.com/interpretive_training_center_course_catalogue_.html
- **Be A Better Guide Online and Customized Training**
Offers free videos and options to purchase or customize training specific to tour operators
www.beabetterguide.com
- **Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands**
Offers a range of free and curriculum-based training. Though geared toward parks and public lands officials, includes information and insight for tour operators.
<https://eppley.org/news-2/part-one-of-professional-interpretation-certificate-program-now-available/>
<http://idp.eppley.org/training/developmental/tools/curriculum-based-programs>

Appendix F: Recertification and Pono Traveler Assessments

Recertification

Certification is valid for 1 year. Each Certified Tour Operator must complete an annual recertification process to maintain current standing as a Certified Sustainable Tour Operator. The Annual Certification Fee (see page 3 of this Checklist and based on number of full time employees) covers the cost of recertification.

Yearly recertification takes place in September of each year and is based upon the following:

- Submitted certification checklist
- Phone interview with HEA's Program Manager
- Participation in Pono Traveler assessments (see below)

Certified Tour Operators will be contacted in August to reserve their phone interview slot in September. The phone interview last approximately one (1) hour and covers updates and/or improvements that the Certified Tour Operator has made to their operations since the previous year. HEA's goal is for Certified Tour Operators to continually improve their programs and tours and set high standards for the tourism industry in Hawai'i. The phone interview will additionally review the feedback from the Pono Traveler Assessment and provide the latest updates about HEA's programs and opportunities.

Pono Traveler Assessments

Overview

Pono Travelers are HEA members that participate in the recertification process of Certified Sustainable Tour Operators. Pono Travelers conduct evaluations of tour operators and provide constructive feedback from the perspective of a sustainably-minded traveler. They evaluate tours for authenticity, quality of program and information, safety, & enjoyableness. Pono Travelers anonymously book their tour with the Tour Operator and participate in the tour. After the tour, Pono Travelers provide feedback about the tour and Tour Operator. This feedback is reviewed with the Tour Operator during the annual recertification phone call. For more information, visit <https://www.hawaiiecotourism.org/get-involved/pono-traveler/>.

Pono Traveler Costs for Tour Operators

Each September (after completing the phone interview with HEA's Program Manager), Certified Tour Operators are invoiced the cost of 2 seats for Pono Travelers. HEA does not accept "comp" tickets for Pono Traveler assessments.