

ECO LODGES - GUIDELINES

For Registration with Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

1.0 Definition

Eco lodges is a visitor accommodation facility meeting minimum standards, designed and custom built in pristine natural locations, often of significant ecological importance, having strong programs of conservation protecting the environment from pollution and degradation, using technologies to reduce energy consumption and waste, having ethical employment practices and strong measures to pass on tangible socio economic benefits to the neighbouring local communities. Commonly use best practice by eco lodges **“Leave nothing but foot prints and take nothing but memories”**.

2.0 Location

Eco lodges are located in a natural area, or in a remote area close to the natural area, away from town/cities, free of noise, traffic, smog and pollution.

3.0 Access

Access to the eco lodges must be keeping in line with the environment and locality.

4.0 Size

Eco lodges are usually small and must be less than 30 rooms and the number of rooms must be limited according to the physical carrying capacity of the site.

5.0 Building

- 5.1 Employ an eco-friendly design where the architectural features shall be compatible with the natural landscape and surrounding vegetation in harmony
- 5.2 The building shall not be conspicuous from outside which may adversely impact the view from other scenic locations in the vicinity. The height of any building shall be below the height of the natural tree line in the location or (G+1) whichever is lower.
- 5.3 Employ systems that protect the environment from pollution and degradation
- 5.4 Utilise recycled materials or recyclable materials for construction
- 5.5 Utilise locally available material and local building practices where practical without impacting the environment
- 5.6 The Architectural style must be consistent with the environmental philosophy and use local traditional building forms where possible.
- 5.7 Employ passive design techniques to create comfortable internal spaces minimizing the need for artificial cooling and heating
- 5.8 Use traditional construction technology from the area to a level of maximum possibility.
- 5.9 In air-conditioned areas where the outdoor temperature can become acceptably cool, provide facilities to open the windows to utilize natural cooling by providing an additional S/S mesh window pane that can be closed to keep the insects away.
- 5.10 Employ energy saving technology and where possible use renewable energy sources
- 5.11 Employ ‘Green Building’ concepts

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- 5.12 The design must give due consideration for possible natural disasters such as floods, landslides, storms etc in the locality
- 5.13 The use of stuffed or caged specimens of local or other wildlife as decor must be avoided
- 5.14 Provision of facilities for disabled persons where practically possible is encouraged
- 5.15 A separate service entrance is recommended to be made available

6.0 Entrance and Reception

- 6.1 The entrance shall be in harmony with the environment. It must provide reasonable protection from weather for guests arriving at the premises. Lighting must be designed to minimize the effects on the environment and nocturnal life.
- 6.2 The reception must be in harmony with the theme of the Eco Lodge. Adequate seating must be available for the guests till checking in procedures are completed.
- 6.3 The reception area must have very good natural ventilation. Measures must be in place to minimize the ingress of insects particularly at night time, to avoid the need for other measures to control the insects.

7.0 Bed Rooms

- 7.1 The bed room must be adequate in size to provide the required space for the necessary furniture, guest's luggage, and internal movement. (preferably Minimum area of Bed room shall be 20 sqm)
- 7.2 Adequate comfortable seating with dedicated reading lamps must be available for reading inside the bed room
- 7.3 Lighting inside the bed room must be adequate but shall not cause light pollution that could disturb nocturnal life. The provision of a dedicated night lamp is strongly recommended to prevent the using of normal room lighting in the night to minimize light pollution
- 7.4 Natural ventilation and passive cooling must be used as far as practically possible. While allowing for natural ventilation in the bed room, adequate measures must be in place to ensure that the bed room is free of insects
- 7.5 Air-conditioning or heating must be provided only where it is absolutely necessary. Highly energy efficient systems must be used where the above facilities are provided.
- 7.6 Facilities such as keyless safe, silent minibars, tea coffee making facilities is recommended to be made available for guests
- 7.7 Adequate reading materials on the locality, environment, the property and other interesting features, must be made available in the bed room
- 7.8 Soap, shampoo and other toiletries used must be bio-degradable. The use of refillable dispensers are strongly recommended to minimise waste and pollution
- 7.9 Running hot and cold water with mixing taps must be available at least for the shower. All measures must be in place to minimize the water consumption. Use of water saving fixtures is strongly advocated. Avoid 'dead legs' in the hot water system that would result in excessive water flow to the waste to obtain hot water at the tap.

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- 7.10 Where the use of communication equipment such as mobile phones, tabs, laptops are not discouraged, provide a universal socket outlet, not controlled by the key tag switch at the bedside and the table for charging of such appliances. Display a sticker prominently to inform that the socket outlet is bypassing the key tag switch to prevent manipulation of the switch by the guests
- 7.11 Bed linen and towels must be of very good quality and the use of locally produced linen where practical is recommended.
- 7.12 Prominently display a notice on Towel replacement policy to reduce the frequency of replacement of towels. The policy must encourage the re use of towels by the guests.
- 7.13 Have a guide book on the property and policies regarding energy & sustainability in the room for reading by the guests and encourage them to actively participate.

8.0 Restaurants and Food Service

- 8.1 Create a restaurant ambience with local artisan décor using local resources and natural decorations while encouraging the use of local workforce.
- 8.2 Encourage the use of local antique or handmade artisan furniture made by locals with local materials found around the area table ware (Ex: reeds/ pan/ mats and coconut shell products) in the restaurant and Bar.
- 8.3 Seek knowledge from the elders in the local community about greeting traditions and ethos that are common in the area and incorporate those traditions into the eco lodge.
- 8.4 Seek knowledge of traditional means of entertainment from the locals around the area and encourage to incorporate it to the restaurant. This may include folk songs, rituals and folk stories.
- 8.5 Restaurant facilities must not be made available for non-resident guests to minimise the traffic to the property.
- 8.6 Encourage to have A' la Carte or Set menu & discourage buffet service.
- 8.7 At least one locally produced food item that is prevalent in the area must be highlighted in the food menu and dishes consisting of the said products must be available in the menu. Encouraging the use of local food by the tourism industry can reduce conflict in the symbiosis between the local economy and the Eco lodge.
- 8.8 Encourage to use fusion dishes with local ingredients picked from local farms and home gardens to provide a special meal experience that will be unique to the specific area.
- 8.9 The use of environmentally friendly crockery must be encouraged
- 8.10 Steps must be taken to prevent animals and birds from coming in to the restaurant and taking away food left unattended. Guests must be strongly discouraged from feeding animals by explaining why it is wrong.

9.0 Kitchen

- 9.1 The Kitchen should be designed considering SLOW food (Sustainable, Local, Organic and Whole) lifestyles in mind while adhering to the food safety standards.
- 9.2 While kitchen appliances for storing of fresh produce are made available, priority must be given where applicable to gather locally sourced fresh food and ingredients

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from around the area to use on the same day as gathered. The kitchen equipment should be designed with sustainability in mind and to balance the requirement of making standard food items as well to help with preparing unique dishes and ingredients.

- 9.3 An open hearth cooking facility using traditional methods may be used.
- 9.4 Very good hygiene standards must be maintained throughout the kitchen. No open drains must be provided inside the kitchen.
- 9.5 Where a conventional hot range is provided an exhaust canopy with grease filter must be provided. A fire blanket must be provided.
- 9.6 A pot-wash consisting of a stainless steel sink with hot and cold water via a mixer tap must be provided at a location away from the food preparation area.
- 9.7 The local products being used are encouraged to be bought locally and must not be outsourced from other areas to decrease leakage of the local economy while preserving the quality food traditions.
- 9.8 Must always prioritize in purchasing and using the ingredients being grown in farms or home gardens by local villagers or communities around the area of the eco lodge.
- 9.9 Encourage to seek knowledge from elders in the local community about the traditional foods and rare ingredients around the area while incentivising locals to gather and provide ingredients to the eco lodge and ensuring compensation as necessary.
- 9.10 Raw food items and ingredients are encouraged to be wrapped in leaves when packing and delivering around to Eco lodge.
- 9.11 When delivering and receiving stock items and food items, encourage the use of bicycles for the transportation of items to reduce the carbon footprint.
- 9.12 All relevant food items where necessary, are encouraged to be cooked and/or wrapped and served in leaves like lotus, banana, grape, Areca nut leaves (Kola Potha) and bamboo leaves. The leaf-wrapped package not only protects the food inside from direct flame, it also forms a tight package to hold in heat and allow the food to steep in its own juices. In addition, the aromatic leaves can add a subtle flavour of their own to the dish.
- 9.13 Any gastronomic activities such as food trails and farm or home garden visits that maybe conducted by the eco lodge at natural areas should contribute to the conservation or preservation of the natural areas and the local cultures. Such activities should promote awareness and appreciation towards the diversity in both the area and the local community. Thus, the activities carried out are to improve local communities' welfare by boosting their social and economic development.
- 9.14 Encourage the use of local pots and pans as well as local furnaces for cooking methods where necessary. Indigenous local food must be promoted to draw new tourists to the destination, traditional 'landscapes' of farming methods are to be showcased for the tourist's experience.
- 9.15 Encourage to serve food items in banana leaves, Areca nut leaves (Kola Potha) and other used leaves to reduce the use of plates resulting in less water consumption used for cleaning and ensure biodegradable waste.
- 9.16 Encourage the use of glass bottles and re use other useful containers to serve beverages throughout the eco lodge and make use of innovative designs for the bottle to make decorations.
- 9.17 Suitable glass/dish washing machine/facilities with running hot and cold water shall be made available in the kitchen, where water is scarce, encourage the dishes

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and utensils to be cleaned in the traditional method of washing by hand and soaking in hot water for a set amount of time and encourage the use of local workforce for labour.

9.18 An ice cube making machine connected to a UV sterilizer must be available.

10.0 Safety and Security

10.1 Fire detection and /or protection system complying with the local regulations shall be available.

10.2 Adequate 'First Aid Facilities' with essential lifesaving drugs such as anti-venom, and anti-allergy (insect bites) must be available. Adequate number of staff must be trained in the administration of such medication. Adequate notices must be displayed to advise the guests on steps to be taken and emergency contacts if the necessity arises. The use of indigenous practices approved by the authorities may also be used.

10.3 A doctor must be available on call at all times

10.4 If the property is identified to be in a lightning strike risk zone (such as on an isolated hillock, in the middle of a meadow etc.) adequate protection to prevent direct lightning strikes must be installed

10.5 In sea side locations adequate precautions must be in place for the safety of guests. Where the use of the sea is considered to be dangerous, adequate and effective measures must be in place to warn the guests and to prevent them getting in to the sea. Adequate emergency lifesaving equipment and trained life guards must be available when such facilities are used by guests

10.6 Where the risk of entry of wild animals in to the property exists, the guests must be effectively and adequately informed of same. Guests must be escorted by staff with adequate knowledge to identify potential risks particularly at night. Guests must be advised and discouraged from venturing out un-escorted where the risk of coming in contact with wild animals exist.

10.7 Walkways must be adequately lit, while minimizing the impact on the sensitive environment, to ensure safety of guests in the night

10.8 Safety security warning/ information notices, signage shall be in places where necessary.

11.0 Waste Disposal

11.1 Kitchen wastewater must be processed through an effective fat trap to minimize the impact on the environment. The collected fat must either be used for composting or carefully disposed of with other food waste. The fat must be removed at regular intervals to avoid septic conditions from setting in.

11.2 Adequate and functional effluent treatment systems must be in placed based on the total volume of effluents and the sensitivity of the environment.

11.3 The use of correctly designed Septic Tanks with adequate soakage may be considered for small properties and where soakage is practical and does not affect the natural water bodies.

11.4 For larger installations and where septic tanks are not practical, an effluent treatment system must be installed. The systems must be designed so that the treated effluent can be reused or safely discharged as per the Environmental

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- regulations. The Effluent Treatment System must be very energy efficient and the quality of the treated effluent must be regularly monitored and records maintained
- 11.5 Food waste must be kept in a lockable area until disposal to prevent attracting of wild life and/or allowing access
 - 11.6 All biodegradable solid waste must be composted. (Exception – Where regular solid waste collection by the local authorities exist). Measures must be in place to prevent attracting wild life to the waste disposal process. Waste disposal location shall not be accessible to wild life and located far from any natural water sources. Such disposal systems shall not be located in an area where the water table is very high and pollution of ground water is possible.
 - 11.7 Non-biodegradable waste must be carefully sorted, preferably at source, and disposed for re-cycling. Such waste must be kept in a fully enclosed area until disposed of
 - 11.8 Ensure that the waste disposal system is fool proof and is accessible to guests to demonstrate the effectiveness of the processes in place

12.0 Staff & Training

- 12.1 Staff must be recruited as far as practical from the area.
- 12.2 Staff must be provided with training on basic aspect of hospitality & meet the product standards.
- 12.3 Comprehensive orientation program with a clear Understanding of Vision mission goals, code of conduct, objectives strategies and tactics to be explained.
- 12.4 Employment of women and marginalized women, minority and marginalized communities, Partial disabilities
- 12.5 Assistance must be provided to women in transport, child care, and allowing flexible working hours.
- 12.6 Encourage cross training and multi skilling
- 12.7 Overall Knowledge including eco concept based training to be rewarded.
- 12.8 Unique practices of the organization must be respected.
- 12.9 A long term objective must be pursued in training for career development of staff and carrying a message on eco-friendly products & eco-tourism.
- 12.10 Staff shall be actively engage with development & implementation of eco-friendly Tourism service and shall be collected staff suggestions, feedback on recommendation for improvement.

13.0 Environment

- 13.1 The use of plastic and polythene must be strongly discouraged. The use of reusable and/or recyclable materials such as glass bottles must be strongly encouraged. Glass water bottles or clay containers must be used inside guest rooms and restaurants. Prevent using single-use plastic. (zero plastic policy & practices)
- 13.2 The guests must be educated on the ‘no plastics’ policy and prevented from carrying any plastic item when entering environmentally sensitive areas, escorted or otherwise
- 13.3 The natural environment shall not be disturbed in anyway. Guests must be very well informed of **“leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but memories”** policy and implementation closely monitored as far as practically possible
- 13.4 The provision of swimming pool is discouraged. (introduction of swimming pool)

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- 13.5 Sound and light pollution must be minimized. The use of loud music for entertainment or otherwise must be avoided. Internal lighting must be shaded as far as practically possible. External lighting (pathway and perimeter lighting if used) must be switched off at a reasonable time in the night to minimize the disturbance to nocturnal life.
- 13.6 Guests must be educated on possible environmentally friendly steps that can be taken by them during their stay to minimize the impact on the environment and energy usage
- 13.7 Rain water harvesting must be carried out if a practical use is identified. If not, measures must be taken for rain water to be used for ground water recuperation
- 13.8 The use of chemicals must be minimized. All detergents, cleaning agents and washing products must be bio-degradable. Details of all such products used must be available for scrutiny
- 13.9 Untreated effluent (Grey or black) and any other wastes shall not be discharged in to the sea or any other water bodies
- 13.10 A policy must be in place to educate suppliers to use only reusable packaging and not use 'single use' packaging when delivering supplies to the hotel. The use of reusable containers such as crates must be encouraged together with bio degradable padding materials.
- 13.11 Any toxic materials brought in to the property for any use must be very carefully stored and any balance materials remaining must be taken out of the premises promptly

14.0 Energy

- 14.1 Energy efficient LED lighting of appropriate colour warmth must be used in all areas of the property
- 14.2 All appliances used must have very good energy ratings
- 14.3 The use of renewable energy must be encouraged. Use of Solar Energy for producing hot water and electricity is strongly recommended
- 14.4 Where other forms of renewable energy such as wind, bio mass etc. is considered a careful environmental study on the impacts must be carried out before implementation
- 14.5 Only water saving fittings and fixtures must be used in the property. The technical details of the fittings used must be available for scrutiny
- 14.6 The use of energy conservation measures such as 'Key Tag' operated Switches in the guest rooms, motion sensor switches for common areas is strongly recommended
- 14.7 Where an emergency generator is used it must be very well sound attenuated together with the exhaust which should use a critical silencer to minimize the sound pollution and disturbance (Recommended sound level to be not more than 75 dBA at 1m distance from the generator)
- 14.8 Clear and accurate records must be maintained on energy consumption to substantiate claims on energy efficiency.

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15.0 Community

- 15.1 All possible steps must be taken for active participation of the community from the very inception of the project
- 15.2 Respect the structure of the community, their language and their concept of time
- 15.3 Promote an understanding of the intrinsic of the property, resources, characteristics and their own cultural values and lifestyles among the local people
- 15.4 Identify the crops and products that can serve and support the property
- 15.5 Promote the development of small local business for sub-contracting for certain services such as local transport, food products, arts and crafts, guiding, tours etc. arrange for guest to visit local producing centres to encourage local producers to market their products.
- 15.6 Facilitate opportunities for employment to the community at all levels of responsibility. Maintain a representative number of local employees at all levels in the organization
- 15.7 Maintain an ongoing program to teach, educate and train local people and employees
- 15.8 Stimulate communities to protect their natural resources. Make the members of the community understand the importance of conservation and its benefits where they will participate in and become proponents of various different projects

16.0 General

- 16.1 Write down a clear policy statement for the project, including the mission, vision & code of conduct. Display it in a prominent place for both visitors and staff to see, explaining of the above should be a part of the welcome of the guests.
- 16.2 Display notices in prominent areas to discourage and prevent guests from feeding wild animals
- 16.3 A comprehensive policy manual encompassing all aspects of operations must be available.
- 16.4 Prepare a booklet giving a brief description of the property, its mission, interesting places in the locality, details of fauna and flora in the neighbourhood, details of the community, places of interest in the community, do's and don'ts. The book to be kept in the guest room for visitors to read.
- 16.5 The rearing of domesticated animals and birds within the hotel premises must be fully avoided to minimize adverse impacts to the fauna of the location
- 16.6 Proper documentation must be maintained on all aspects including local procurement, sustainable goals and energy conservation.
- 16.7 Guests must be encouraged to participate in all sustainable and eco-friendly activities conducted by the hotel.

17. Guest Satisfaction Ratings

- 17.1. Achieve very good online guest satisfaction feedback and in-house guest satisfaction survey feedback. Documentary evidence must be available
- 17.2. Overall service standards of the hotel in all departments shall be maintained at a high level.