



# BIOSPHERE ADHESION GUIDE

STAKEHOLDERS

# THOMPSON OKANAGAN DRIVE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

*"Take only memories,  
leave only footprints."*

- CHIEF SEATTLE

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) is one of six Regional Destination Management Organizations working under the Super, Natural British Columbia brand.

An industry-led organization, TOTA represents and supports all tourism business and community interests throughout the Thompson Okanagan with a mandate that includes destination development, management, and marketing.

Guided by the 10-Year Regional Strategy "Embracing Our Potential," the association is committed to responsible and sustainable tourism practices. This provides the foundation for ensuring all aspects of destination development are guided by the pillars of sustainability.

It is TOTA's fundamental belief that sustainability encompasses all aspects of social, cultural, environmental, and economic health. These principles are represented throughout the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) Sustainability Criteria, the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Responsible Tourism Institute's Biosphere Program.



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# THOMPSON OKANAGAN VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association's vision is that the Thompson Okanagan will be a highly successful, year-round destination, with a strong and attractive image that is clearly differentiated from its competitors. The region will be well known for the authenticity and quality of its tourism offers, and the cultural and environmental richness and diversity of the areas within it. The industry will be recognized for its commitment to work together to strengthen tourism for the benefit of all.

It is TOTA's mission to stimulate ongoing sustainable growth by embracing the value of tourism through community engagement, innovative leadership in promoting authentic experiences, and inspiring creative collaboration.



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# GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL GLOBAL BASELINE STANDARDS

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council's criteria serves as the global baseline standard for sustainability in travel and tourism. The criteria are used for education, raising awareness, policy development for businesses and government agencies, measurement and evaluation, and as a basis for certification.



The result is a worldwide effort to develop a common language around sustainability in tourism.

Criteria are arranged in four pillars:

- Sustainable Management
- Socioeconomic Impacts
- Cultural Impacts
- Environmental Impacts (including consumption of resources, reducing pollution, and conserving biodiversity and landscapes)

# UNITED NATIONS 17 DEVELOPMENT GOALS



See Appendix for breakdown of  
UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, 193 world leaders agreed to a more sustainable future with the endorsement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These goals have the mandate to fight inequality, reduce climate change, strengthen economic diversity, share authenticity, and protect the natural environment.

The World Tourism Organization adopted these principles as the foundation for a more sustainable tourism industry and has focused on the importance of collaborative efforts within community and regional destinations. These efforts are based on grassroot initiatives that provide benefits to local populations and endorse a global shared vision for responsible development.



# THOMPSON OKANAGAN BIOSPHERE ACCREDITATION

In 2012, the Thompson Okanagan 10-Year Regional Tourism Strategy, "Embracing Our Potential" was completed. The strategy outlined a commitment to responsible and sustainable tourism with a focus on environmental, economic, cultural, and social responsibility.

In 2016, TOTA began the process to determine an international accreditation system that would help guide the regions sustainable development practices. Through an exhaustive approach, TOTA aligned with the Responsible Tourism Institute to obtain the Biosphere Sustainable Destination Certification.

Biosphere is a Sustainable Tourism System certified by the Responsible Tourism Institute, an international accreditation body that maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with UNESCO, is affiliated with the United Nations and World Tourism Organization, and is a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

After completing a detailed action plan, the Thompson Okanagan Region was officially certified as a Biosphere Destination in November 2017, meeting the fundamental requirements within the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals. With this certification, TOTA, in accordance with an interdepartmental committee, partner organizations, and industry stakeholders, will continue to undertake annual action plans and reviews to verify the region's sustainable goals are upheld.



With the Thompson Okanagan Region now certified as a Biosphere Destination, TOTA is implementing an industry-led program whereby tourism stakeholders can commit to the Biosphere principles of sustainability.

The Biosphere Adhesion Program is a collaborative industry effort to uphold responsible tourism development practices, differentiate our region from other global competitors and attract visitors that are seeking authentic, meaningful, and sustainable experiences.

If you are a business, a community organization, a destination management organization, or a funding partner, there are various levels of participation within the Biosphere Program.

# INTRODUCTION TO BIOSPHERE ADHESION





### PRINCIPLE PARTNERS

Leaders in sustainable and responsible tourism management and systems



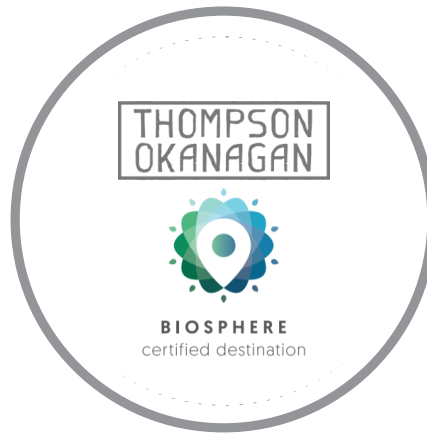
### COMMITTED COMPANIES

Tourism businesses and organizations committed to continuous improvement toward certification



### REGIONAL PARTNERS

Organizations and DMO's committed to the communication, implementation, and promotion of sustainable tourism



### COMMUNITIES

Communities and Organizations committed to supporting the Biosphere Sustainable Tourism efforts



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# PRINCIPLE PARTNERS

## INTERNATIONAL



RESPONSIBLE  
TOURISM  
INSTITUTE



## DOMESTIC



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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# REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT



Regional Tourism Stakeholders provide the foundation for the Biosphere Sustainable Initiative. As a region, we have acquired the Biosphere Accreditation, however, business commitment to the Adhesion Program provides the core element that drives our collaborative sustainable development efforts.

The Business Adhesion Program follows several key principles:

- Facilitating the development of sustainable tourism principles
- Promoting sustainable tourism knowledge and practices
- Building demand for sustainable travel
- Elevating our region's sustainable efforts on the world stage

At the core of this program is the Global Sustainable Tourism criteria, and the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Areas.

# REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT

As a tourism stakeholder within the Thompson Okanagan Region, you have the inclusive opportunity to become a "Committed Company" through the Biosphere Adhesion Initiative.



**BIOSPHERE**  
committed company

## BIOSPHERE ADHESION

- Education and Training
  - Regional Pledge
- 1st Year Requirements
  - Benefits



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# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TRAINING PROGRAM BIOSPHERE COMMITMENT

A core aspect of the Biosphere Adhesion Program is the focus on continued education and training as it pertains to the GSTC core principles and the UNWTO Sustainable Development Goals. As a stakeholder, you will be provided training opportunities through the GSTC's Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP). GSTC offers tailored training options to meet the specific needs of our regional businesses and accommodates various learning and capacity-building requirements.

With the aim of strengthening awareness of sustainable tourism in destinations around the world, the STTP offers an in-depth look into the GSTC Criteria, the global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism. In addition to sharing lessons and ideas with each other, participants will review local and international examples of leading sustainable tourism businesses and destinations.

## TRAINING SEMINAR

STYLE	FACE TO FACE
DURATION	1/2 DAY
SIZE	30+
TRAINER	GSTC TRAINER + LOCAL SPECIALIST



# 1/2 DAY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SEMINAR

## A GROUP SESSION FOCUSED ON SELECT BEST PRACTICE CASES AND KEY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM APPROACHES

The Sustainable Tourism Training Program will be a yearly offering through the Biosphere Commitment. The first Training Sessions will be held October 2018.



## PART I. BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- Relevant industry and consumer trends: opportunities for sustainable tourism practices
- Tangible benefits of sustainability practices beyond cost-saving
- The role of GSTC and Biosphere in tourism development

## PART II. UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE CRITERIA

- Sustainability guidelines: the GSTC Criteria as a framework to support local business standards
- Sustainable tourism strategy: best practices in building and implementing a sustainable tourism destination strategy

## PART III. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Interactive discussions and brainstorming sessions on several key aspects of sustainable tourism development, with the goal of helping stakeholders identify sustainability training and skill-building needs, and the steps for creating a plan to address those needs.





# REGIONAL TOURISM PLEDGE

Another fundamental aspect of the Biosphere Initiative is the Regional Pledge.

While tourism is a great contributor to our economy and can bring with it many positive outcomes, the implications of impact on our environment and social systems can be significant, as witnessed by popular tourism destinations globally.

By investing in the education, management, and development of our destination, by consciously doing our best to protect our natural and cultural resources, we look to increase the long-term viability of our industry and promote responsible and respectful travel as we share with the world this beautiful place we call home.

TOTA is in the process of undergoing consultations to determine a regional pledge. The pledge will be industry and consumer facing and will encourage responsible and ethical traveler choices.

Determining a pledge will require cross industry input and support, including the voices of our youth. For an example of a similar process that has been successful, visit: [palaupledge.com](http://palaupledge.com).



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# BIOSPHERE ADHESION YEAR ONE REQUIREMENTS

The Adhesion Program follows a six-step process in order to be recognized as a Biosphere Committed Entity. Through the following process, you will work with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association who will provide step-by-step guidance for smooth adherence to the program.

## SIX STEPS TO ADHESION

- **Stakeholder Commitment**  
Sign the commitment and make the first annual payment. Contract and invoice will be sent by email.
- **Getting Started Guide**  
After the commitment process is complete, you will receive a Getting Started Guide which will provide in-depth information regarding program requirements, program benefits, online account setup, and next steps.
- **Online Account Setup**  
You will receive login information for the Biosphere dashboard. The online dashboard is where you will upload and provide evidence for the sustainable development goal areas the program requires.
- **Activate the Regional Pledge**  
As the first requirement, we ask that you verbally commit to showcasing a regional pledge. The pledge will enable both industry and consumers to signify and share their commitment to responsible tourism.
- **Education and Training**  
An important aspect of the Biosphere Adhesion criteria is training and education. As such, you will be required to provide evidence of professional development for sustainability practices within your organization.
- **Verification of Sustainable Evidence**  
Upload the remaining requirements as outlined by the Biosphere Commitment, which in Year One includes three goal areas.



# BIOSPHERE ADHESION YEAR ONE COMMITMENT

As a Committed Biosphere Entity, you will be required to meet key sustainable tourism practices. For the first year, we have determined three action points, that cover five of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goal areas, required in order to meet the Biosphere Adhesion Commitment. Each of these action items addresses at least one of the four Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria as indicated below.

- **Activate the Regional Pledge** ● ● ● ●

Pledge to be created through stakeholder and interdepartmental committee consultations.

- **Education and Training** ● ● ●

A list of programs will be provided, however, you are encouraged to submit any other training programs that your organization may attend that are related to sustainability.

- **Internal Practices**

Required to provide evidence on internal practices that meet three initial goal areas:

- **Goal Area 5 | Gender Equality** ● ● ●

The entity must verify that non-discriminatory language is used within the organization, including hiring procedures and marketing materials.

- **Goal Area 7 | Clean Energy** ● ●

The entity must verify the responsible use of energy and provide evidence supporting the implementation of measures to improve energy efficiency. Examples may include: use of LED lighting, energy-saving internal policy, educational material to raise awareness of energy saving.

- **Goal Area 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production** ● ●

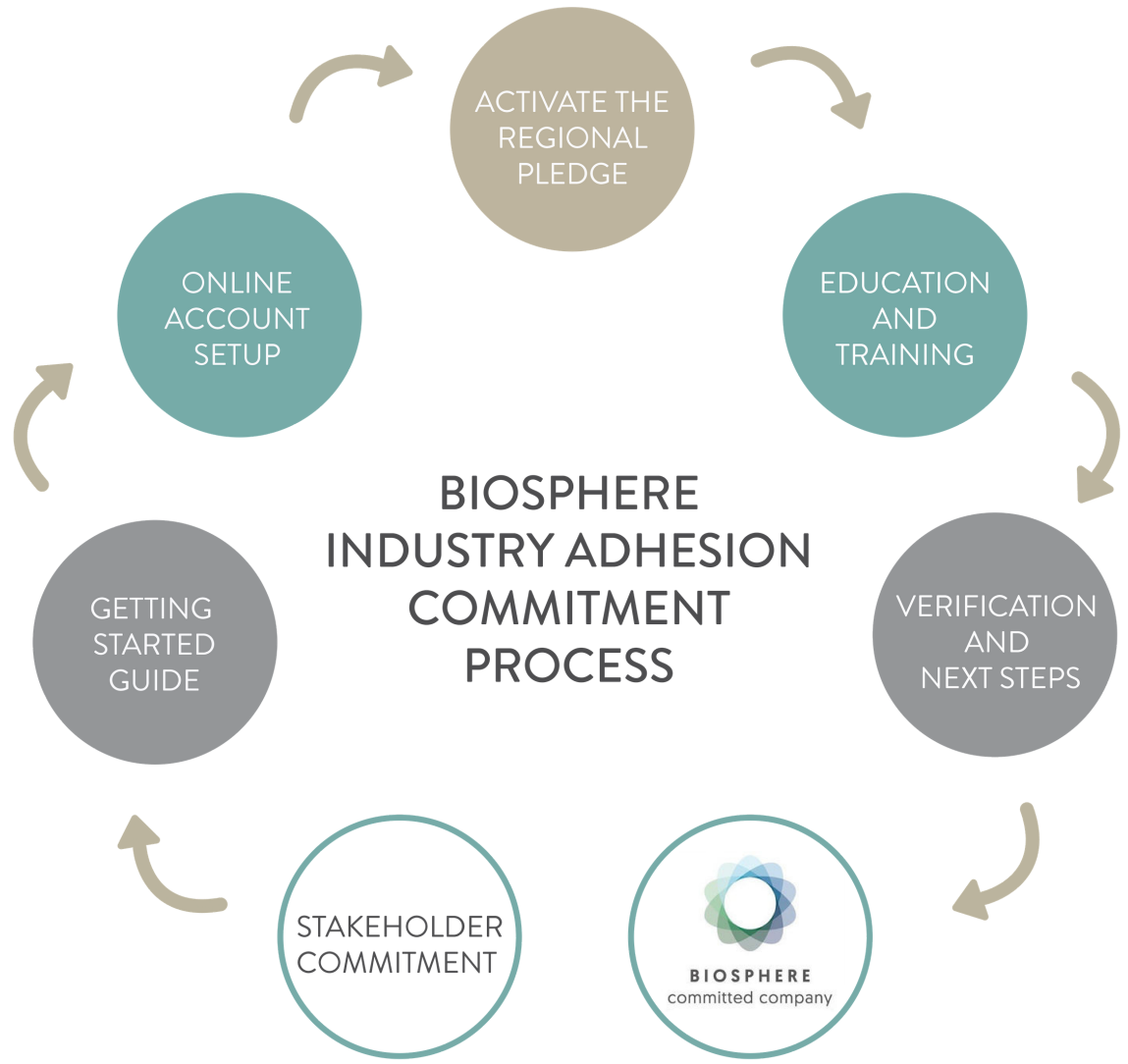
The entity applies measures to minimize waste products and disposables where possible. Examples may include: recycling and re-use policy, use of composting, proper waste disposal, education materials promoting responsible disposal.

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## GSTC PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainable Management
- Socioeconomic impacts
- Cultural impacts
- Environmental impacts









# KEY BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

- Join an internationally recognized sustainability system aligned with the Responsible Tourism Institute, the United World Tourism Organization, UNESCO, and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council
- Use of the Official Biosphere Adhesion Committed Company Logo
- Recognition through TOTA's social and digital marketing platforms
- Recognition on the official Biosphere International website and booking platform
- Participate in TOTA Biosphere Awards - Recognizing sustainable business excellence within the region
- Onsite video/film opportunities for Biosphere Committed Companies
- Sustainable Education and Training Opportunities



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# REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT

COMMITMENT REQUIREMENT

3-YEAR COMMITMENT

FIXED ANNUAL COST  
FOR 3 YEARS

\$250 ANNUAL COST

\$150 ANNUAL COST FOR  
GREEN TOURISM CERTIFIED  
COMPANIES



# APPENDIX

## UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

