

Enabling Conditions Assessment of the destination: Governance and Conservation

General considerations for Data Collection

Five main principles have been defined to measure governance. Translated in the context of the Local Ecotourism Cluster (LEC), this means:

- Legitimacy and Voice: A LEC must reflect all voices and have clear rules.
- Direction: A LEC follows a common vision of ecotourism
- Performance: A LEC implements its tasks in an ongoing learning process and in a participatory way
- Accountability: A LEC ensures transparency and informs on its activities
- Fairness and rights: A LEC respects all stakeholders and rightsholders.

Alongside these five principles, there are indicators regarding the composition of the LEC, the existence of rules and regulations, communication mechanisms or the level of activity of the LEC, which will be assessed by means of a self-assessment during the set-up and initial testing process.

To ensure a low-impact and conservation-friendly design of the ecotourism products, MEET has defined five criteria that need to be met:

- Legal designation: The protected area must be a legally established protected area at least according to national law.
- Conservation planning: The protected area has adopted a management or conservation plan.
- Visitor management: The protected area has adopted visitor regulations and actively manages visitors.
- Impacts on conservation: There are no adverse (environmental) impacts related to the package. At the same time, there is a positive impact on conservation through additional activities.
- Conservation compliance of package design: The package is in line with existing regulations and with the conservation targets of the protected area.

These five criteria include indicators that will be assessed by the corresponding protected area management body in consultation with the LEC. It comprises of compulsory criteria e.g., legal designation, conservation, planning, and qualitative indicators that should be monitored and inspire the LEC to make further improvements.

Given that nature conservation is often beyond the sphere of influence of a LEC or a local conservation authority, these indicators should also be considered as a benchmark of what to achieve over time.