TOPRAIL GUIDELINES ON SUSTAINABLE RAIL TOURISM

2017

"UIC would like to thank TopRail's members for their contribution to these Guidelines. Thanks in particular to Mr Iñaki Barrón, Mr. Carles Casas and Mr. Glenn Frommer for their creativity and commitment with this project."

Warning

CONTENT

FOREWORDS

As the Director General of the International Railway Association, UIC, it is an honor to present the work performer over the last year by the UIC TopRail working group to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable management and to maximize social and economic benefits to their local communities.

Tourism and transport are inherently and historically linked. TopRail is a commitment to address the challenge of facing the future of railway, not only from the nostalgic point of view, that special trains can provide, but also to support tourist experiences on railways, as a strategic framework for ensuring an attractive and positive image of railways in forthcoming generations.

These kinds of trains have the ability to transform simple transport into memorable experiences, iron into dreams and dreams into opportunities. They allow us to discover breathtaking sceneries through their windows, protect the heritage and take advantage of local landscapes and resources.

In the context of steadily growing international tourism, TopRail's objective is to promote railway products by increasing the visibility of quality services and encouraging railway tourism opportunities.

UIC represents the entire global railway community, which effectively encompasses 1 million kilometers of infrastructure, 7 million staff and a significant volume of traffic. We have more than 200 members, in 95 countries on 5 continents. This grants us the possibility of being observers as the major trends in mobility unfold in the 21st century.

We keep an active dialogue with the United Nations with the aim to promote the development of rail transport at a global level in order to meet the challenges of mobility and Sustainable Development.

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has adopted a resolution to proclaim 2017 as The International Year of Sustainable Tourism Development. The declaration by the UN recognized "the importance of international tourism in fostering better understanding among people everywhere, in leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and in bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures"

These Guidelines are our special contribution to this statement. Supporting sustainable tourism using railways is not only a strategic framework for ensuring a positive image of railways but also a way to give an answer to social concerns, create a competitive advantage and manage risk. It could be also an important contribution to encourage territorial development policies. Well-designed and well-managed railway tourism products are related to the three pillars (social, environmental, economic) of sustainable development and should contribute to sustainable tourism challenges.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux
Director General of the UIC

The renaissance of rail, linked to the development of high-speed rail, high capacity commuter systems and efficient long-distance freight traffic, has enhanced investment and political interest on rail. Nowadays, railways are no longer seen as the old-fashioned mode of transport on the verge of its disappearance but as an essential part of a sustainable transport system and the backbone for the transport system that society demands.

The UIC launched the TopRail project in order to focus on the tourist segment of the market and develop the potential of rail for touristic services. The project covers all the topics linking rail and tourism, from cruiser and scenic trains to marketing tourists on conventional trains and the preservation and promotion of heritage rail.

Toprail gathers the huge diversity and immense attractiveness of both rail and tourist sectors enlarging stakeholder profile in the group. The website www.toprail.org and the upcoming Toprail events give you the opportunity to approach the activities of TopRail and its members.

The declaration by the United Nations of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development has been a major driver of TopRail activity during 2017. In support of this declaration, two main documents have been produced: the TopRail Charter on Sustainable Rail Tourism (supported by several high-level representatives of rail companies and federations) and this set of Guidelines on Sustainable Rail Tourism.

These guidelines are meant to provide a systematic approach to the consideration of sustainability on rail tourism projects and activities. By using these guidelines, the different aspects of sustainability, both economic, social and environmental, can be taken into account and adapted to each particular case and situation.

Rail Tourism has an immense potential to provide the market with sustainable tourism alternatives. Rail is inherently linked to the territory and the communities it deserves being a major contributor to local development. The systematisation of a sustainable approach on the design and delivery of rail tourism products not only provides the sector with a competitive advantage but it enhances the overall visibility of rail options as an alternative for tourists all over the world.

I encourage you to use these guidelines, which are the result of the collaborative effort within TopRail, and give us your feedback. Rail and tourism are diverse worldwide activities but in the end, we are all on the same track!

Carles Casas Esplugas
Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya
Chairman of TopRail

1. INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are the final output of the project developed by the International Union of Railways (UIC), TopRail, and commissioned to the ESG matters Limited to develop a set of Guidelines for managing and reporting on sustainable rail tourism. These Guidelines provide the tools to implement the TopRail Charter on Sustainable Rail Tourism, detailed in Guidance Note 1.

TopRail's stated purpose is to expand visibility of railway tourism products and to encourage train and tourism opportunities by collaboration between stakeholders.

The project to develop these Guidelines commenced at the 13th UIC Conference on Sustainable Development in Vienna, 12 – 14 October 2016 where TopRail members detailed their broad offerings of rail based tourism products and services and highlighted their varied capabilities. An outcome of this session was the agreement to draft a set of voluntary Guidelines in support of sustainable rail tourism products and services.

The Guidelines are developed to leverage TopRail to members' capabilities to:
- improve visibility across the sector to increase patronage;
- share and compare procedures and achievements to improve delivery and profitability of rail tourism products and services;
- develop additional depth and competencies for members in related products and services;
- leverage the members' and the sector's ability to attract and develop partners;
- support TopRail Charter activities; and
- prepare baseline indicators for international certification in support for Green and / Social Investment Bonds.

The Guidelines are designed for step-wise implementation to:
- provide a value-added approach;
- focus on re-use and building on current public relations material and procedures;
- become a more efficient operation by sharing best practices;
- encourage 'learning by doing' opportunities for operating and sustainability departments; and
- inspire continual improvement across networks and within the sector.

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2. THE GUIDELINES

The Guidelines are a direct outcome of a survey and telephone interviews with a number of TopRail members in connection with a Briefing Paper circulated in December 2016. The Briefing Paper and a summary of survey responses are provided in Guidance Note 2.

A considerable number of reporting guidelines and representations for railways, tourism facilities, hotel, leisure and tour operations world-wide were reviewed. Guidance Note 3 provides an overview of the sources and details the methodology used to develop these Guidelines.

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Table 1.TopRail Sustainable Rail Guidelines – Section A

Demonstrate Effective Management		Description of Guidelines	Potential Content
A1	Sustainability Management System	The organisation has a well-documented, and has implemented a Sustainability Management System (SMS).	Describe the system, its governance, provide a list of applicable laws and relevant internal policies, the organization's performance in terms of compliance to the laws and internal policies, and Major achievements. Provide details of senior management roles, responsibilities and achievements.
A2	Reporting and Communications	Regular reports on sustainability achievement are provided.	Provide evidence of regular reporting. This could be as a stand-alone report, a section of the annual report or a regular Newsletter. PDF copies or websites are sufficient.
A3	Staff Engagement	Staff training and development with the SMS are cited in regular communications.	Provide evidence of staff training and examples. • As a minimum, working conditions of staff should be reported: Accident Frequency Rate per 100,000 hours worked or 'near-miss' statistics if relevant. • Types of working contracts should also be reported (Full-time, Part-time etc). • Average number of training hours per staff, dedicated sustainability training, relevant staff stories should be reported.
A4	Customer Experience	Customer satisfaction and feedback are provided in regular communications.	Provide evidence of customer feedback systems and performance, and potentially, examples. Providing a customer story is good practice.
A5	Access for all	Disability access	Provide examples of disability access and/or numbers of locations. This could be in absolute numbers or percentage of stations / stops covered.

Table 1.TopRail Sustainable Rail Guidelines – Section B

Maximize Economic and Social Benefits to the Local Community and Minimize Negative Impacts		Description of Guidelines	Potential Content
B1	Economic Community Support	Describing those economic initiatives supporting local communities with economic outcomes.	This is the focus of the regular report and communications, and includes examples of: • number of locals employment; • amount of local purchasing (in local currency or number of contracts), and encouragement of local entrepreneurs and businesses (number of partnerships); and • lobbying.
B2	Social Community Support	Describing those initiatives supporting local community development and educational contribution.	This is a main focus of the regular report and communications, and includes numerical measures for: • staff gender, age an educational diversity; • handicap and disability inclusion; and • contribution to local educational programmes.

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Table 1. TopRail Sustainable Rail Guidelines – Section C

| Maximize Benefits to Cultural Heritage and Minimize Negative Impacts		Description of Guidelines	Potential Content
C1	Protecting Cultural Interactions	The organisation contributes to the protection, preservation and enhancement of local traditions and interactions, following international and national good practice.	Provide evidence of: • which practices are being followed; • how those practices are being implemented; noting the traditions; and • impacts, outcomes and achievements.
C2	Protecting Heritage Properties and Sites, and Archaeological Heritage.	The organisation values and protects traditional and local historical properties and sites, and archaeological artefacts.	Provide evidence of: • which practices are being followed, • how those practices are being implemented; • cite impacts, outcomes and achievements; and • how assets and artefacts are protected and preserved.

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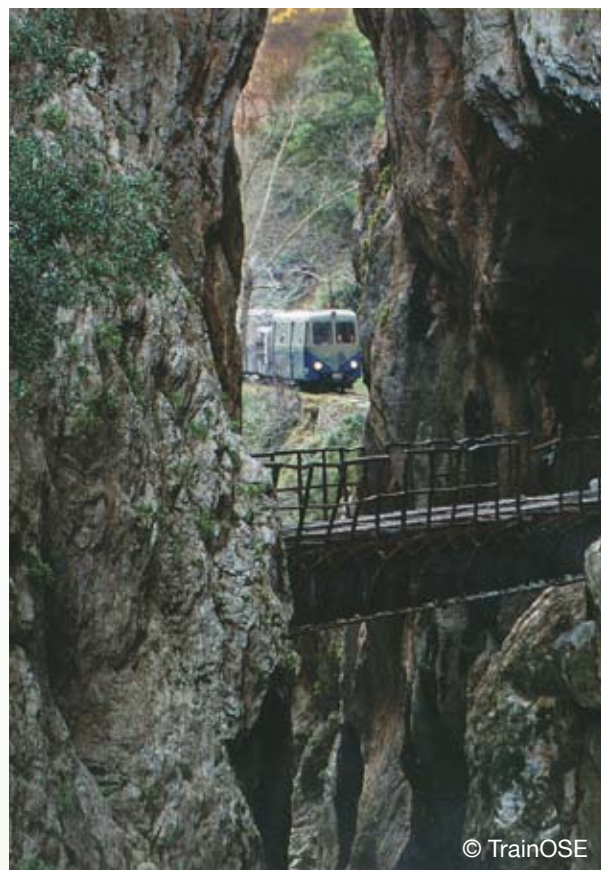
Table 1.TopRail Sustainable Rail Guidelines – Section D

Maximize Benefits to the Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts		Description of Guidelines	Potential Content
Conserving Resources			
D1.1	Environmentally preferable purchasing	Purchasing policies are implemented favouring environmentally sustainable suppliers and products.	Provide Code of Procurement, or similar, describing how environmentally friendly items are sourced and purchased, and how staff are trained to follow the Code.
D1.2	Efficient purchasing	Careful procurement of consumables and disposables is implemented.	Provide evidence that: the Code is used in purchasing; examples of use, and examples of staff training.
D1.3	Energy conservation	Energy consumption is measured and minimised.	Amounts and types of energy consumed in litres, tonnes, etc., and how energy use is being minimized - % reduction or absolute amount of reduction.
D1.4	Water conservation	Water consumption is measured and minimised and sourcing considered.	Sources of water identified, amounts of water consumed and discharged, amounts reused and recycled, in m3 or tonnes.
Reducing Pollution			
D2.1	Greenhouse gas emissions	Greenhouse gas emissions are measured, minimised and offset where possible.	Amount of gases are measured according to the WRI/WBCSD protocol – Scopes 1,2, and 3. How the emissions are minimized and how they are offset, in tonnes of CO_2 equivalent.
D2.2	Waste water	Waste water is treated.	Amount of water discharged and how it is treated to meet the local discharge conditions, in m3 or tonnes.
D2.3	Solid waste	Solid waste is managed and minimised.	Waste amounts are segregated, measured and the steps taken and success achieved to minimize disposal identified, in Kgs or tonnes.
D2.4	Harmful substances	Use of harmful substances is minimised and storage is properly managed.	Identification of harmful waste in litres or Kgs, usage measured and the steps and success taken to minimize disposal.

D2.5	Minimise pollution	Pollution from sources is managed and minimised.	Other forms of pollution are identified e.g.light, noise, are quantified and the steps taken to minimize pollution and the effectiveness achieved.
Conserving Biodiversity, Eco Systems and Landscapes			
D3.1	Biodiversity conservation	Operations support and contribute to biodiversity conservation.	Describe those actions taken to protect and regenerate biodiversity, and their effectiveness.

Of the 19 guidelines, 7 are quantitative and 12 are qualitative, detailed in Table 2 below. Also, included in this table are those departments who might be responsible for the information. The qualitative guidelines refer to descriptions of policies, systems and their management while the quantitative guidelines refer to specific environmental aspects. It is to be noted that some of the proposed guidelines are informed by the GSTC Criteria, others by the UIC Reporting Guidelines.
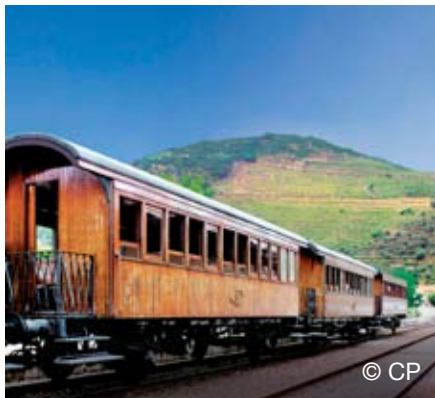

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Table 2. Qualitative vs Quantitative Indicators and Responsible Department

	Indicator	Qualitative	Quantitative	Responsible Department
A1	Sustainability Management System	√		CEO to sign off Corporate Relations and Operations – SD/HSE
A2	Reporting and Communications	√		Corporate Relations
A3	Staff Engagement		√	Human resources
A4	Customer Experience		√	Corporate Relations
A5	Access for all		√	Operations
B1	Economic community support		√	Corporate Relations
B2	Social community support		√	Corporate Relations
C1	Protecting cultural traditions	√		Corporate Relations / Operations – SD/HSE
C2	Protecting cultural heritage	√		Corporate Relations
D1.1	Environmentally preferable purchasing	√		Procurement
D1.2	Efficient purchasing	√		Procurement
D1.3	Energy conservation		√	Operations
D1.4	Water conservation		√	Operations
D2.1	Greenhouse gas emissions		√	Operations
D2.2	Waste water		√	Operations
D2.3	Solid waste		√	Operations
D2.4	Harmful substances		√	Operations – SD/HSE
D2.5	Minimise pollution		√	Operations
D3.1	Biodiversity conservation	√		Operations – SD/HSE

Note: SD/HSE refers to Sustainable Development / Health Safety and Environmental Departments

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3. USING THE GUIDELINES

3.1. Reporting

Performance reporting of guideline achievement is to be provided regularly (annually or every second year). The units for the quantitative reporting are straightforward and should follow the relevant UIC Guideline where applicable.

It is proposed that the 7 qualitative guidelines could be reported in a Maturity Matrix similar to that identified by BSi8900 could be helpful in this regard.BSI British Standards Institution was the first to launched a regulation regarding the management of sustainable development with the aim of helping organizations build a balanced and lasting approach to economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress. See Guidance Note 3 for further details.

Reporting on guideline achievement need not be assured by a third party, though it would be good practice to do so.

3.2. Implementing the Guidelines

The Guidelines are designed for a step-wise implementation.

An operator first embarking on the journey to comply with the Guidelines would most benefit by re-using their current marketing and quality information and reports, and respond initially to the qualitative **Guidelines** presented, noting their future intent to report following the TopRail Guidelines. Reporting on the back of an Environmental or Quality Management System is an advantage.

Subsequent reports in following years would supplement with the quantitative Guidelines A3 – A5, followed by the detailed environmental performance, Guidelines D1.3 – D3.1, as operations and reporting developed.

A mature operator currently providing annual and sustainability reports would be able to re-use that material in the form noted in the **Guidelines**, reporting directly using the TopRail Guidelines.

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GUIDANCE NOTE 1
UIC TopRail Charter on Sustainable Rail Tourism

UIC TopRail Charter on Sustainable Rail Tourism

The International Union of Railways (UIC), and the other TopRail associated members are committed to the social, environmental and economic features of sustainable rail tourism, their regional development and allied heritage protection.

This Charter acknowledges the accomplishments UIC TopRail Charter Signatories have achieved to enhance the visibility of railway tourism products and to encourage train and tourism opportunities through collaboration with their stakeholders.

In support of the **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017**, the UIC TopRail Charter Signatories pledge to support the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) by:

- Demonstrating effective sustainable management in their operations.
- Maximizing social and economic benefits to the local community and minimizing negative impacts.
- Maximizing benefits to cultural heritage and minimizing negative impacts.
- Maximizing benefits to the environment and minimizing negative impacts.

Furthermore, UIC TopRail Charter Signatories will aspire to continually improve their railway tourism products by:

- Developing alliances to share best practices and related knowledge with the help of the TopRail platform.
- Promoting and developing capabilities to help member organisations and their stakeholders to include and advance sustainable development considerations in their corporate decision-making at all appropriate levels.
- Providing appropriate training and awareness for sustainable development.

Initial Signatories

GUIDANCE NOTE 2

Briefing Paper, TopRail - Sustainable Tourism Moving Forward,
December 2016 and
Summary of the Response to the Survey Questions

Briefing Paper, TopRail - Sustainable Tourism Moving Forward, December 2016 and
Summary of the Response to the Survey Questions

Executive Summary

Guidance Note 2 contains background research for the TopRail Guidelines on Sustainable Rail Tourism. This Note provides documentation and reference for TopRail members and others seeking to following TopRail's leadership in developing similar guidelines.

The Note provides a brief background to the Guidelines development project and presents the model framing sustainable rail tourism products and services in terms of characteristics, facilitators / partners and potential products. Detailed considerations of each of these characteristics is provided.

Also, included in this is the survey formed as a basis for detailed interviews with TopRail members to understand and gain direction on the type of guidelines and indicators that would enhance their particular products and service offerings. A brief summary of interviews held with TopRail members concludes Note 2 and informs Guidance Note 3, Sources of Reporting Guidelines and the Methodology Underlying the TopRail Guidelines.

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Provide a unified understanding and approach to rail-based sustainable tourism supporting possible reporting indicators for TopRail tourism products; and
- Present a basis for discussions with TopRail members regarding collaborative initiatives and services that would best support members' sustainable tourism products.

2. Background

2.1. A TopRail workshop was held on 8 June 2016 at UIC Headquarters with 30 participants from 13 different countries. Delegates expressed the clear objective to promote railway products by increasing visibility of quality services and encouraging tourism opportunities.It was agreed that TopRail would be the perfect tool to create a strong network focus on the development of new opportunities for tourism experiences in the railways. Initial steps would include the creation of a dedicated website, some market studies, and the organisation of further workshops and conferences to enhance the awareness of tourist possibilities in the railways.

2.2. Supporting sustainable tourism using railways is not only a strategic framework for ensuring a positive image of Railways but also a way to answer social concerns, create a competitive advantage and manage risk. It could be also an important contribution to encourage territorial development policies.

Further, during the International Year of Sustainable Tourism 2017, the TopRail group will identify:

- Strengths of railway tourism, and effective means of communication to the market;
- Sustainability risks and appropriate management approaches; and
- Key indicators, measurement and tools to support communication and benchmarking.

2.3. To assist UIC and TopRail, Dr.Glenn Frommer, will be supporting TopRail's initiatives throughout this project. Dr Frommer, is an internationally recognized expert in sustainability. He has recently completed the UIC Reporting Guidelines -GRI G4 indicators Guidelines and will be assisting TopRail's work by:

- Providing an approach to frame rail-based sustainable tourism development;
- Facilitating discussions to advance members' sustainable tourism products to determine TopRail's role in supporting members; and
- Preparing members for a certification process of their sustainable tourism initiative, potentially using UIC reporting indicators.

2.4. A further Workshop was held during the 13th UIC Sustainability Conference in October 2016 where a number of members highlighted their tourism offerings. A discussion at the Conference provided some direction for further considerations.

- An overarching declaration or brand statement;
- A Charter or label demonstrating visible commitment;
- A checklist providing activation points to enable consumers to act on their values;
- The Charter / label / checklist to be based on the existing UIC Reporting Guidelines; and
- A synergy with other offerings and networks in other sectors.

Given the above aspirations, there may be a need to educate consumers on sustainable tourism initiatives in collaboration with TopRail.

3. Framing Rail-centric Sustainable Tourism Products

3.1. **Figure 1**, attached, summarises a number of aspects discussed previously and is proposed as a potential frame for detailed discussion. Three main blocks are suggested and would be used as follows.

– Characteristics of rail-based tourism products
  • Sharing of initiatives and best practice
– Facilitators and partners; and
  • Sharing of partnerships and enabling best practices
– Administration of TopRail tourism products.
  • Providing an overview and supervision of supporting activities.

3.2. The framework categorizes the characteristics into seven categories that form the key elements for the tourism products. The intent is to embrace the vast majority of TopRail member's tourism products by describing their inherent features.

3.2.1. Physical features of the tourism product
– Mountainous corridors;
– Low grades and / or water features;
– Gentle bends; and
– Wide corridors

3.2.2. Environmental aspects
– Unique habitat;
– Wildlife conservation;
– Plant / ecosystem preservation; and
– Migration routes

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3.2.3. Scenery
– Landscapes;
– Architecture; and
– Rural routes

3.2.4. Length
– Attract overnight visitors; and
– Interaction with adjacent communities

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3.2.5. Gateway
– Entry / exit points;
– Interlinks rural locations; and
– Recreational resource

3.2.6. Heritage
– History, technology and education

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3.2.7. Local and regional economic and social development.
   – Fixed population and ongoing or planned development

Not all of the above characteristics must be present in all products. However, it would be expected that the greater number of features present would provide a stronger interconnection between characteristics and facilitators, resulting in a stronger identity for the rail based tourism products.

3.3. Facilitators and partners are grouped into three blocks representing potential collaborations and partnerships. Again, the intent is to embrace the vast majority of TopRail member's tourism products by describing potential facilitators and partners. Different forms of facilitations and partnerships are envisioned. It is expected that the specific tourism product would identify a smaller and potentially more focused subset of synergies pertinent to their unique market offerings.

3.3.1. Co-evolution of the tourism product
   – Supply and value chains (preferred suppliers);
   – Capacity building (supplier's staff);
   – Local service providers (allied offerings, products or services);
   – NGOs; and
   – Managing the product (relying on local volunteers)

3.3.2. Community development
   – Local and regional government cooperation;
   – Shared leisure space; and
   – Inter- and Intra-community development

3.3.3. Interpretation / educational opportunities
   – Target specific tourists;
   – Curriculum development (at local schools leading to educational certification e.g.Degree or certification in tourism); and
   – Signage / brochure development

The stronger the identity of the tourism product, the increased cooperation between partners and potentially local government would result.

3.4. Administration of the sustainable tourism products would be undertaken by TopRail or an appointed sub-committee. The purpose of these tourism initiatives is to add credibility to the TopRail products while at the same time providing increased visibility and transparency in parallel with improved economic, social and environmental performance of the offerings.

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3.5.   A selection of supporting initiatives

– Website (Voluntary submission of marketing material.Initial website launched 22 November 2016.);
– Set of checklists for monitoring suppliers, partners and tourism offering using TopRail developed lists (or another source for example Travelife Sustainability Scheme **www.its4travel.com**)[1];
– Training of partners, internal staff and facilitated experience sharing with TopRail members; and
– Reporting through local partners and supply chain using relevant metrics.

3.5.1.   A certification of the tourism product using existing UIC Reporting Guidelines or a subset of the Guidelines. This is formulated as a Charter.Use of and the accountability of the Charter will be developed.

While these efforts would assist forming a consistent label with significant credibility, the work would require a commitment by TopRail members. Formed correctly, this could develop a substantial synergy with a local educational or NGO partner.

3.6.   Brand

3.6.1.   It was suggested that a unique brand for rail-based tourism products be developed. Consistent through all of the initiatives appears to be a 'low carbon travel' or 'S-low Carbon Travel'. This might be a basis for a brand (Slow Travel or the S-low Carbon Traveller). If this direction is chosen by members, as a minimum, members would need to assess their carbon footprints annually, prepare to report their findings in relation to similar and allied services and commit to a carbon reduction target.

Leveraging off of the Paris Agreement could afford TopRail members a possibility to influence similar local initiatives and provide coverage under the Nationally Defined Contributions (NDCs) for their country. This might lead to an alternative source of funding as well[2].

4.   Survey Questions

Included in **Attachment A** are a number of questions generated by this paper. These questions formed the basis for further TopRail member interviews.

5.   Subsequent Steps

The paper was used as follows.

5.1.   TopRail circulated this paper for comments by members. The questions in **Attachment A** refer to completeness and utility of **Figure 1**. Additional questions clarified the applicability of the characteristics and whether they were fully described, and the facilitator and partners fully detailed and applicable. Further responses to the questions provided insight as to member's appetite for checklists, certification and labelling.

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1.   **http://www.travelife.org/Hotels/Home.asp**
2.   Under the Paris Agreement each country has proposed a set of initiatives to reduce their carbon emissions (NDCs). A pool of funds is being organized by the World Bank to assist countries in implementing their carbon-reducing initiatives and it may be possible that promotion of S-Low Carbon Travel as one of these initiatives could receive funding as a contribution.

5.2.   The responses and comments to the paper formed the basis of the further interviews to be taken by the consultant. This was used to inform the content of the Guidelines.

5.3.   Following completion of the comments and responses, the consultant developed the Guidelines presenting taxonomy of indicators to be included within a future certification scheme. This will be developed at further TopRail meetings.

6. Summary

In summary:
–   TopRail is promoting railway products by increasing visibility of quality services and encouraging tourism experiences in the railways. A website has been launched providing further visibility for members' rail-based tourism offerings.
–   A methodology is presented in this paper to characterize rail-based tourism offerings, detail facilitators and partners and summarize potential products.
–   The methodology was utilized for further assessment of member's views and gauge their enthusiasm for the use of checklist or labelling to support their offerings.

7. Conclusion

It is concluded that there was a need to:
–   Provide a unified understanding and approach to rail-based sustainable tourism and prepare for possible reporting indicators for TopRail tourism products; and
–   Present a basis for discussion with TopRail members regarding collaborative initiatives and services that would best support members' sustainable tourism products

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ATTACHMENT A

Interview Questions

1. Characteristics

1.1.   Is your tourism product described within the Characteristics?
1.2.   If not, what should be amended to include your offering?
1.3.   Can you provide any additional Characteristics?
1.4.   Do you disagree with any of the Characteristics?

2. Facilitators / Partners

2.1.   Does your tourism product rely on the partners as described?
2.2.   If not what should be amended to include your offering?
2.3.   Is your tourism product facilitated by allies included in this description?
2.4.   If not, can you describe your additional allies that facilitate or enable your offering?
2.5.   Are there other ways of facilitating / enabling your tourism product?
2.6.   Do you agree with the description of facilitator / partner used?
2.7.   If not can you provide improvements?
2.8.   Could you suggest additional partnership initiatives or programmes supporting your tourism product?

3. SusRail Products

3.1.   Beyond the TopRail website, would you find specific checklists helpful in supporting your tourism product?
3.2.   If positive, what areas might these checklists cover? Environmental? Energy? Community Involvement?
3.3.   Would you prefer using other groups' or sectors' checklists?
3.4.   Would you be interested in assisting TopRail develop staff training modules / certificates on the basis of the checklists, potentially in collaboration with a local educational institution?
3.5.   Would you be supportive in developing a reporting regime and publishing the results on your leisure product's offering consistent with the UIC Reporting Guidelines and their metrics through the TopRail website?
3.6.   Would you be supportive in developing a benchmarking programme administered by TopRail for your leisure product's offering?
3.7.   Would you support developing a TopRail Charter of Sustainable Tourism?
3.8.   If yes, what format would best support your offering?

4. Others

4.1.   Would you be in favour of "S-Low Carbon Travel" as a brand line?
4.2.   Do you have any suggestions for a TopRail brand line?
4.3.   Do you have any suggestions as further TopRail initiatives supporting of your leisure offering?

Figure 1.
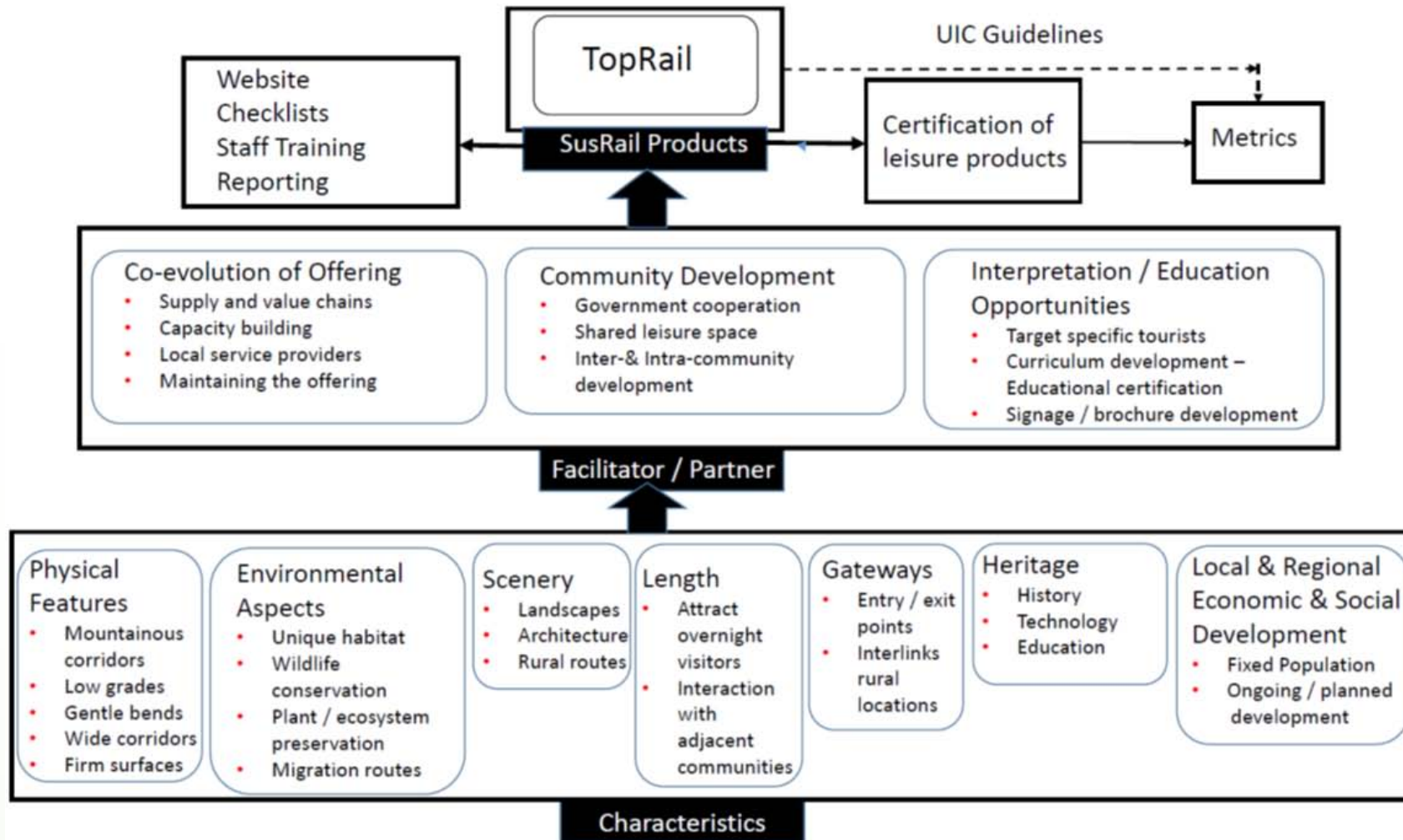
Summary of Responses

1. Guidelines

1.1. Guidelines and their application generally need to be viewed primarily as to how they will increase patronage in rail offerings and secondarily to improve performance.

1.2. Guidelines are viewed as helpful, though some members have concerns regarding their focus, extent and related implementation costs.

1.3. Most responses have focused on the environmental aspect of proposed guidelines, in particular the low-carbon feature of rail transport.

1.4. Generally, members do not have or use guidelines for sustainable tourism offerings.

1.5. Most members are aware of related guidelines.

2. Website

2.1. The current website is viewed positively.

2.2. Members see the website as a portal for a central registry of sustainable rail offerings and contacts.

2.3. The website is viewed as a first step and there are expectations that the website will expand its scope to include

– more rail offerings;

– integration of offerings with other modes (cycling, hiking, cruise ships, bus);

– combine rail offerings with overnight accommodations;

– improve granularity of information potentially using the characteristics provided in the Briefing Paper.

3. Use of Guidelines

3.1. Benchmarking

3.1.1. Members are generally familiar with benchmarking, though the majority use these in relation their operations.

3.1.2. Members would be supportive of a benchmarking exercise involving the guidelines, but again the focus should be primarily on increasing patronage and secondarily on improving efficiency.

3.1.3. Members would be willing to share and compare their information.

3.1.4. Only a few members would be willing to provide resources to assist in developing a TopRail benchmark and process.

3.2. Checklists

3.2.1. Members are generally familiar with checklists, though the majority use these in connection with their operations.

3.2.2. Members would be supportive if the checklists could be incorporated into training related to the Guidelines and benchmarking. However, not all members would have resources to implement a TopRail wide initiative.

3.2.3. Amongst areas of interest for checklist would be the following: rail history, related museums, heritage in general, unique environmental features, and related local actives (art, festivals, music etc).

3.2.4. Some members would be willing to share their internal checklists with TopRail members.

4. TopRail Sustainable Rail Brand

4.1. It was generally felt that a TopRail Sustainable Rail Tourism Brand and related certification would not be of interest due to the expected investment of time, resources and lack of international / national awareness. The UIC brand would suffice for present.

4.2. A S-Low Carbon Brand would not be generally supported.

5. Charter

There was general support for a TopRail Sustainable Rail Tourism Charter, but this needed to reflect on what was being delivered, the aspirations involved and how the Charter would be used.

6. Characteristics

It was generally concluded that the characteristics of member's rail offerings were substantially generally covered by that described in the Briefing Paper.

7. Facilitators / Partners

7.1. It was generally concluded that the summary of facilitators / partner of member's rail offerings were substantially covered by that described in the Briefing Paper.

7.2. Some members did highlight connections with other parties, notably local universities.

8. Additional Information

Members have provided a significant amount of further information regarding their links to websites, documents, reports, related activities etc. These have been archived by the UIC TopRail Secretariat.

9. Survey Participants

The following TopRail members provided responses to the survey questions and were interviewed by Dr Frommer.

– FGC (Spain)
– Irish Rail (Ireland)
– Korail (Korea)
– MÁV-START (Hungary)
– Tren Ecuador (Ecuador)

– FEDECRAIL (Europe)
– ÖBB (Austria)
– TrainOSE (Greece)
– FS (Italy)
– JR (Japan)
– CP (Portugal)

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GUIDANCE NOTE 3

Sources of Reporting Guidelines and the
Methodology Underlying the TopRail Guidelines

Sources of Reporting Guidelines and the Methodology Underlying the TopRail Guidelines

1.   Guidance Note 3 provides an overview of the sources used to develop the TopRail Guidelines.
     –   the Industry Standard for the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC);
     –   the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) Material Issues for Cruise Operators;
     –   the Standard from the Sustainable Golf Initiative;
     –   the Reporting Guidelines issued by the UIC (updated with the GRI G4); and
     –   the Maturity Matrix from the BSi 8900 Standard.

2.   It is of interest that similar sustainable tourism guidelines for the cruise sector have not been found. Significant aspects focus almost exclusively on the environmental impact of operations[1], with the following main considerations.
     –   Type and extent of fuel usage in harbour and port, and related carbon footprint;
     –   Waste minimization both of food and other waste streams; and
     –   Water usage safety, usage minimization and effluent discharge.

2.1. The sector's related Stakeholder Management Chart is however informative for these Guidelines.

      There are only cursory mentions of social considerations in the cruise industry's own Training Manual[2], mainly concerning off-site recreational activities.The industry does however recognize the benefit of environmental certification through ISO 14001, though few examples are cited.

      One example of note is the voluntary measures referenced for Belmond Safaris[3].

      The Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development have published a document regarding certification for sustainable tourism. The guidelines contain a useful description of the certification process, focusing primarily on ecotourism[4].

3.   A number of references, best practices and case studies on sustainable tourist activities and attractions can be found through the platform for the Acteurs du Tourisme durable (ATD)[5]. Guidelines similar to those presented in this paper have not been found.

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1.   Genç, Ruhet (2016), Sustainability in Cruise Ship Management, in International Journal of Social Science Studies, Vol.4, No 6, June 2016.
2.   Training Module 7: **http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/pdfs/Day7_INDUSTRY_MANUAL.pdf**
3.   **http://investor.belmond.com/our-company/company-overview.aspx**
4.   **http://www.responsibletravel.org/docs/Ecotourism_Handbook_I.pdf**, A Simple User's Guide to Certification for Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism.
5.   **http://www.tourisme-durable.org/bonnes-pratiques**

4. Within partnerships under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a mention of a programme for Certification for Sustainable Tourism[1]. Though a list of partners is provided there are no guidelines or details provided for this action.

   Tourism, in particular sustainable tourism, is referenced throughout the United Nations SDGs. A report on the detailed relationships has been published elsewhere[2].

5. Guidelines Referenced

   The guidelines / standards have been chosen to represent the wide portfolio of documents available.
   - The Industry Standard for the GSTC is comprehensive as is the UIC Reporting Guideline. Both provide quantitative and / or qualitative definitions of the indicators.
   - The GTSC Criteria is also used as a basis for certification under the GTSC, with the methodology employed to determine certification the responsibility of the certifying body.
   - The SASB standard is focused on only a few material issues with the reporter held liable for non-compliance by the US SEC (when mandatory).
   - The Guideline from the Sustainable Golf Initiative uses 16 material issues and employs a weighting of the material issues to resolve a final score.
   - Though the BSi 8900 is a standard for a sustainability management systems it is useful in developing a simple representation demonstrating allocation of resources and achievement.

   All the above guidelines / standards are voluntary though SASB is seeking to make their Standards mandatory for 10-K and 20-F fillings as directed by the US Security and Exchange Commission under the Dodd-Frank Legislation.

5.1. Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)[3]

   The GSTC is a USA registered, virtual non-profit organization representing a diverse and global membership including UN agencies, leading travel companies, hotels, country tourism boards, tour operators, individuals and communities.

   The GSTC establishes and manages global sustainable tourism standards with the aim of increasing sustainable tourism knowledge and practices among public and private stakeholders. The GSTC is independent and neutral, and is mostly a volunteer organization.

   There are currently two sets of GSTC Criteria: Destination and Industry Criteria. These are the guiding principles and minimum requirements that any tourism business or destination should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources, while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation.

1. **https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=1495**
2. **http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284417254**
3. **https://www.gstcouncil.org/en/about/gstc-overview/welcome-to-sustainable-tourism.html**

The GSTC is sponsored by the UNWTO, InterContinental Hotels Group and the TUI Group. A large number of tourist organizations and NGOs are supportive, notably The Rainforest Alliance.

A copy of the 'Tour Operator Criteria and Performance Indicators' can be downloaded from the GSTC Website.

There are in all 43 Performance Indicators, which are divided into four main sections as follows.
– Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management (14 indicators);
– Section B: Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts (9 indicators);
– Section C: Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts (4 indicators);
– Section D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts (16 indicators).

Indicators are both qualitative and quantitative.

5.2. Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)

SASB is an USA-based independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides sustainability accounting standards for use by publicly listed corporations in the U.S.SASB standards are designed for disclosure in mandatory fillings to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), such as the Form 10-K and 20-F. They have developed unique sets of material issues for 80 different industries.

As noted in the extract from Standard SV0205 for Cruise Operators can be downloaded from the SASB Website. There are 18 material issues with additional standards for Leisure Facilities, Hotels and Restaurants, though the scope and coverage are similar.

5.3. Sustainable Golf Initiative

The Sustainable Golf Initiative was an outcome of a benchmarking exercise initiated by the Federacio Catalana de Golf and Between-us to provide participants with insights to become more efficient and sustainable.

By examining members' and non-members' views they concluded a set of 16 material issues based on people, planet and profit with appropriate weightings, including water, waste, biodiversity, health and safety and local community involvement. Quantitative indicators were developed using relevant questions.

The issues were used to benchmark performance between participants and create heat maps for further projects. A chart is provided on the website showing the weighting for the material issues. There are also examples of benchmarking and heat maps.

5.4. UIC Reporting Guidelines

The "UIC Reporting Guideline Sustainable Mobility & Transport" supplements the "UIC Declaration Sustainable Mobility & Transport" with explanations and a collection of indicators approved as suitable for reporting on the progress of the Declaration's progress. The current version downloadable from the UIC Website is an amendment of the original version issued in 2011 and is updated with the GRI G4 Reporting Guideline and supplemented with experiences of the UIC Expert Network Sustainable Mobility.

The indicators are primarily quantitative and divided into three sections as follows.

– Society: Section A - focusing on the overall advantage of rail for the whole society regardless of using the mobility and transport systems or not – due to lower negative impacts than other transport modes (38 indicators).

– Customers: Section B – focusing on the advantages of rail for various customer groups as well as for non- users of the mobility and transport systems (7 indicators).

– Company: Section C - putting the emphasis on the responsibility and management of railway companies concerning all the stakeholders and shareholders and deals with ethical standards as well as with the sustainable performance of the company (165 indicators).

5.5. BSi 8900

BSi 8900 British provides guidance on managing sustainable development systems and a framework that assists organizations to enhance performance and effectiveness. It offers a coherent approach to managing social, economic and environmental aspects of an organization's activities.

The Maturity Matrix included in this Standard summarizes the 4 Principles, 10 Practices and increasing maturity level for the Principle's characteristics from minimum involvement to maximum engagement.

A radar plot demonstrating how the maturity achievement of the characteristics can be used to define an annual snapshot of achievement. The plot allocates a rating of 1.0 to the lowest level of maturity and 4.0 to the full extent. Fractions are defined by partial achievements of the next highest maturity level.A useful example of this is provided for the MTR Corporation Sustainability Report from 2008 – 2012 and was extracted from the 2012 Sustainability Report.

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6.   Methodology Underlying the TopRail Guidelines

6.1. Aligning Criteria

TopRail has aligned its programme with the UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism. The GSTC, which is supported by the UNWTO, has already established a robust methodology for certification, and it would seem sensible to develop TopRail Guidelines along the lines of the existing Industry criteria.

The GSTC Industry Criteria were used to compare coverage with the UIC Reporting Indicators and the Sustainable Golf Material Issues.

There is good coverage of the GTSC Industry Criteria by the UIC Indicators.This would be expected as there are 210 UIC (and GRI G4) Criteria.

Reasonable coverage could also be concluded with the material issues used by the Sustainable Golf Initiative, though the resulting relevant questions would need significant re-definition and expansion. The use of benchmarking and heatmaps remains instructive.

Given the good coverage provided by the UIC criteria, there is no need to initiate a process to define material issues and develop relevant indicators.It is however necessary that TopRail Guidelines:
–   mirror spirit of the relevant UIC indicator within the context of the GSTC industry criteria; while
–   containing a minimum number of UIC Guideline indicators for cost-effective and efficient implementation.

6.2. Prioritizing TopRail Guidelines

The TopRail Guidelines were design to a close alignment with the GSTC Criteria.There are 19 TopRail Guidelines proposed, which are divided into four main sections as follows.
–   Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management (5 indicators);
–   Section B: Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts (2 indicator);
–   Section C: Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts (2 indicators);
–   Section D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts (10 indicators).

The GSTC Criteria deleted are either included in the regular operations of the current rail offering or endemic to the offering's ongoing operations and need not be reported separately.

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GLOSSARY

ALB – KM – Available Lower Berth kilometers

ATD - Acteurs du Toursime durable

APCD – Average Passenger Cruise Day

BSi – British Standards Institution

CDC – Center for Disease Control

CEO – Chief Execuitve Officer

CITES – Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

CO2 – Carbon dioxide

EEDI – Average Energy Efficiency Design Index

EMS - Environmental Management System

GRI – Global Reporting Initiative

GRI G4 – global Reporting Initiative Guidelines Version 4

GSTC – Global Sustainable Tourism Council

HS – High Speed

ILO – International Labor Organization

ISO – International Organization for STandardization

IUCN – International Union of Conservation of Nature

MSDS – Material Safety Data Sheets

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OPS – Onshore Power Supply

PM – Particulate Matter

SASB – Sustainability Accounting Standards Board

SDG – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

SD/HSE – Sustainable Development / Halth and Safety Execuitve

SM – Sustainability Management (System)

SMS – Sustainability Management System

UIC – International union of Railways

UN – United Nations

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization

US SEC – United States Security and Exchange Commission

USA - United States of America

WRI/WBCSD – World Resource Institute / World Business Council on Sustainable Development