

Over the last decade, tourism governance has become a central issue and has been progressively included in tourism policies at all levels (national, regional and local). Besides, private and public sectors both need to participate in the formulation of tourism policy and regulations, as well as in the destination development if they wish decisions to be made inclusively and widely accepted by all actors in the tourism destination.

As the level of decentralization from the national administration increases, DMOs emerge as a pivotal reference at destination level, assuming a wider scope of responsibilities. Given the cross-cutting nature of tourism, a multifaceted and holistic destination management approach is central to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of destinations.

4.2 Criteria and indicators for effective DMOs

To assess each of these three key performance areas – 1. strategic leadership; 2. effective execution and 3. efficient governance – UNWTO through UNWTO.QUEST has developed a set of criteria and indicators.

The criteria summarized in the following table are the basis of the detailed set of 23 criteria and 64 indicators that form the UNWTO.QUEST destination management organization Certification process.

Criteria and indicators for effective destination management organizations (DMOs)

3	23	64
Key performance areas of DMOs	Success criteria	Success indicators
1. Strategic leadership	7 Success criteria	21 Indicators
2. Effective execution	11 Success criteria	27 Indicators
3. Efficient Governance	5 Success criteria	16 Indicators

Table 1: Destination management organizations' (DMOs) key performance areas and criteria

Note: The majority of the criteria in this table apply to all DMOs while some of them are more specific and apply only if included in the DMO mandate

Key performance area: 1. Strategic leadership		
Aspects of successful destination management that depend primarily on an integrated tourism sector effort, for which the DMO acts as a leader, facilitator, coordinator or execution partner		
Criteria	Scope	
1.1 To play a key role in participating in and implementing a destination tourism policy and/or strategic development plan.	Requires not only key participation in the formulation of a destination's tourism policy and/or strategic vision within a leading role, but also to monitor its correct development in compliance with the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. ^a	
1.2 To have a defined strategic vision	This means that a destination strategic plan for the destination, including its key elements, has been formulated, documented and validated by relevant stakeholders and also the responsible authority. It also involves leadership and coordination for its appropriate implementation and for its modification/ update upon suitable stakeholders consultations as required by diverse scenarios.	
1.3 To act as a leader in tourism knowledge and tourism information	The DMO not only collects and compiles most recently available destination information, data and statistics for research but also conducts analysis, relevant studies and data analysis for correct decision-making, publication and communication.	
1.4 To play an appropriate role in coordinating tourism sector action in the event of a crisis	The DMO has a documented crisis management plan of procedures, actions and roles in case of a crisis that may affect the destination. This crisis management plan, validated by diverse interested agents, coordinates the tourism sector in case of crisis. It also includes a Crisis Communications Plan. ^b	
1.5 To have a sustainable management programme that covers economic, sociocultural and environmental fields.	<p>A management programme for sustainability aligned with the 12 UNWTO Indicators for Tourism Sustainability (ITS),^c as well as with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)^d is required. This implies that the DMO has a plan/policy for sustainable tourism that covers key aspects in the environmental, sociocultural and economic fields (i.e. economic viability, local prosperity, etc.) and ensures its compliance by means of an ongoing monitoring of implementation with the final goal of maximizing the contribution of tourism to the SDGs.</p> <p>The plan/policy for sustainable tourism of the DMO should comply with Article 3 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism: "Tourism, a factor of sustainable development"; and with Article 4: "Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement"^e.</p>	
1.6 To leverage and build stakeholder partnerships in pursuit of destination competitiveness	<p>The DMO participates in collaboration initiatives with suppliers outside the DMO to improve the tourism value chain and establishes effective alliances with the private sector.</p> <p>The DMO engages in private-public partnership initiatives and also with government authorities that are involved in or affect the destination's competitiveness in alignment with the destination Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The DMO ensures regular and effective communication with non-DMO providers of services and infrastructure.</p>	
1.7 To promote a tourism culture in the destination and its community.	<p>This criterion is intended to determine if the DMO advocates compliance with Article 2 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism: "Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfillment"; and Article 5: "Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities".</p> <p>In fulfillment of its mandate, the DMO conducts joint actions with the local community to promote awareness of tourism benefits and impacts and engages local communities.</p>	

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Key performance area: 2. Effective execution

Aspects pertaining to a satisfactory destination management that depend primarily on the actions and efforts of the DMO

Criteria	Scope
2.1 To regulate the tourism sector	The DMO participates in both the formulation and the implementation of tourism regulations and norms.
2.2 To conduct a destination leisure tourism marketing and promotion plan	The DMO develops, executes, monitors and measures the scope of the Marketing Plan for leisure tourism with a sound strategic approach (e.g., market analysis, segmentation, definition of objectives, prioritization, return on investment, etc.) within the scope of its mandate.
2.3 To conduct destination business tourism (related to the meetings industry) marketing and promotion plan	The DMO develops, executes, monitors and measures the scope of the Marketing Plan for the meetings industry with a sound strategic approach (e.g. market analysis, segmentation, definition of objectives, prioritization, return on investment, etc.) within the scope of its mandate.
2.4 To integrate information and communications technologies (ICTs)	The DMO has integrated technological tools that favour and foster the destination promotion in online platforms (social media, digital marketing campaigns). The DMO conducts measurement activities and monitors ICTs' use results to verify appropriate development of selected strategies and for decision-making in accordance with strategy and marketing plan.
2.5 To conduct tourism investment promotion	The DMO develops a tourism Investment Promotion Plan indicating investment opportunities, target markets, marketing mix, incentives, processes, etc. The DMO also executes, monitors and measures the impact of actions to promote investment in tourism by tracking and following through on actual investment values and progress within the scope of its mandate.
2.6 To promote and facilitate the destination tourism offer enhancement and competitive capacity	The DMO has a documented plan that shows the destination's tourism offer strengths, competitive capacity and needs. This plan prioritizes tourism attractions/experience improvement and development (culture, nature, urban, man-made, etc.) in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
2.7 To promote tourism entrepreneurship and innovation	The DMO carries out a programme or actions to promote entrepreneurial initiatives and innovations in tourism and promotes stakeholder partnerships to show appropriate financial and human resource allocation in support of entrepreneurship drive.
2.8 To produce and distribute promotional material	The DMO develops and orderly distributes contents and promotional material suited for the targeted public in support of the marketing strategy.
2.9 To provide information services to visitors	Visitors receive information relevant to the destination provided by suitable tourism information offices and other visitor information infrastructure, through distribution of printed material or online.
2.10 To develop tourism human resources development in the destination	The DMO contributes to the formulation or implementation of a destination's tourism sector Human Resources Plan and encourages human resources development in the destination by promoting training and skills development initiatives led or actively supported by DMO. The Human Resources Plan in the destination promotes the compliance with Article 9 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism about "Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry" ⁹ .
2.11 To ensure tourism quality in the destination	The DMO implements a tourism quality assurance system or advocates its implementation.

Key performance area: 3. Efficient governance

Aspects that define a satisfactory and sustainable DMO organizational governance

Criteria	Scope
3.1 To have a mandate and role aligned with its Strategic Plan	<p>The functions and tasks in the DMO are clear and aligned with a Strategic Plan, communicated to stakeholders and internal staff.</p> <p>Likewise, the DMO defines its roles and responsibilities with respect to public sector actors in their diverse competences (national, regional and/or local), as well as to the private sector.</p> <p>The DMO advocates compliance with Article 6 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism regarding “Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development”ⁿ.</p>
3.2 To manage the DMO according to nationally and internationally accepted governance principles	<p>The DMO’s annual Operation Plan has been designed based on the destination’s Strategic Plan, with detailed actions, budgets, calendars and performance measurement indicators and protocols.</p> <p>Likewise, the DMO holds regular meetings of its governing authority/board, management and committees and implements an appropriate procurement policy and suppliers practices.</p>
3.3 To manage DMO’s finances in accordance with its mandate	<p>Approved accounting policies and procedures and financial management are followed by the DMO.</p> <p>Budgetary allocations correspond to priorities determined in the destination’s Strategic Plan and annual reports clearly outlining DMO activities, achievements and financial situation for the last financial year are produced.</p>
3.4 To manage human resources according with accepted international and national principles	<p>The organizational structure or organization chart is stated and documented.</p> <p>Each person in the organization knows his/her role and responsibilities and receives suitable, continuous training and capacity building to ensure optimal execution of key performance areas.</p> <p>Recruitment and appointment processes are based on fair and transparent employment practices and the DMO advocates compliance with Article 9 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism about “Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry”.</p>
3.5 To use technology effectively to fulfill DMO’s mandate aligned with its Strategic Plan	<p>DMO develops a plan to improve and use of appropriate current information technologies in managing the organization.</p>

- a) For further information on the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, please consult: <http://ethics.unwto.org/en> or <http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/gcetbrochureglobalcodeen.pdf>.
- b) For further information on tourism crisis communication, please consult: World Tourism Organization (2011), *Toolbox for Crisis Communications in Tourism – Checklists and Best Practices*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284413652>.
- c) World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme (2005), *Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284411191>.
- d) For further information on the Sustainable Development Goals and tourism, please consult: <http://tourism4sdgs.org/tourism-for-sdgs/what-are-the-sdgs/> and World Tourism Organization (2018), *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284419401>.
- e) For further information on the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, please consult: <http://ethics.unwto.org/en> or <http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/gcetbrochureglobalcodeen.pdf>.
- f) Ibid.
- g) Ibid.
- h) Ibid.
- i) Ibid.