COMMUNITY & CULTURE · TOPIC GUIDE C3

Cultural heritage

Promotion of local culture and a cultural protection policy.

WHAT THIS COVERS

A platform for local artists and products with guest information on heritage and visitor etiquette (COM-05), and a policy respecting local culture and sites (COM-06).

WHY IT MATTERS

Required by GSTC section C and the Basics, and often the property's biggest differentiator in its destination.

How to track it well

1. Record what guests see: local products, artists, heritage information, etiquette guidance.
2. Write or adopt a short cultural protection policy specific to the destination.
3. Mark both in place and attach materials and the policy; review when the destination context changes.

Your first month

1. Check what guests are told about local customs, sites and etiquette, and in which languages.
2. List any artefacts on display and how they were acquired.
3. Ask a local cultural body to review how culture is presented.

WORKED EXAMPLE (ILLUSTRATIVE FIGURES)

The hotel sells work by six local artists and displays nine historic items, each listed with its provenance. Guest information on local customs is in the room directory and at reception.

Where the data comes from

- Marketing and front office
- GM
- Destination management organisation guidance

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

Photos or PDFs of guest materials; the policy.

HOW OFTEN, AND WHO

On change, reviewed annually.

Common pitfalls

- A generic group policy with nothing specific to the place

What the research says

- Culture was the least-studied dimension in a review of hotel sustainability research. The criteria it draws together are practical: consult the community before offering products based on its culture, give guests a code of conduct for sensitive sites, explain local customs properly, and never trade historical items outside the law.

Source: dos Santos, Méxas & Meiriño (2017), Journal of Cleaner Production 142 — review of sustainability criteria used in hotel management research. Findings are summarised in our own words; they come from specific samples and may not hold everywhere.

What you record

2 attributes make up this topic. Each lists the data points to enter; anything marked “calculated for you” needs no entry.

Promotion of local culture COM-05

When it changes

Platform for local artists and products; guest information on heritage, ecosystems and visitor etiquette

Evidence: Guest materials / photos · Scoring: in place = 100, not in place = 0

No.	Data point	How it is entered	Asked for by
COM-05.1	**Promotion of local culture**	Yes / no	WTTC · GSTC-C
COM-05.2	Guest materials / photos	Document	–

Cultural protection COM-06

When it changes

Policy respecting local culture and sites; contribution to heritage protection; artefact inventory with legal provenance

Evidence: Policy · Scoring: in place = 100, not in place = 0

No.	Data point	How it is entered	Asked for by
COM-06.1	**Cultural protection**	Yes / no	GSTC-C
COM-06.2	Policy	Document	–

Ready-for-audit checklist

- Every attribute above has a value for the current period, submitted (not left as a draft).
- Each measured value has its bill, invoice, log or photo attached.
- Any estimated figure is marked as estimated, with the real figure entered when it arrives.
- Flagged readings have been confirmed or corrected.
- The method is written down: which meters, sources or records feed each number.
- Policies and registers are dated, owned by a named person and reviewed this year.

What a certifier will ask

The certification criteria this topic supports, in plain words, and the Canoprise attribute that holds the evidence.

Scheme	Criterion	What it asks for	Supported by
GSTC Hotel v4	A6	Information sharing and guidance	COM-05
GSTC Hotel v4	C1	Cultural interactions	COM-05
GSTC Hotel v4	C2	Protecting cultural heritage	COM-06
GSTC Hotel v4	C3	Presenting culture and heritage	COM-05
GSTC Hotel v4	C4	Artefacts	COM-06
Green Key	1.12	Plants, animals and artefacts traded legally	COM-06
EarthCheck	2.4.1	Cultural sensitivity	COM-06
EarthCheck	2.4.2	Cultural engagement	COM-05
EarthCheck	2.4.3	Cultural awareness	COM-05
EarthCheck	5.4	Guests guided on responsible behaviour	COM-05
EarthCheck	5.6	Natural and cultural surroundings interpreted	COM-05
EarthCheck	5.7	Interpretation and education	COM-05
EarthCheck	5.8	Content of interpretation material	COM-05

Criterion titles are Canoprise’s short paraphrases of WTTC Hotel Sustainability Basics, the GSTC Hotel Standard v4 and the Green Key 2026–2031 hotel criteria; read the scheme’s own text before applying. This mapping is our reading; your certification partner decides what is met.
EarthCheck clause titles paraphrase the EarthCheck Company Standard v4.2.