



# Travalyst

## Certifications Initiative: Ground Rules for the Review Process

### Glossary

A glossary of terminology used in this document is as below:

**Certification:** *A voluntary, third-party assessment, through an audit, of a tourism enterprise or destination for conformity to a standard.*

**Third-party Certification:** *An audit by an independent professional organisation that is officially trained in the certification criteria.*

**Certification Body (CB):** *An organisation that verifies that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled.*

## Background

Founded by Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex, Travalyst is a pre-competitive coalition of some of the biggest names in travel and technology including Amadeus, Booking.com, Expedia Group, Google, Mastercard, Sabre, Skyscanner, Travelport, Trip.com Group, Tripadvisor, and Visa. Together, we aim to bring sustainability information to the mainstream to help people make better travel choices.

## What is the Travalyst Certifications Initiative?

As sustainability has become louder in the consciousness of travellers globally, we have seen a correlating increase in the number of sustainability-focused certifications for accommodation providers.

These initiatives include certifications, schemes and pledges which, although well-meaning in their objectives, also give rise to confusion. There are over a hundred certification bodies (CBs) that focus on sustainability within the accommodation sector.

Research carried out by our partners at Booking.com uncovered that 45% of travellers view accommodation that is labelled more sustainable, as more appealing, but travellers want consistency. The same research also found that 67% of travellers agree that all travel booking sites should use the same certifications and labels.

Travalyst's Certifications Initiative aims to answer this call for consistency, by asking certification bodies to show their process is compliant with a set of criteria. A list of compliant certifications will be made publicly available for partners and the wider industry to align with; providing an opportunity for consistency across platforms. This is the first step, and we expect for the Travalyst Certifications Initiative to grow in alignment with the evolving sustainability landscape across the sector.

## What are the criteria?

Travalyst has worked closely with its partners and in conjunction with its Independent Advisory Group (IAG), to align on three criteria that certification bodies are invited to show they are compliant, with in order to be added to Travalyst's list of compliant certifications.

The criteria are as follows:

1. Third-party audit that includes on-site and/or remote online assessment of sustainable practices reported by the property.
2. Publicly available standards upon which the certification is based.
3. Focuses on evaluating the impact of social and/or economic, and/or environmental factors, among others, as encompassed within, but not restricted, to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

To ensure rigour and independence, this criteria was validated by our Independent Advisory Group (IAG).

## How will Travalyst conduct the review process?

The review process will be undertaken in stages, on a first-come-first-served basis. The review procedure to ensure that any applicant CBs are compliant with the criteria is as follows:

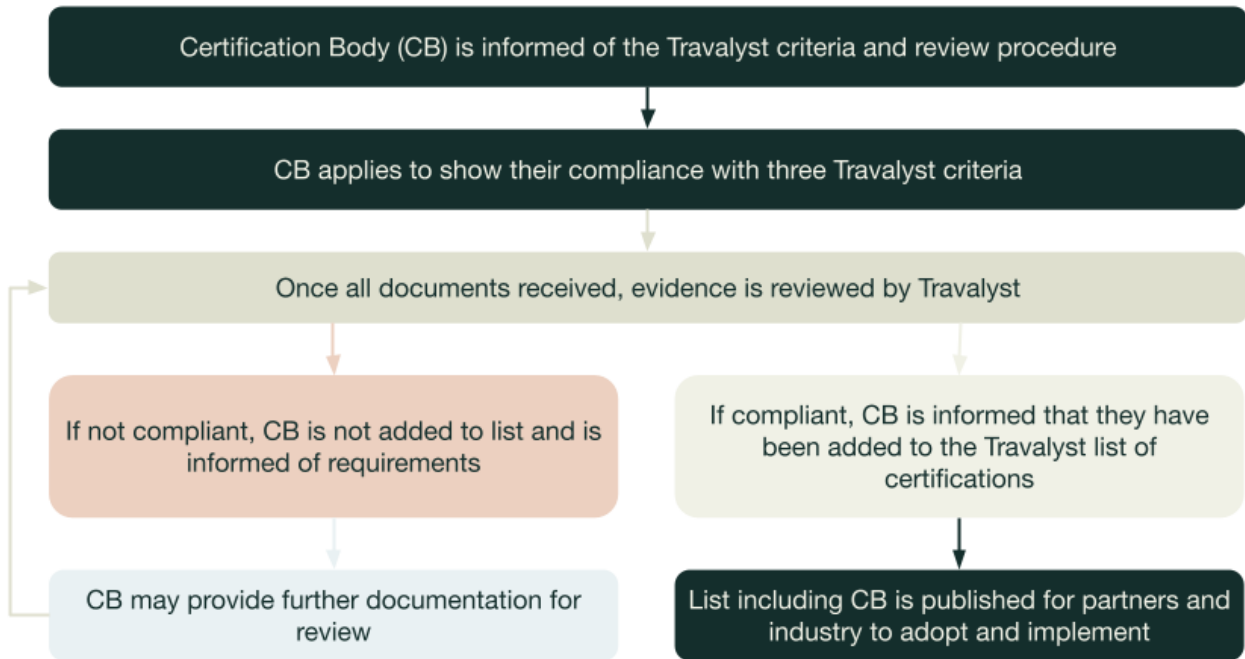


Figure 1: A flowchart to visualise the Certification Initiative Review Procedure

## What documentation is required for the review process?

The table below outlines the documentation required by Travalyst to show compliance.

Travalyst Criteria	Documentation accepted as proof
<p>1 Third-party audit that includes on-site and/or online assessment of sustainable practices reported by the property.</p>	<p>1.1a. Extract from CB process manual describing third-party audit process and frequency.</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>1.1b. CB promotional material (e.g. website/brochure) for properties, detailing third-party audits required to achieve certification.</p> <p><i>And</i></p> <p>1.2. Example of a recently completed third-party audit evaluation (less than 12 months old).</p> <p><i>And</i></p> <p>1.3. Evidence of qualifications of auditors (e.g. CVs, course certificates)</p>
<p>2 Public available standards upon which the certification is based.</p>	<p>2.1. Weblink provided by the CB, where the standards are accessible.</p>
<p>3 Focuses on evaluating the impact of social and/or economic, and/or environmental factors, among others, as encompassed within, but not restricted, to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).</p>	<p>3.1. CB standard/s.</p> <p>3.2. CB is asked to share their own comparison of their standard with the SDGs, using a template prepared by Travalyst.</p> <p>3.3. Information on how tiered certification reflects different levels of coverage of criteria within the CB's standard (e.g. bronze, silver, gold, platinum etc)</p>

## What happens after the review process?

If an applicant certification body is found to be compliant with the three Travalyst criteria, they will be included in Travalyst's list of certifications. We will make this list publicly available for partners and the wider industry to adopt and implement.

If a certification body applies and is not compliant with the Travalyst criteria, they will be informed of missing requirements and are welcome to provide further documentation for review. At present there is no limit on the number of times a certification body can re-apply, and there is no closing date for the initiative. A certification body can only be included on Travalyst's list of compliant certifications if they apply to be reviewed. If a certification body does not apply, Travalyst cannot review whether they are compliant with the three criteria.

## How can I find out more information?

For more information visit <https://travalyst.org/work/certifications-initiative/>

To read our full press release on the certifications initiative, visit <https://travalyst.org/news/travalyst-vets-certifications-for-display-on-leading-travel-booking-platforms/>

For any comments or queries, please contact us at [certifications@travalyst.org](mailto:certifications@travalyst.org)