WORKING MATERIAL 1.10 · CHAPTER 1 — THE VISION OF OWNERSHIP (SECTION A) · SETTING: PONTA DELGADA, AZORES, PORTUGAL

Collaboration with the Destination

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7a — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 1.10 (book page 121)

GUIDING QUESTION

A hotel can run an excellent sustainability plan inside its own walls and still work against the place it depends on. When the destination has priorities of its own, who in the hotel knows what they are, and what does the standard expect a property to do about them?

1 · Verification Pact: market claims against the standard

Copied from the book. The last column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know it.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
Membership of a tourism association satisfies the criterion	Only partially true	Membership can be engagement, but A9.1 asks for documented engagement aimed at aligning goals with destination priorities	
Engagement must be documented	Yes	A9.1 asks the hotel to maintain documented engagement with relevant local stakeholders	
The hotel must implement everything the destination decides	No	The guidelines say the hotel considers and, where feasible, applies mutually agreed outcomes in proportion to size and capacity	
Only the DMO counts as a stakeholder	No	A9.1 also names NGOs, tourism boards, community leaders, cooperatives and local tourism-related associations	
A hotel with a strong internal plan has met its obligations to the destination	No	A9 asks for alignment with broader community and destination priorities	
Promoting local products can be a form of engagement	Yes	The guidelines list promoting local products and cultural heritage among forms of engagement	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property, and note where it shows.

☐ Building the sustainability plan entirely from inside the property.

☐ Leaving destination invitations in a shared inbox with no one responsible for them.

☐ Treating paid membership of a programme as equivalent to engagement.

☐ Attending meetings without recording what was discussed or agreed.

☐ Assuming the hotel must adopt every destination initiative, rather than what is feasible in proportion.

☐ Considering only the DMO and ignoring NGOs, cooperatives and community leaders.

☐ Running excursions and purchasing without reference to destination priorities.

☐ Listening at meetings without contributing what the hotel knows about visitors.

3 · A Checklist for Engagement with the Destination

The book's checklist, with a column for your own answer.

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
Who are the relevant local stakeholders, and what are their published or stated priorities?	A9.1 asks for engagement with relevant stakeholders to align with destination priorities	
Who in the hotel is responsible for engagement, and do invitations reach them?	Without a defined role, engagement depends on chance	
Is our engagement documented in a form an auditor could read?	A9.1 asks for documented engagement	
Have we compared our plan, excursions and purchasing with destination priorities?	Alignment, not attendance, is the purpose of the criterion	
Have we applied agreed outcomes where feasible, and recorded why where not?	The guidelines ask for outcomes in proportion to size and capacity	
Do we report our engagement in our annual sustainability report?	A4 asks the hotel to communicate its actions to stakeholders	

4 · What would show this is working

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. Indicator references point to the GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0; where the evidence lives is this book's practice, not a requirement of the standard.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Is engagement with relevant local stakeholders documented (A9.1)?	Minutes, notes of meetings attended, correspondence	☐
Are the named stakeholders identified: DMO, NGOs, tourism board, community leaders, cooperatives, associations?	Stakeholder list with contact person	☐
Have we compared our plan and activities with the destination's published priorities?	Written comparison kept with the plan	☐
Where outcomes were agreed, were they applied in proportion to our size, and are reasons recorded where not?	Decision record beside each agreed outcome	☐
Is someone in the hotel responsible for destination engagement?	Role assignment and time allocated	☐

> *What this sheet is not: the GSTC Hotel Standard does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard's criteria, indicators and guidelines govern the real case. Independent material; not affiliated with or endorsed by the GSTC. The standard's own text at www.gstc.org prevails.*