The Linden Centre: Pursuing the Green Globe Certification

A Feasibility Assessment
Acknowledgements: Kate Fritz and Glenn ReDavid as part of their requirement to graduate for Virginia Tech’s College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE), Master of Natural Resource Management compiled this report.

**Introduction**

With certification becoming the standard for hotels and businesses across the globe, the need for the Linden Centre to be a leader in China is growing.\(^1\) China is in a period of unprecedented economic growth and with that comes the need for rapid infrastructure building projects.\(^2\) Sometimes in the push to expand, a country can sweep aside its own priceless historical and natural treasures. Certification can help China grow in an accountable, sustainable way, ensuring its resources are there for future generations.\(^3\) The Linden Centre can become an example within China for this responsible growth.

Becoming certified is not an easy process. It can be intimidating when a company is first starting out. A comprehensive look at how far the Linden Centre has already traveled on the road to certification is documented in this report. With a quick look at the information provided, the amount of work the Linden Centre has already completed will be apparent because of the coloring system listed in the included spreadsheet, found on page 26. The key of the coloring system is as follows: green equals 75%-100% completed, yellow equals 25%-75% completed, and red equals 0%-25 completed. It should be noted that the assigned percentages were from XMNR students’ brief interactions with the Centre, and therefore the amount of work completed may be even further along than the chart or supporting information indicates. This is most likely true for certification areas highlighted in yellow or red, as oftentimes XMNR students did not have enough information to evaluate in the analysis.

In addition, the chart has been divided into sections so that the requirements can be clearly explained. Implementing a plan to fulfill the requirements that are described in the included guide for creating a Sustainable Management Plan (SMS) will allow the Linden Centre to become certified under the Green Globe certification. A detailed SMS will allow a company to combine all parts of its business into one cohesive plan that addresses environmental, cultural, and economic concerns.\(^4\) The Linden Centre is already working hard to create a sustainable business that will preserve both the natural and historical treasures within China. Certification will be a symbol for all the hard work and a beacon for other operations to follow in the Linden Centre’ footsteps. Pursuing the Green Globe certification will


help the Centre increase their branding as providing a sustainable tourist destination, and can help to attract more guests pursuing this type of experience.

**Green Globe Certification**

**Sustainable Management**

**A.1 Implement a Sustainability Management System (SMS)**

**Criteria:** *The Business has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health, and safety issues.*

**Current Status:** Currently, the Linden Centre does not have an SMS in place. However, there are various elements in existence at the Linden Centre that can be incorporated into an overall SMS. Many of these opportunities can also be found in the Roadmap to Sustainability document.

**Recommended Next Steps:** The information provided in the SMS section (page 33), found at the end of this Appendix, will provide a template and guidance on how to create an SMS for the Linden Centre.

**Resources:** Proposed Sustainable Management System (SMS), page 33.

**A.2 Legal Compliance**

**Criteria:** *The Business is in compliance with all relevant international or local legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labor, and environmental aspects).*

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre has complied with all local regulations and ordinances, especially as they relate to historic restoration and preservation. Since the Centre has been operating since ____, it is likely in compliance with all health, safety, labor, and environmental regulations. In addition, the Linden Centre currently employs a staff member charged with liaising with the local government. With the addition of more detail specific to current legal compliance, the Centre should easily achieve this credit area.

**Recommended Next Steps:** The Linden Centre should enumerate all of the permits and permissions that they have been officially granted from local and state governmental authorities. The job description for the government liaison could also be included to help meet this criterion.

**A.3 Employee Training**

**Criteria:** *All personnel receive periodic training regarding their role in the management of environmental, sociocultural, health, and safety practices.*
**Current Status:** It was unclear to the extent that the Linden Centre provided regular training regarding the above-mentioned roles. It was mentioned at the visioning session that an employee handbook would be a helpful item for new employees to understand their role and the business. With the implementation of some other aspects of this certification, the Centre should achieve this credit.

**Recommended Next Steps:** The Linden Centre should enumerate all of the training opportunities that they provide for staff currently. This could be trainings that are provided on-site, and any off-site training opportunities. This is an opportunity for the Linden Centre to take the Sustainability Management System (SMS) (see Section A.1) that is created, and integrate elements of its implementation across various staff training platforms or opportunities. This is an opportunity to integrate the goals and values of the Linden Centre into new staff training as it relates to implementing sustainability practices.

**Resources:** It should be noted that the Green Globe Certification includes opportunities for employee training through the annual dues and fees. Currently, there is an online training opportunity entitled “Sustainability Training Series for Tourism and Travel Industry Professionals” that can be accessed at any time. Key concepts in the training include: human rights and ethics, health and safety, social and community support, chemicals, waste, water, energy and carbon emissions, climate change, and corporate social responsibility. This training would help staff in their overall performance at the Linden Centre, and would assist in staff’s preparation of the Green Globe Certification application. Information regarding this Sustainability Training can be accessed at [http://greenglobe.com/academy/sustainability-training/](http://greenglobe.com/academy/sustainability-training/).

**A.4 Customer Satisfaction**

**Criteria:** *Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken where appropriate.*

**Current Status:** It is uncertain how the Linden Centre measures customer satisfaction. It is critical to note that currently, the Linden Centre is the number one hotel to visit in China according to TripAdvisor.com. The Centre is currently ranked #1 out of 123 hotels. With the creation of some simple feedback and survey tools, the Linden Centre will be able to meet this criterion.

**Recommended Next Steps:** There is an opportunity for the Linden Centre to solicit feedback from guests, which could be achieved through various methods. There is an opportunity for an electronic survey to be provided via e-mail post visit, and also to provide a hard copy in each room. Surveying is a simple and cheap method to solicit feedback from guests regarding their stay and overall experience. Surveying can also be linked back to implementing the SMS, and can provide a way to solicit the success of these sustainability improvements, as they are perceived by guests.
A.5 Accuracy of Promotional Material

**Criteria:** Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business.

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre currently operates a well-designed and graphically interesting website. They also provide a brochure that contains more information regarding the Centre. There is currently one staff member responsible for marketing for the Linden Centre, while various staff has a hand in crafting promotional material. Promotional material also exists through social media outlets such as Facebook and YouTube videos, along with reviews from guests on TripAdvisor.com.

**Recommended Next Steps:** It would be important to detail the process for preparation of the promotional materials utilized by the Linden Centre, including the current practices underway. Critically important to include here would be the person/company that helped prepare the materials. Changing promotional material could be an opportunity to manage expectations of guests through the appropriately informed material. When detailing these criteria, it can be beneficial to the Linden Centre to include some highlights from the communication strategy (see Section A.8) that will help provide insight into the accuracy of this material. Feedback from customer surveys can help inform promotional material to better target guest audiences.

**Resources:**

i-Sight. “Managing Customer Expectations to Improve Satisfaction.” Accessed May 10, 2012 from [http://www.customerexpressions.com/cex/cexweb.nsf/(GetPages)/fb0e21c03e1a1fbb85257011006e6396](http://www.customerexpressions.com/cex/cexweb.nsf/(GetPages)/fb0e21c03e1a1fbb85257011006e6396)
A.6     Local Zoning, Design, and Construction

A.6.1  Design and Construction – Compliance with Legal Requirements

Criteria: Comply with local land acquisition and land rights legislation and local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements.

Current Status: It is very clear that the Linden Centre has acquired the use and restoration of their current space through the appropriate governmental approvals and permits. It is apparent that all the appropriate local approvals have been attained, and that the Linden Centre is in compliance with appropriate ordinances. When the Linden Centre proposes to make changes to the building, it is clearly understood that they are required to follow the rules of the local government agent in charge of regulating historic buildings. As previously mentioned, there is a staff member dedicated to maintaining a positive relationship with local government officials and agencies. Through explanation of how the Centre meets current legal requirements, this criterion will likely be met.

Recommended Next Steps: If this hasn’t already been done, the Linden Centre could summarize all the local permits currently being held. There is also an opportunity for the Linden Centre to promote their conformance and partnership with governmental organizations on their website.

A.6.2 and 3  Sustainable Design and Construction of Buildings and Infrastructure – New and Existing Buildings

Criteria: Use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction and design while respecting the natural and cultural surroundings.

Current Status: The Linden Centre has done an excellent job of utilizing an existing historic building, and restoring the facility to historically correct and habitable status. The Linden Centre should include details regarding the employment of local villagers for the restoration activities. These employees were able to contribute to local construction methods and techniques for historic restoration. The building’s existing footprint was utilized when restoring this building, and therefore did not include any new development on a previously undeveloped site. As with other similar credit areas, include details regarding the restoration and construction of the Linden Centre should easily meet this criterion.

Recommended Next Steps: The Linden Centre could include information regarding the local workers that were employed by the various restoration efforts. Also, any stakeholders that were integrated into the planning and implementation process could be enumerated in this section. It should be clearly enumerated that the Linden Centre has increased the aesthetic, cultural, and historic assets of Xizhou village through restoring this landmark.
A.7 Interpretation

**Criteria:** Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behavior while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.

**Current Status:** The current program offerings for guests include many interpretation opportunities and are lead by knowledgeable staff. The Linden Centre does a wonderful job of introducing guests to the local culture in both the village and in the surrounding natural areas. Because of the Centre’s intimate relationship with Xizhou, the staff is keenly aware of culturally appropriate behaviors and advises guests on these as they tour the village. Because of their passion, staff is able to discuss the local culture and heritage of the village, translating this to guests as they go on excursions in the local area. All staff is, at a minimum, conversant in the local dialect, and are able to communicate well with the local residents.

**Recommended Next Steps:** While the Centre already does an excellent job in this category, there is an opportunity to potentially provide more signage for guests at the hotel. These signs could help educate guests who are exploring the Linden Center on their own, and would help further the education of guests without staff time. Section ___ of the Roadmap to Sustainability offers many opportunities for future programming that can help increase interpretation-related activities for guests.

**Resources:**


A.8 Communications Strategy

**Criteria:** The Business has implemented a comprehensive communications strategy to inform visitors and guests on its sustainable policies, programs and initiatives.

**Current Status:** The website maintained by the Centre is comprehensive, and clearly defines its mission and values. This site includes information regarding expectations for guests that clearly define the type of experience that the guest will have. The communication regarding the social aspect of the Centre is clearly articulated in both the website, promotional material, and through staff interactions. The Centre also currently utilizes social media, such as Facebook, to connect with the rest of the world and share cultural experiences that way. Currently there is a staff person dedicated to overseeing the Marketing efforts of the Centre. If such a formal strategy does not exist, its creation will create a common messaging platform for all staff to work from. It appears some work will need to be done to achieve this credit if such a strategy does not currently exist.
Recommended Next Steps: There is potential to include a clearer and direct association with the environmental objectives in order to best round-out a comprehensive communication strategy. The ethos displayed by Centre staff in regards for the village, can evolve to include the natural resources of the Xizhou village area as well. These objectives could include organizational goals for reducing the overall environmental footprint of the Centre, along with the education of guests regarding these initiatives. There is also potential to increase the use of social media to include popular sites such as Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube, in order to help communicate within an international context.

Resources:


A.9 Health and Safety

Criteria: The Business ensures compliance with all relevant health and safety measures to ensure the well-being of its customers, staff and local community.

Current Status: The Linden Centre is likely in conformance with all local health and safety regulations, including Provincial and State regulations. The Centre is keenly attuned to guests needs, and has provided safe and healthy conditions. This includes ensuring a clean source of drinking water, and fresh and safe foods for guests and staff alike. While it is unclear what, if any, health and safety requirements the Centre must adhere to, enumerating the current efforts will likely easily achieve this criterion.

Recommended Next Steps: There is an opportunity to reiterate the positive relationship that the Centre has with the local government officials. In order to fulfill these criteria, the
Linden Centre can enumerate the legal processes that they have gone through in order to reach full compliance.

**Resources:**


**B. Social/Economic**

**B.1 Community Development**

**Criteria:** The business actively supports initiatives for social and infrastructure community development including, among others, education, health, and sanitation.

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre is an active member of the Xizhou community, and works diligently as an active and responsible member of the village. The Centre is often involved with community events like a trash pickup at Erhai Lake. Informal community development takes place every day through operations and guest engagement opportunities like tours and cultural events in the village. The building is oftentimes opened to cultural events and activities, and is utilized as a gathering place to exchange learning and ideas. The Centre oftentimes proactively invites local artisans and craftsmen to their building in order to display their wares and goods. Local musicians from the Bai minority are often invited to the facility to perform traditional music for hotel guests.

**Recommended Next Steps:** It is unclear as to the exact extent that the Linden Centre provides community development in a formalized way. Currently, it appears that most community development is provided through informal interactions. This certification area is one the Linden Centre will likely easily achieve. There are many future opportunities to create formal community development, including potential training and education for villagers. This training could include demonstrating various sustainability-related operations, which would benefit the larger village and general quality of life in Xizhou. There are many opportunities to partner with local organizations involved in community development in the village, such as with the Community-Driven Development (CDD) initiative.

**Resources:**


**B.2 Local Employment**

**Criteria:** Local residents are employed, including in management positions. Training is offered as necessary.

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre currently employs many local citizens that are intimately familiar and linked to the Yunnan Province as a whole. From the very start of restoration of the Centre, there has been a dedicated use of local labor. Many local employees hold management positions that supervise other local employees. Including details regarding the demographics of the employees, the Centre will likely easily achieve this credit area.

**Recommended Next Steps:** If the Centre is not already doing so, there is an opportunity to track statistics regarding the demographics of staff employed. This tracking will help best fulfill this Green Globe certification requirement, while also providing an introspective look at internal employee hiring practices.

**B.3 Fair Trade**

**Criteria:** Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business, where available.

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre consciously purchases locally produced goods and services from the Dali area. They support local businesses by leading guest tours through local shops, and encouraging guests to purchase from these villagers. The visitor experience is therefore enhanced through interactions with local villagers. Food is oftentimes acquired from the local village market, helping to reduce costs and greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. It appears that most transactions for food and goods to operate the Centre are done through individuals and not through large corporations.

**Recommended Next Steps:** This area of the certification is one that the Linden Centre does very well already. Inclusion of details regarding current methods for purchasing local goods and services can be enumerated to help meet this criterion.

**B.4 Support Local Entrepreneurs**
**Criteria:** The business offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area’s nature, history, and culture (including food and drink, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).

**Current Status:** As was mentioned in Section B.3, the Linden Centre actively helps small local entrepreneurs to sell their products by introducing guests to these shops. As was referenced in Section B.1, the Centre also extends invitations to local minority artisans to display and sell their goods at the facility. It appears that the Centre creates arrangements with local businesses for specific needs such as furnishings or food. As with many of the other sections, inclusion of details of current practices will help to achieve this credit area.

**Recommended Next Steps:** The Centre can continue to support and develop other potential relationships with local vendors and businesses.

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### B.5 Respect Local Communities

**Criteria:** A code of conduct for activities in local communities has been developed, with the consent of and in collaboration with the community.

**Current Status:** As has been mentioned before, the Centre does an excellent job integrating tourism opportunities in culturally appropriate ways in Xizhou village. The Centre has worked diligently to integrate the traditions of the local culture into their every day operations. The Centre respects the community in such a way that only those residents interested in being included in the tourist activities are involved. As previously stated, staff direct guests in appropriate mannerisms and behaviors to show respect. With the formalization of a code of conduct, the Linden Center will easily meet this certification area while formalizing employee behavior with both guests and the local village residents.

**Recommended Next Steps:** While the Centre is already integrated into the community in a meaningful way, there is an opportunity to formally adopt an employee code of conduct. This can be integrated into the employee handbook and any future training. This training can enable staff to educate guests in proper manners and etiquette when visiting with Xizhou residents. This code would help educate new staff on expectations regarding their interactions with guests and local village residents. Information regarding conduct could also be provided to guests in each room or within common areas. A preparatory email could also be provided to guests ahead of their stay.

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### B.6 Exploitation

**Criteria:** The business has implemented a policy against commercial exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation.

**Current Status:** It is likely that the Linden Centre does not engage in business dealings with those that exploit child labor or take advantage of disadvantaged populations. The familial setting of the Centre displays a deep respect for children and women. Through the
detailing of their commitment to prohibiting exploiting behaviors, the Linden Centre will likely easily achieve this credit area.

**Recommended Next Steps:** In order to obtain this credit, it is likely that the Linden Centre has to demonstrate their commitment to not exploiting women or children in the village. Commitment to this practice can be incorporated into the overall mission statement and operations of the Centre.

### B.7 Equitable Hiring

**Criteria:** The business is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions, while restraining child labor.

**Current Status:** Women and local minorities are currently integrated into various positions at the Linden Centre. Women currently hold positions such as Director of Operations, Associate Travel Curator, Front Desk Supervisor, Guest Relations Associate, and Housekeeping Supervisor local to the Yunnan Province. It appears that the Linden Centre adequately meets this Green Globe Certification requirement already.

**Recommended Next Steps:** As with other Green Globe credit areas, the Linden Centre has an opportunity to better track employee statistics. For this credit, the Centre has an opportunity to track where employees are from in relation to the Centre, their gender, and their ethnicity. This kind of reporting can help annually track the progress of the Linden Centre in meeting equitable hiring requirements, and reaffirms the commitment to local community development.

### B.8 Employee Protection

**Criteria:** The international or national legal protection of employees is respected and employees are paid a living wage.

**Current Status:** While it is not known how much the Linden Centre pays their staff, it is suspected that staff are indeed paid a living wage by international standards. Due to the familial nature of the Centre, it appears that employees are provided basic services such as food, health care, shelter, and education. Meals are provided for staff members, which is cooked at a kitchen located across the street from the Centre. Through details regarding the current status of employee compensation, the Linden Center will likely easily achieve this credit area.

**Recommended Next Steps:** This Green Globe credit area presents an opportunity for the Linden Centre to formally adopt any employee protection standards laid out by the International Labour Organizaiton (ILO). This formal adoption will create a competitive advantage as the Linden Centre continues to grow and expand around China. As has been mentioned, the formal adoption of employee protection practices can be incorporated into an employee handbook, and the Centre’s overall guiding principles for operation. There is also an opportunity for the Centre to include any employee protection requirements
relevant to the local or state governmental structure. This formal step would once again help manage the Centre’s expectations for staff.

Resources:


B.9 Basic Services

Criteria: The activities of the business do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy, or sanitation, to neighboring communities.

Current Status: The current method of operations by the Linden Centre does not appear to alter, disrupt, or strain community infrastructure and basic services. In fact, it appears that the Centre provides basic services to many of their staff as part of routine operations. Operations of the Centre do not threaten the socioeconomic or environmental character of Xizhou village. The Centre’s operations appear to blend seamlessly into the village. For example, the Centre utilizes local horse drawn carts to move guest luggage through the streets of Xizhou. Clearly enumerating the various ways that the Centre embraces local culture and tradition will help to easily achieve this credit area.

Recommended Next Steps: To fulfill this credit, the Linden Centre can enumerate the various basic services that they provide to both staff and local villagers. Including a narrative regarding some of the practices that the Centre participates in to not create an extra burden on the village will help to achieve this credit area.

C. Cultural Heritage

C.1 Code of Behavior

Criteria: The business follows established guidelines or a code of behavior for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.

Current Status: As was enumerated in Section B.5, the Centre already provides guidance to staff and guests regarding culturally appropriate interactions with villagers. The Centre best demonstrates its respect for local culture by striving to restore local landmark buildings, and to integrate local art, culture, and music into their daily operations and guest engagement programs.

Recommended Next Steps: Again, the Linden Centre has the opportunity to formally adopt employee codes of conduct or behavior, while integrating this information into
formal staff training. This will help to ensure that the Centre’s overall value system is integrated at the staff level, ensuring high quality service that delivers respectful interactions with the community.

### Resources:


### C.2 Historical Artifacts

**Criteria:** Historical and archeological artifacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by law.

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre deals closely with local historical and archeological artifacts. It does so in such a way that respects the local community by providing safe and culturally appropriate preservation at their hotel. Oftentimes, artifacts that are being discarded from other local landmarks are saved and preserved at the Linden Centre in their geographically appropriate location. While the Centre often brings guests through local shops that sell artifacts, they do not support stores that illegally procure or sell artifacts. They extend this knowledge to their guests in order that visitors better understand local artifacts and the significance of not removing these from the area. By including details regarding this practice, the Linden Centre can easily meet this Green Globe requirement.

**Recommended Next Steps:** There is an opportunity for the Linden Centre to include information regarding this subject on their website. Information regarding how they actively preserve local heritage can be provided in order to show their commitment to this important cultural imperative. This information can also be integrated into promotional materials produced by the Centre.

### C.3 Protection of Sites

**Criteria:** The business contributes to the protection of local historical, archeological, culturally, and spiritually important properties and sites, and does not impede access to them by local residents.

**Current Status:** As has been enumerated again and again, it is clear that the Linden Centre goes above and beyond to protect historic and culturally important properties in Xizhou village. The Centre currently coordinates with both local villagers and governmental officials in the correct preservation of this historically significant site. It is very clear that this preservation is integral in the daily operations of the Centre, and can help to achieve this Green Globe credit very easily.
**Recommended Next Steps:** There is an opportunity to continue to integrate the Centre’s values of preserving local historic and cultural facilities into marketing and branding material. As the Centre moves forward in expanding, integration of this information can help increase the brand of the hotel and provide for stronger offerings for guest experiences. Detailing the various efforts taken to carefully restore the building can help ensure meeting this credit area.

### C.4 Incorporation of Culture

**Criteria:** The business uses elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

**Current Status:** As has been enumerated in the other areas of this Green Globe category, the Linden Centre incorporates local culture very well into its day-to-day operations. Regular communication with local leaders appears to occur frequently, and its importance to the Linden Centre is punctuated by the fact that there is staff dedicated as the governmental liaison. It is very obvious that the Centre cares deeply about utilizing many aspects of local culture in their daily operations. Due to this incredible commitment, it is believed that this Green Globe certification credit can be easily obtained.

**Recommended Next Steps:** This credit is an opportunity for the Linden Centre to better track and reports their operations that integrate local culture into practice. This is already enumerated through marketing materials, but can be reiterated in different creative ways such as through social media outlets. This exercise might also help streamline restoration at other future ventures for the Centre.

**Resources:**


### D. Environmental

#### D.1 Conserving Resources

##### D.1.1 Purchasing Policy

**Criteria:** Purchasing policy favors environmentally friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food, and consumables.

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre currently engages many local businesses to obtain locally produced foods and products. Observations of the Centre concluded that many items appear to be obtained through a local business network that has a low environmental impact and favors local businesses. Purchasing food from the local market and utilizing...
reusable dishes and silverware in the dining room are examples of this. It is possible that a
formal purchasing policy exists at the Linden Centre, and an opportunity to incorporate
different purchasing preferences can be included in this initiative. Other examples of
current Centre practices include obtaining building materials from other existing sites that
are slated for demolition, thereby promoting the purchase and reuse of building materials
in Linden Centre operations. This also helps meet many certification areas under Section C,
Cultural Heritage, of the Green Globe Certification.

**Recommended Next Steps:** Creating a formal purchasing policy can help not only the
Centre, but local businesses as well. It can help encourage a local market for sustainably
produced goods and services, and can help promote the talent of local businesses, and
provide a reliable network for them to distribute their goods and services on a larger scale.
This purchasing policy can help demand products from providers that seek to conserve
energy, utilize recycled materials, responsibly manage waste, and minimize greenhouse gas
emissions. There is an opportunity to incorporate responsibility towards creating and
maintaining this practice into the Director of Operations’ job description and
responsibilities. Staff dedicated to policing the procurement practices of the Linden Centre
will ensure that this practice is implemented in a consistent manner. There are many
opportunities for monetary savings through the implementation of a sustainable
purchasing policy.

**Resources:**

Fuguo, C., Yuying, Y., Fen, Z. “Towards Sustainable Public Procurement In China: Policy and
Regulatory Framework, Current Developments, and the Case for a Consolidated Green

“How to Create a Formal Purchasing Program: Make sure you’re purchasing high quality
supplies at good prices by formalizing your business’s purchasing.” Accessed May 15, 2012

International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN). “IGPN and Green Purchasing Activities in

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). “An Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).
“Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production in Asia and the Pacific.” Accessed
May 19, 2012 from [www.greengrowth.org/.../sustainable_consumption_and_production](http://www.greengrowth.org/.../sustainable_consumption_and_production).

**D.1.2 Consumable Goods**
**Criteria:** The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and the business actively seeks ways to reduce their use.

**Current Status:** It appears that the Linden Centre is already making strides towards reducing their use of consumable goods. Some current practices include recycling the plastic water bottles that are occasionally used at the Centre, and composting in the off-site courtyard. It was observed that food scraps are collected and distributed to a local farmer who utilizes them to feed livestock. With the implementation of a tracking and reporting system, the Centre will likely easily meet this credit area.

**Recommended Next Steps:** As with many of these certification areas, there is an opportunity to incorporate monthly monitoring and tracking. This tracking should include both compostable, recyclable, and other solid waste. The purchase of consumable goods should also be tracked (see Section D.1.1 for further information) in order to have a monthly baseline for tracking how much waste is produced. These measurements can be incorporated into the SMS (see Section A.1) and can provide information for the Centre regarding their efforts. There is an opportunity for cost savings as well, as anything that is thrown away is a cost that cannot be recaptured. For example, the Centre is currently recycling plastic bottles for an amount of Yuen per bottle, which is contributing to the reduction of overall expenditures. The four simple rules of reducing waste include avoiding, reducing, reusing, and recycling.

**Resources:**


**D.1.3 Energy Consumption**

**Criteria:** Energy consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.

**Current Status:** The energy purchased by the Linden Centre is largely derived from hydropower, which is oftentimes regarded as a clean source of energy. Because of this, energy prices oftentimes increase during the summer months when the rain is less frequent and water is being utilized heavily by agricultural processes. These price spikes can cause the Centre to spend more for electricity during certain months. It should be
noted that a solar water heater was located in the kitchen, and is helping to alleviate the
need for power from the larger grid, therefore making the Linden Centre able to generate
part of their own electricity. For a more detailed list of current ongoing practices, refer to
the Roadmap to Sustainability report, Energy Efficiency Section.

**Recommended Next Steps:** There are various opportunities to increase energy efficiency
at the Linden Centre, many of which are outlined in the Roadmap to Sustainability report.
These opportunities include monitoring monthly utility bills, training staff on energy
efficiency practices, creating an incentive system for staff, and providing routine
preventative maintenance on different appliances and systems. The largest opportunity in
this certification area is for the Centre to implement a system of monitoring and measuring.
This can be implemented through the SMS (see Section A.1 for details), and can help the
Centre track its savings from different implementation strategies over time. Measuring and
monitoring will help to identify anomalies in power use, and allow for course correction to
help save money.

**Resources:**

19, 2012 from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-
growth/sustainability/top-apps-for-monitoring-your-energy-use/article2152177/.

“Monitoring Your Energy Use – Small Businesses.” Energy Efficiency and Conservation
Authority, New Zealand. Accessed May 19, 2012 from
http://www.eecabusiness.govt.nz/how-to-be-energy-efficient/small-and-medium-
businesses/monitoring-your-energy-use.

Small Business CEO. “Top Ways SMBS Can Save on Energy Costs Now.” Accessed May 19,
2012 from http://www.smbceo.com/2010/04/15/energy-
costs/.

**D.1.4 Water Consumption**

**Criteria:** *Water consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to
decrease overall consumption should be adopted.*

**Current Status:** The Linden Centre is already making strides in reducing the amount of
water consumed throughout the hotel. Many of the ongoing water conservation strategies
are listed in the Roadmap to Sustainability report. These include a linen exchange program
and providing potable water for drinking in refillable pitchers versus individual water
bottles in guest rooms and common spaces. Like other areas in the Green Globe
Certification, there are many opportunities for the Centre to increase their water
conservation efforts through tracking and monitoring. For a more detailed list of current
ongoing practices, refer to the Roadmap to Sustainability report, Water and Waste Water
Management Section.
**Recommended Next Steps:** As has been mentioned, tracking and monitoring of water use can be a valuable step to take to reduce consumption at the Centre. This can be a very simple exercise, and can be started off with monitoring monthly water bills. There are many free apps and spreadsheets that exist on the web, and the Linden Centre can utilize one of these systems to help them track water use. A highly respected tracking tool is one called the Global Water Tool produced by the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD). These tracking and measuring efforts can be incorporated into the overall SMS (See Section A.1).

**Resources:**


**D.2 Reducing Pollution**

**D.2.1 Greenhouse Gas**

**Criteria:** Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are measured, and procedures are implemented to reduce and offset them as a way to minimize climate change.

**Current Status:** Due to the remote location of the Linden Centre, transportation emissions from guest travel are relatively high. This is especially due to emissions from air transportation and bus rides to Xizhou. The Centre likely does not produce high emissions from heating or cooling because there is no central system for this purpose. Space heaters located in each guest room provide heating when needed, which is not often. As has been mentioned, electricity used by the Centre is generally produced by hydropower, which has a very low emissions rate, and thereby helps the Centre be a low-emitting institution. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the Linden Centre can help reduce operating costs, as this effort is directly linked to utilizing less or cleaner electricity, and managing solid waste properly. Solid waste management opportunities can be reviewed in Section D.1.2. Opportunities for energy conservation can be found in Section D.1.3.

**Recommended Next Steps:** The area of highest emissions is likely from the air and ground transportation undertaken by guests. There is an opportunity to include information on the Centre’s website regarding offsetting carbon emissions, such as through TerraPass.com, which would help to reinforce the sustainable brand. There is also an opportunity to properly treat wastewater from the Centre, which can cause an increase in methane production, one of the greenhouse gases. Recommendations for potential
wastewater treatment upgrades can be found in the complete Roadmap to Sustainability report. Taking strides in reducing pollution from these sources will help the Linden Centre reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Resources:


D.2.2 Wastewater

Criteria: Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible.

Current Status: Currently, the Linden Centre provides primary treatment of the hotels wastewater. This means that there is a settling tank (located in the far courtyard), which separates the solid from the liquid waste. This treatment does not currently treat any of the bacteria from the waste stream, which is occasionally pumped out of the building into a nearby channel, which carries the waste to Erhai Lake. In order to pursue Green Globe Certification, proper and adequate wastewater treatment will need to occur. In conjunction with other untreated wastewater from other village residences, there is great potential for aquatic pollution and negative impacts to both fish species and the human population until there is adequate waste treatment.

Recommended Next Steps: The details of potential options for wastewater treatment at the Linden Centre have been enumerated in the Roadmap to Sustainability report. These options include three choices: hooking up to the existing wastewater treatment plant, installing a septic field in the nearby agricultural field, or creating a living machine treatment system in one of the courtyards. The Roadmap to Sustainability report should be referenced for details regarding these options.

Resources:

Striving for Sustainability: A Strategic Roadmap for the Linden Centre, June 2012.
D.2.3  Waste Management Plan

D.2.3.1  Plan and Reduce

Criteria: A solid waste management plan is implemented, with quantitative goals to minimize waste that is not reused or recycled.

Current Status: It appears that the Linden Centre does not currently have a solid waste management plan in place, but already implements many elements of one. Formalizing actions that already occur can help create institutional knowledge that can transfer to new staff and other venture opportunities and locations. This is an opportunity to align the values of the Centre, staff trainings, and a formalized plan in order to continue to boost the branding image of the hotel.

Recommended Next Steps: The Linden Centre can create a solid waste management plan as part of their overall SMS. This plan should include measurable and trackable goals, and should include specific details for implementation including who is responsible and a process for measuring this initiative. The items required under this certification criteria, Waste Management Plan, will help to fill in the gaps of creating a solid waste management plan.

Resources:


D.2.3.2 Reuse

Criteria: A comprehensive strategy of reuse exists to reduce waste to landfill.

Current Status: The Linden Centre is actively committed to reusing building materials from other sites in the restoration of their own, thereby reducing the amount of waste that ends up in the landfill. This reuse enables the Centre to participate in historically correct restoration of the building while reducing the environmental impact of the building. While it has been noted that the Linden Centre does currently divert recyclables from the landfill, it does not appear that there is a plan for active reuse of various materials. It has been noted that the Centre does actively reuse material from other buildings. Again, formalizing this reuse practice can help ensure achieving this certification credit area.

Recommended Next Steps: The solid waste management plan should include information regarding the Centre’s intentions to reuse items around the building and village. These areas to be included can be related to building materials, packing and shipping materials.

D.2.3.3 Recycle

Criteria: A comprehensive recycling strategy exists to reduce waste to landfill.

Current Status: As has been mentioned in this certification section, the Linden Centre currently actively recycles its plastic waste and composts or feeds livestock with its food waste. There is an opportunity to expand this in a greater way, and this can be incorporated into the SMS for the facility. This recycling strategy is also an element of the overall Waste Management Plan.

Recommended Next Steps: The Linden Centre can expand the amount of waste they are recycling, and can even help spur local markets for recycling and recycled goods. Oftentimes, recycled items can provide material for various commodity markets, and the Centre can potentially benefit from getting paid for recycling parts of its waste stream. This can help increase the bottom line of the center, and potentially spur a local niche and market for this recyclable material. This effort will also help reduce the amount of trash ending up in the landfill, thereby helping with the aesthetic appeal of the village.

Resources:

D.2.4 Harmful Substances

Criteria: The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized; substituted, when available, by innocuous products; and all chemical use is properly managed.

Current Status: The Linden Centre currently proactively reduces the use of harmful cleaning and hygiene products by using natural, and oftentimes, homemade substitutions. The Centre has experimented with different brands of eco-friendly cleaners, and currently utilizes these products to clean the guest rooms, common spaces, and other areas of their facility. The Centre has also engaged staff in this effort by creating naturally based shampoos, conditioners, and lotions, which are available for guest use in each room. It is unknown where other harmful chemicals such as pesticides are kept at the facility. Detailing the storage of harmful chemicals will help the Centre achieve this credit.

Recommended Next Steps: If not already underway, the Linden Centre can take steps towards safely securing harmful chemicals away from guests and staff, in properly ventilated and secured spaces, and in proper storage containers. This will help ensure that neither humans nor the environment are contaminated by any of these harmful substances. There are various international standards that can be followed if local regulations do not exist.

Resources:


D.2.5 Other Pollutants

Criteria: The business implements practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants.
**Current Status:** It is unclear how the Linden Centre currently mitigates against utilizing substances that deplete the ozone or pollute air and soil. Currently, there does not appear to be any practices in place to help control runoff or erosion caused by storm events. The Centre does not appear to contribute heavily to noise and light pollution, and operates in a manner that minimally contributes to these pollutants. Not enough is currently known about the Linden Centre’s practices in regards to preventing these types of pollution. Through applying for this credit, the Centre can actively answer these questions and demonstrate how they already achieve them. It should be noted that China actively regulates ozone depleting substances, and the Linden Centre likely benefits from this by not being able to purchase harmful substances.

**Recommended Next Steps:** There is potential for the Linden Centre to educate and train staff regarding the prevention of pollution sources such as those listed in this criterion. Enumerating current practices regarding light and noise pollution, stormwater runoff control, and ozone depleting substances, will help achieve this credit area.

**Resources:**


**D.3 Conserving Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Landscapes**

**D.3.1 Wildlife Species**

**Criteria:** *Wildlife species are only harvested from the wild, consumed, displayed, sold, or internationally traded, as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable.*
Current Status: It does not appear that the Linden Centre harvests, consumes, displays or sells any wildlife species at this time. The building materials that they use do not include any precious woods, and are oftentimes sourced from existing buildings that are being demolished. Foods are sourced locally from farms, and do not include the harvesting of any locally scarce or endangered plants. It is likely that the Centre will easily meet this Green Globe Certification criteria.

D.3.2 Wildlife in Captivity

Criteria: No captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated activities, and living specimens of protected wildlife species are only kept by those authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them.

Current Status: The Linden Centre does not appear to have any animals, domestic or wild, at their facility. The Centre will likely easily meet this Green Globe Certification criteria.

D.3.3 Landscaping

Criteria: The business uses native species for landscaping and restoration, and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.

Current Status: The only landscaping that appears to occur at the Linden Centre is in the last two courtyards. The plants included in these areas appear to be native to the region, and no non-native species were observed. Securing this area of certification does not appear to be a problem for the Linden Centre. There is an opportunity to formally adopt a practice that prohibits the planting of non-native plant species at the Linden Centre.

D.3.4 Biodiversity Conservation

Criteria: The business contributes to the support of biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.

Current Status: A number of the excursion options provided for guests include visits to local natural areas where guests can learn about the conservation efforts underway. Tourism of such areas as Erhai Lake or Cangshan Mountain is an important way that the Linden Centre provides a locational experience for guests. Bike rides through Xizhou Village include a ride by Erhai Lake, where local farming practices can be viewed in relation to the landscape.

Recommended Next Steps: There is an opportunity for staff to engage guests more on the topic of biodiversity and natural resources in the region. This type of guest engagement can help bring more awareness to biodiversity conservation efforts, and might result in future community development opportunities to help further these efforts. The Roadmap to Sustainability report provides detailed information regarding opportunities to offer guest engagement packages related to this Green Globe criterion. There are also extensive resources listed in this report.
D.3.5 Interactions with Wildlife

**Criteria:** *Interactions with wildlife must not produce adverse effects on the viability of populations in the wild; and any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and there is compensatory contribution to conservation management.*

**Current Status:** The Centre’s guest outings involving natural areas provide passive opportunities, and do not appear to interact with plants and animals in the wild other than from an observational vantage point. The Centre has taken opportunities within the local community to help pickup trash, which promotes safer conditions for wildlife and aesthetic appeal of the natural areas. It appears that the Centre will easily meet this condition for certification.

**Recommended Next Steps:** As was described in Section D.3.4, there are opportunities for more guest engagement surrounding natural resource issues in the Dali area, and the Yunnan Province. The Roadmap to Sustainability can help better identify some of these specific opportunities, included in the Guest Education and Engagement Section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Globe Certification Area</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.1 Implement a Sustainability Management System (SMS)</td>
<td>The Business has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health, and safety issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Legal Compliance</td>
<td>The Business is in compliance with all relevant international or local legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labor, and environmental aspects).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3 Employee Training</td>
<td>All personnel receive periodic training regarding their role in the management of environmental, sociocultural, health, and safety practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.4 Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5 Accuracy of Promotional Material</td>
<td>Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.6 Local Zoning, Design, and Construction</td>
<td>Comply with local land acquisition and land rights legislation and local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behavior while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Strategy</td>
<td>The Business has implemented a comprehensive communications strategy to inform visitors and guests on its sustainable policies, programs and initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Globe Certification Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>The Business ensures compliance with all relevant health and safety measures to ensure the well-being of its customers, staff and local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>The business actively supports initiatives for social and infrastructure community development including, among others, education, health, and sanitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Employment</td>
<td>Local residents are employed, including in management positions. Training is offered as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Trade</td>
<td>Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business, where available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Local Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>The business offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area’s nature, history, and culture (including food and drink, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect Local Communities</td>
<td>A code of conduct for activities in local communities has been developed, with the consent of and in collaboration with the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>The business has implemented a policy against commercial exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equitable Hiring</td>
<td>The business is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions, while restraining child labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Globe Certification Area</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Protection</strong></td>
<td>The international or national legal protection of employees is respected and employees are paid a living wage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Services</td>
<td>The activities of the business do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy, or sanitation, to neighboring communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Heritage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Behavior</td>
<td>The business follows established guidelines or a code of behavior for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Artifacts</td>
<td>Historical and archeological artifacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Sites</td>
<td>The business contributes to the protection of local historical, archeological, culturally, and spiritually important properties and sites, and does not impede access to them by local residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporation of Culture</td>
<td>The business uses elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserving Resources</td>
<td>Purchasing policy favors environmentally friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food, and consumables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumable Goods</td>
<td>The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and the business actively seeks ways to reduce their use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Globe Certification Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Consumption</td>
<td>Energy consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Consumption</td>
<td>Water consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing Pollution</td>
<td>Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are measured, and procedures are implemented to reduce and offset them as a way to minimize climate change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastewater Management</td>
<td>Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserving Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Landscapes</td>
<td>Wildlife species are only harvested from the wild, consumed, displayed, sold, or internationally traded, as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction To The Sustainable Management System

One of the first steps a sustainable tourism business is required to take when it decides to seek certification is the creation of a long-term Sustainable Management System (SMS). The SMS will document the entire process of how sustainability will be implemented within the organization.

An SMS has the purpose of allowing an organization to manage the impact it has on the environment in a planned way that minimizes resource use and improves efficiency. One of the first requirements for obtaining a Green Globe certification is to create and implement an SMS. Thus, creating an SMS will not only allow the Linden Centre to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding community, it will also bring the Centre one step closer to certification.

One of the ways the SMS will improve efficiency is through the documentation and tracking of all operations that are required. As shown in an actual implemented SMS from the Belgian Brewing Company, tracking operations is a significant part of an SMS. Only through detailed tracking of operations, the Linden Centre can obtain the full benefits of an SMS.

The management plan should be written in a concise and succinct manner to ensure that everyone can read and understand the process. The following SMS guide serves as a framework for the Linden Centre to create a simple plan to assist with their decision-making process. This SMS framework is set in the context of meeting criteria in the Green Globe certification.

This SMS framework contains seven sections for the Linden Centre to populate with their particular information. These sections will allow the Linden Centre the flexibility to create an SMS that caters to the needs of their unique business. Each section includes suggestions to help simplify the process of information gathering. Also, much of the information needed is detailed in the main report provided by Virginia Tech XMNR students.

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Each section of this SMS framework builds upon the previous section. The first section, **SMS Objectives And Guiding Principles**, is where the Linden Centre will describe what they are currently pursuing to achieve their vision with sustainability. In this section, the Linden Centre should also outline their decision-making process. After identifying their vision and decision-making process, the second section, **Strategic Priority**, can be articulated. While there are many ways to become sustainable, it is realistic to have a strategic set of priorities to get to sustainability. The priorities should be set out in a way to support each other so that they can be accomplished in the most positive effects possible.

Once the priorities are affirmed, the third section, **Goals**, can be formulated. Goals should be long-term and aligned with the strategic priorities set forth in the last section. The fourth section, **Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**, will be milestones on the way to reaching goals. To achieve goals, it is necessary to implement ways to measure if they are being accomplished. Therefore, the fifth section, **Procedures And Protocols**, will be the means of measuring the success of fulfilling goals.

While the first five sections of the SMS set up the framework on how the Linden Centre will operate, the sixth section, **Measurement and Reporting**, will ensure that the plan is working properly. This will require both internal and external audits (inspections) to be performed at regular intervals. Internal audits can be accomplished by the Linden Centre themselves while the external audits will need an independent outside organization, such as Green Globe, to come in and verify compliance with the SMS.

All sections of the SMS are important. However, it is the seventh section, **Stakeholder Engagement**, which will be the public face of the company. Here the Linden Centre will educate their stakeholders on all aspects of the company. Informing people about the importance of the Linden Centre’ preservation work will make a lasting impression for all those who come into contact with the Centre.

As mentioned before, the objective of this guide is to give the Linden Centre the tools to create a simple SMS that will allow them to move towards the vision they have set out for the company. The Linden Centre is already working towards sustainability and certification; completing and implementing this proposed SMS will allow the Linden Centre to track their successes and improve upon them. Meanwhile, it will also allow the Linden Centre to track areas in the operation that are not as efficient so they can be revised. An SMS will not only allow the Linden Centre to become certified, but become a more successful business in general.

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Proposed Sustainable Management System (SMS)

“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a first step.” Lao Tzo
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INTRODUCTION

This is a section to introduce the stakeholders to the Linden Centre.

Example:

The Linden Centre offers the intrepid traveler a true immersion into authentic China. Guests reside in an expansive and luxurious courtyard home in Xizhou, a pristine village in Southwest China’s Yunnan Province. Our model is one of sustainable tourism, and we have partnered with local leaders and villagers to restore a nationally protected heritage site to its former dynastic elegance. Visitors experience the rich history of this former home of one of the Southern Silk Road’s leading merchant families. In the foothills of the Himalayas, only a 3-4 hour drive from the provincial capital of Kunming and the World Heritage Site of Lijang, guests enjoy a year-round spring climate and direct access to rich, undisturbed cultures in a true melting pot of the region. Our guests touch the “old” China that is elusive to most visitors, experiencing directly the warmth of the local people and their ways of life that have not changed for centuries.\(^\text{12}\)
1.0 OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section is to explain the principles that guide the Linden Centre and how an SMS will help achieve them.

Example:

1.1 Vision

The Linden Centre is based on a philosophy of intercultural exchange. Our guests stay in an elegant courtyard mansion in the midst of an ancient village that functions today as it has for centuries. Outside our walls, the buildings are stone and the roads are dirt, with the Himalayan foothills providing a majestic backdrop. Throughout the village, the warmth of the local Bai people and the year-round spring climate evoke an openness that facilitates a bringing together of East and West.

The Centre is an all-inclusive compound, with our staff providing all meals and transport for excursions and side-trips. This allows our guests to focus on the deeper aspects of the ethnic traditions and enjoy unimpeded interaction with local villagers and their customs. Too often, the average tourist experience consists of stepping off a bus to snap a photo. What we offer is something special...we strive to genuinely enrich the lives of our guests.

Each day at the Centre is different, with a constant flow of activities and experiences available. What stays the same is a personal interaction with the authentic cultures, traditions, values, and daily life of the Bai people of Xizhou Village and beyond. Some experiences are observational, while others are participatory. The strong educational component of a stay at the Centre includes a wide palate of expert guidance on the diverse traditions of the region. We are also proud to offer unique chances to join in volunteer efforts that benefit the immediate community of Xizhou.\(^{13}\)

2.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Sustainability is a framework that allows for decisions to be made in an encompassing and comprehensive way. To develop a successful sustainability strategy, it must incorporate the entire organization and take all aspects of the business into account. As such, the Linden Centre needs to set goals that will reflect their considerations for People (social), Planet (environmental), Profit (financial), and Place (geography). It is strongly encouraged that long-term goals are established within each of these categories. More detailed information regarding each category is included below.

2.1 People

The greatest asset of an organization is to have people who are invested in the success of the organization. With the Linden Centre promoting geotourism, they have the opportunity to conserve and promote local historical, archeological, cultural, and spiritual sites where they operate. To accomplish this, the Linden Centre can implement policies that benefit not only their own staff, but also guests and local residents. Through pursuing the Green Globe certification, specifically through creating and implementing an SMS, the Centre can prioritize their actions in creating formalized policies regarding staff hiring and management, along with interactions with the local community.

2.2 Planet

Globally, the planet is under stress from many different places and the task of healing may seem daunting. However, the healing needs to start with one person or one business. The Linden Centre is already operating in an environmentally conscious way, but they also have many opportunities to reduce their impact further. Concerns with energy reduction, water efficiency, solid waste management, and other such initiatives can be prioritized in order for the Centre to create achievable goals.

2.3 Profit

Profit is vital to a business because a company cannot afford to make the changes necessary to become sustainable without any financial support. While sustainability can sometimes be framed as a purely a green environmental exercise, a profitable company also has
the ability to sustain the local community with jobs and purchases of local goods. Priorities for implementing various cost-saving techniques related to reducing the environmental footprint of the Linden Centre can be created through this SMS structure.

2.4 Place

The last category is the most visible when working towards a sustainable business. Residents and visitors can easily see the condition of an area's ecosystem. Preserving the natural beauty of the area where the Linden Centre operates will help increase tourism and also pride within the community. The Centre's current guest outing options are heavily reliant on the geographic setting of Xizhou Village and the surrounding area. Priorities related to preserving the existing landscape and improving environmental quality can be set by the Linden Centre through the creation of an SMS.
3.0 GOALS

Goals can be developed using the S.M.A.R.T. goal system. Using this system will allow the Linden Centre to work towards certification in a realistic and timely manner.

**S:** Specific - Should be detailed, observable, and to the point.
**M:** Measurable - Need to have criteria that can be measured.
**A:** Attainable - Must be realistic to achieve, both in the economical and personnel aspects.
**R:** Relevant - Should align with the overall vision.
**T:** Time-Bound - Should be achieved within a set measurable time period.

The following examples are just a few suggestions:

3.1 People

There are many opportunities for the Linden Centre to incorporate goals specifically related to their social interactions with staff, the local community, and government officials. The following information is provided in order to help guide the Centre in the goal setting process surrounding these social interactions.

1. **Training:** It is vital for the Linden Centre to ensure all employees understand and help to promote their sustainable policies.
2. **Seminars:** The Linden Centre could organize different workshops to educate guests and residents about the local area and what it has to offer.
3. **Local Interpretation (exhibits):** Exhibits within and around the Linden Centre can be viewed as an alternate mean to educate guests and residents.
4. **Hiring Employees:** The hiring of local personnel is essential in trying to promote local cultural treasures. Locals have an inherent love and knowledge of their village, which also promotes sustainability of local culture because meaningful employment will keep local families engaged and can help prevent populations from moving away from Xizhou.

3.2 Planet

Reducing the environmental footprint of the Linden Centre will help to sustain the local village, as it will reduce the burden on natural resources. Creating goals surrounding various environmental

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initiatives can help the Centre become a leader in the Yunnan Province, and will increase their branding and marketing as a sustainable organization. The suggestions listed below are relevant as priorities to the Linden Centre as determined through interactions with staff during the March 2012 visit.

1. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**: Since global warming is a major concern for China and the planet as a whole, taking steps to reduce emissions is critical to increasing the sustainable operation of the Linden Centre.

2. **Recycling**: This is a key aspect to any sustainability plan, and locally important to the Linden Centre. In addition to reducing costs, recycling helps reduce stress on resources around the globe. At a minimum, the Linden Centre should start to recycle paper and continue to recycle plastic products. Other products such as cooking oil and metal (e.g., copper, aluminum, etc.) can be included if the scope of the recycling program is to be broadened.

3.3 **Profit**

Continually increasing the profitability of the Linden Centre is critical to their operations in the long run. Goals related to increasing the bottom line through the sustainability framework can help increase profits while branding the Linden Centre as a responsible citizen in Xizhou village.

1. **Purchasing Local Goods**: Building a loyal local supply chain will help the Linden Centre support the community. While it can keep the costs down, it is also an important part for the long-term sustainability of the company.

2. **Energy Reduction**: The amount of energy consumed by a business in its daily operation can be one of the biggest expenses. Getting control of costs and working to reduce energy consumption will increase the bottom line and long-term sustainability and viability of the Linden Centre.

3. **Minimize Water Usage**: It is crucial for keeping costs down and preserving a local resource. Future climate change impacts on the Yunnan Province are predicted to include a scarcity of potable water in the future.

3.4 **Place**

The setting of Xizhou Village creates an easy link between culture and natural resources. Creating goals relative to the geographic location of the Linden Centre can help sustain resources into the future.
Goals created by the Linden Centre in this category will provide benefits to both the Centre and the surrounding village as a whole.

1. **Carbon Footprint:**
   a. Calculating the Linden Centre’s carbon footprint is a great way to see how the operations affect global warming.
   b. The Nature Conservancy has a free carbon footprint tool on the web.\(^{15}\)

2. **Water Stewardship:**
   a. Water is a limited resource that needs to be conserved. The Linden Centre already has practices in place for water conservation, such as limited times for hot water available for showers.
   b. The main report provided by Virginia Tech XMNR students includes various ways the Linden Centre can continue to improve their water stewardship.

3. **Wastewater Reduction:**
   a. Like water stewardship, the Linden Centre already practices some wastewater reduction strategies. The report provided by Virginia Tech XMNR students provides more opportunity for reductions in wastewater.

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4.0 **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)**

The first step for creating key performance indicators (KPI) is to establish a baseline for all the goals that the Linden Centre has identified. After establishing a baseline percentage, improvements can be set for two, five, and ten-year intervals. These improvements are the KPI that the Linden Centre will need to satisfy in order to meet the goals.

4.1 **Baseline**

1. This is where the Linden Centre is currently in regards to each goal.
   
   a. Example: If the Linden Centre were planning to hire more local employees, they would need to know the percentage of their employees that are currently from the local area.

4.2 **KPI**

1. These are milestones.
   
   a. The Linden Centre should create several milestones for each goal. These should include an annual milestone, and longer-range milestones at five or ten years out. This is to show that progress is being made towards the goal, and can aid in any annual adaptation to goals as necessary.
   
   i. Example:
      
      o Hiring More Local Employees
         
         ▪ Baseline: 20% of current employees are local.
         
         ▪ Goal: To have 40% local employees within a year.
         
         ▪ KPI (milestone): At the six-month point, increase the percentage of local employees to 30%.

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5.0 PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

The Linden Centre will need to develop consistent procedures and protocols that will prescribe how they are going to achieve the goals that are listed as important to the organization. These procedures and protocols should be written in a way that is easily understood and adopted by the entire organization. Training for staff will help provide consistent operations toward achieving these goals. Educational opportunities for guests regarding these practices can help increase the branding of the Centre as a sustainable business.

5.1 Metrics

Definition: Standards of measurement by which efficiency, performance, progress, or quality of a plan, process, or product can be assessed.\(^{17}\)

1. After the Linden Centre has decided on their Strategic Priorities and has identified their goals, a way to measure progress must be devised.\(^ {18}\) Metrics are a way for the Linden Centre to know if they are making progress to their goals.
   - For each stated goal, a metric to measure is expected.
     a. Example:
        - Energy Reduction
          - Baseline: The current monthly fuel usage.
          - Goal: Reduce fuel usage by 10% after 6 months.
          - Metric: Monthly bills for purchased fuel can be saved and compared to previous bills.

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6.0 MEASUREMENTS & REPORTING

To meet the established goals, the Linden Centre will need to keep careful accurate records that can be audited yearly to ensure they are on track. Changes can be made and documented during the auditing process if the Linden Centre realizes that they are not able to meet their goals. In order to meet specific goals, it is imperative that their progress is tracked through Key Performance Indicators (see Section 5.0).

6.1 Internal Auditing

1. The Linen Centre will need to have the ability to assess their environmental performance. Once goals and KPIs are established, an annual internal auditing schedule can be implemented. This process will allow the Linden Centre to properly determine if they are making progress towards the goals they set for themselves.

2. Opportunities to share auditing results with staff and potential guests can help reinforce the Linden Centre’s commitment to sustainable operations.

6.2 External Auditing

1. This is done by a qualified third party. Green Globe provides qualified auditors that will be able to assess the Linden Centre, not only the progress towards their internal goals, but also towards certification. This third party verification allows for a transparent auditing process that will ensure consistent measures to reaching the goals set forth in the SMS.
7.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Linden Centre has many stakeholders, both internally and externally, that play an important role in their operations. Engaging these stakeholders at the start of the SMS preparation and throughout annual reviews can help create an open dialog and ensure buy-in from the beginning. Outreach to stakeholders can help to prevent any future conflicts that might arise over implementing the various SMS strategies.

7.1 Stakeholders

Identify stakeholders and the roles they have with the Linden Centre.

1. Owners (the Linden Family)
2. Employees
3. Xizhou (the local people)
4. Local government officials and agencies
5. China

7.2 Engagement Plan

This section is the Linden Centre’s plan for interaction and engagement with their stakeholders.

1. The report provided by Virginia Tech XMNR students has devoted an entire chapter to an engagement plan. There is a great opportunity for the Linden Centre to integrate future guest engagement plans into the SMS.
2. Once the Linden Centre finalizes an engagement plan, they must document the details of their work for the plan in this section.