



BIOSPHERE DESTINATION COMMUNITY

# BIOSPHERE

A pioneering and  
visionary RTI initiative

The Responsible Tourism  
Institute's comprehensive  
sustainability management,  
recognition and certification  
system for continuous  
improvement processes.

# +25 years of experience in sustainability



Since its inception, the RTI has maintained a close relationship with UNESCO through a Memorandum of Understanding.

## Origin

### **The Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI)**

was born after the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, held in Lanzarote in April 1995 under the sponsorship of UNESCO, UNWTO, UNEP and the EU. After more than 25 years, the mission of the RTI has not changed: to transfer the objectives universally agreed in the international Summits and Charters to all the societies and agents involved: administrations, public and private institutions and companies, citizens and visitors.



# Mission

More than 25 years of international implementation and methodological development for continuous improvement.

## Since 1995

RTI recognizes and reinforces, through its different seals, grouped under the Biosphere© brand, the competitiveness of destinations and companies, measuring their contribution to the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** [SDGs], the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism +20, and the Paris Climate Summit guidelines, and with indicators developed jointly with **UN-SDSN** [Sustainable Development Solutions Network], the organization founded by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, through the Spanish branch of the organization [REDS-SDSN Spain].



# Our experience

## Pioneers and harmonisers

Biosphere© was the first system in the world to incorporate socio-cultural aspects, as well as environmental and economic aspects, in sustainability management and certification processes. It was also the first sustainability methodology to be applied at destination level on an international scale, thus recognised by international organisations, and the first to certify sustainability in its three areas in the hotel sector [since 1997].



## Methodological basis

The criteria used in the Biosphere© methodology since 1997, set the basis and precedent for the creation, in 2010, of the global criteria of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), along with others. Years later, the 2015 UN guidelines on sustainability, **propitiated the close collaboration of RTI with UN-SDSN** to adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 United Nations targets in the Biosphere© methodology; becoming the first and only certification in the world that allows assessing the contribution of tourism to the 2030 Agenda and the 17 UN SDGs.

# Our system

Biosphere® is the only international system that allows working continuous improvement processes, connected in real time with the 17 SDGs and UN goals, and with indicators developed with the UN-SDSN.



## Holistic view

The Biosphere© methodology is holistic and participatory, involving all stakeholders: administration, companies, workers, customers, citizens and visitors. With a 100% digital platform, we involve and mobilise all stakeholders in a real commitment to sustainability.

## Continuous improvement system

The Responsible Tourism Institute, with the collaboration of the Spanish antenna UN- SDSN [REDS], has developed the Biosphere© methodology, with a battery of indicators, activities and actions connected to each of the Sustainable Development Goals, principles and 169 goals of the United Nations, in order to measure and evaluate the contribution of the territory, the business network and its tourism model to sustainability.



## UN-SDSN

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network [UN-SDSN] is the international reference network for the achievement of the SDGs. This network develops, together with the RTI, the parameters for measuring the contribution of tourism to sustainability, creating the indicators of the Biosphere system and methodology.

# Our certification processes

## Continuous improvement process for DMOs

### Certification and methodology

With Biosphere you identify what to do, how to do it and how to measure it, with the guarantee of a system based on the 2030 Agenda, the 169 goals and the 17 SDGs of the United Nations. A methodology that allows you to involve as many members of the organization as necessary, as well as employees, customers, citizens and tourists, promoting continuous improvement in ESG, in a real and attractive way.

The Biosphere methodology for destinations is an annual continuous improvement process where the orientation of public policies, projects and plans that are channeled by the managing body of the destination [Tourism Management Area] is identified, to contribute to the achievement of the 17 SDGs and 169 goals set by the UN.



# Biosphere Destination Methodology

A methodology with quantitative monitoring indicators, selected in a personalized way for the destination by the Responsible Tourism Institute [RTI] and UN-SDSN, international reference network for the achievement of the SDGs.

With an external third party audit and the issuance of a report by the Biosphere© Technical Committee, the RTI deliberates an act of delivery of the destination certification, Biosphere Certified Destination© and its renewal if applicable, for the recognition and guarantee of the work demonstrated by the managing entity in its process of continuous improvement:



## **Biosphere Certified**

*Certification of tourism public policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets.*

- Analysis and diagnostic report
- Action Plan
- 3rd Party External Audit



## **Biosphere Gold**

*Certification of tourism public policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets.*

*Actions to promote corporate commitment.*

- Biosphere Certified
  - Analysis and diagnostic report
  - Action Plan
  - 3rd Party External Audit



## **Biosphere Platinum**

*Certification of tourism public policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets.*

*Encourage companies to have access to software to manage and recognize their sustainability.*

- Biosphere Certified
  - Analysis and diagnostic report
  - Action Plan
  - 3rd Party External Audit

A seal that only those destinations that are committed to sustainability and work from their Tourism Management Area to improve the sustainable alignment of the territory and its business network, according to the standards defined by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, within the framework of the Biosphere© system and its methodology developed with the UN-SDSN.

## **UN-SDSN indicators**

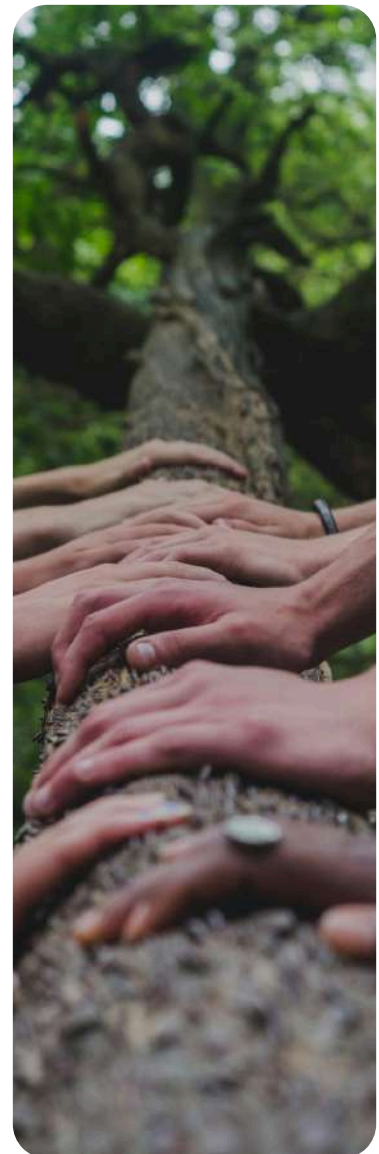
### **Quantitative of the territory**

The RTI, in collaboration with UN-SDSN, identifies a battery of indicators suitable for monitoring and tracking the sustainability of the territory, more in line with its link to tourism, based on the United Nations 232 and customized to the destination.

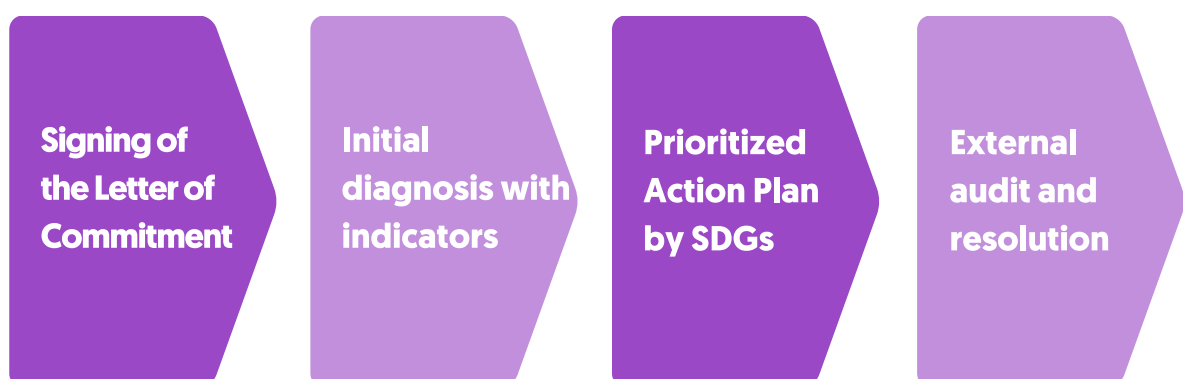
## **Qualitative assesment**

### **Diagnosis of the Tourism Management Area's contribution**

Analysis of the actions carried out and reported by the Destination's managing entity in those priority SDGs in its territory, recognizing their impact or final results in the destination, with the lowest level being the lack of information or actions carried out, and with different degrees of compliance with continuous improvement.



## **Phases of the Biosphere Destination process**





## 1. COMMITMENT

### Signing of Letter of Commitment

The competent authority in the destination performs a telematic signature of the Letter of Commitment of the Biosphere Destination process with the RTI representative.



## 2. INITIAL DIAGNOSIS

### Quantitative UN-SDSN indicators of the territory in connection with the 17 SDGs

Knowing the competencies, function structure and teams of the managing entity, on the one hand, a quantitative analysis of the sustainability of the territory in its connection with the 17 SDGs is carried out, using indicators developed ad hoc for the destination, between the RTI and UN-SDSN.

### UN-SDSN Indicators



### Assessment of the contribution of the managing entity to the sustainability of the destination.

Information is collected and analyzed on the actions and activities carried out and reported by the destination's management body in each of the 17 SDGs, recognizing their impact or final results in the destination, with the lowest level being the lack of information or actions carried out, and with varying degrees of compliance with continuous improvement.

### Diagnostic result: prioritization of action by SDGs

Considering the results obtained from both parts of the diagnosis, the SDGs with the least sustainability development in the destination are determined, and are therefore presented as a priority for the destination's management body at that time.

ACCIÓN	VALORACIÓN
Acción 1.1 Colaborar con entidades públicas o privadas con fines sociales, implicando a la población local, empresas, y visitantes.	Yellow
Acción 1.2 Maximizar los beneficios de las principales actividades económicas del territorio para que recaiga en la comunidad, creando vínculos estables con la economía local del territorio y otras actividades económicas del entorno.	Green
Acción 1.3 Organizar o participar en proyectos de cooperación internacional, solidarios, de acción humanitaria o asistencia en sostenibilidad.	Yellow
Acción 2.1 Fomentar y apoyar la agricultura local y sus mercados de distribución.	Green
Acción 2.2 Asegurar que las normativas de gestión y seguridad alimenticia son cumplidas por todas las entidades y promover la creación de hábitos alimenticios sanos y nutritivos.	Green
Acción 2.3 Fomentar las buenas prácticas para evitar el desperdicio de alimentos.	Yellow
Acción 2.4 Garantizar un uso respetuoso de las tierras agrícolas del entorno del territorio.	Orange

■ Incumplimiento: No se dispone de información sobre el requisito, así como líneas de acción o acciones al respecto.  
■ Cumplimiento parcial: Se plantea o ejecuta una actividad relacionada con la acción por el destino con frecuencia o alguna en el ámbito turístico, o el Área de Turismo en concordancia.  
■ Bien: Cumplimiento. Se desarrolla plenamente el destino del turismo en la acción, se desarrollan o ejecutan actividades por parte del Área de gestión turística.  
■ Cumplimiento: Se cumple la acción de forma completa y satisfactoria.  
■ No aplica: El requisito no aplica.

### 3. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

#### **Elaboration of a Biosphere© Plan based on a proposed improvement manual.**

Prioritizing the focus on actions framed within the Sustainable Development Goals identified as a priority in the destination, chosen according to the results of its indicators and the assessment of the contribution of its actions to date, the RTI will present a proposal of sustainable activities that the managing entity could carry out, in the form of an Improvement Manual.

#### About the manual

It details and exemplifies, with success stories from other member destinations of the community, viable activities that the managing entity could include in its action plan, associated with each of the priority actions and SDGs for the improvement of its destination.

#### About destination's Plan

The selection and execution of the actions and activities of the managing entity's plan will be freely chosen, assessed and worked on voluntarily and by consensus, in accordance with its reality, capacity for action, resources and interests.

### 4. EXTERNAL AUDIT

#### **External audit process**

The work performed will be presented to the team of external auditors appointed by the RTI in accordance with the rules and regulations to evaluate third party information of the destination: result of its indicators, documentation of the initial diagnosis and improvement action plan defined by the destination. Based on the result of the audit and, together with the report of the Biosphere technical committee, the RTI will deliver the certification if applicable.

### 5. RESOLUTION

#### **Delivery of annual report and awards**

With the judgment of compliance of the external auditor and after final assessment of the Biosphere committee, the RTI will deliver, if applicable, the materials and recognition of certification "Biosphere Certified Destination", awarding the corresponding badges and the certification report, which will include the external audit report and the report of the Biosphere technical committee as a report of the process carried out during the year.

# Our community



**+ 4.000  
members in  
77 countries**

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## **+40 member destinations**

Currently there are more than 4,000 companies working with the Responsible Tourism Institute's sustainability management and recognition system, using the 100% online Biosphere© methodology and work platform in more than 77 countries. As international organizations promote new international guidelines, these are incorporated in the Biosphere© methodology, constituting the most complete and integral process in the world. Likewise, through the alliances and collaborations of the RTI, this methodology is consolidated as the catalyst and harmonizer of all the sustainability criteria and standards available in the world.



# Contact us



## Operating internationally

We would be delighted to meet you and find synergies that will help us to extend the reach of sustainability culture around the world, as well as being located in the Peninsula and the Canary Islands, we also have delegations and collaborators in LATAM, Canada, Portugal, and many more regions! You can also visit our website and contact our teams for more information.

## General contact

C/ La Rosa 1, 1º Santa Cruz  
de Tenerife, 38002 / [info@  
biospheresustainable.com](mailto:info@biospheresustainable.com)



Biosphere Destination Community

# BIOSPHERE



Join the Biosphere Community, a  
feasible and scalable sustainability  
alignment process

## BIOSPHERE



Biosphere Community

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Find out more about Biosphere

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