



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

As part of its program to encourage best practice marine tourism in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) rewards high standard operators and provides incentives for other operators to improve their performance, including longer term permits and showcasing by the GBRMPA.

The method of identifying high standard operators is through external certification schemes. The GBRMPA accepts certification schemes that meet the criteria described below.

Note: These criteria may be amended in the future to ensure that they complement broader Australian Government initiatives to improve Australia's tourism accreditation arrangements.

Assessment Criteria

To be accepted by the GBRMPA as a suitable certification scheme, a scheme must demonstrate that it has, as a minimum:

1. A set of best practices that effectively covers the nominated *Key Areas of Best Practice* (below).
2. A requirement that tourism operators agree to adopt, comply with and publicise the best practices.
3. A process for monitoring and auditing compliance with the best practices and other requirements, including tour-based audits.
4. A system to issue a certificate to demonstrate compliance with the best practices.
5. A mechanism to investigate alleged non-compliance with the best practices and, if necessary, to withdraw certification.
6. An appeals process for tourism operators.
7. A process and timeframe for reviewing the set of best practices.
8. A process to identify and address conflicts and potential conflicts of interest.
9. The potential for long-term viability.

KEY AREAS OF BEST PRACTICE

Protection

- Habitat protection
- Species conservation and interaction
- Waste minimisation and management
- Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change impacts
- Cultural heritage protection
- Good neighbour behaviour
- Environmental contingency arrangements

Presentation

- Visitor information about the Marine Park, its natural and cultural values, its World Heritage status and its management
- Delivery of visitor information
- Truth in marketing
- Client services and infrastructure

Partnership

- Reporting suspected infringements, incidents and pollution
- Monitoring the Marine Park and its use
- Supporting local and indigenous communities
- Training staff