

## GLOBAL ECOSPHERE RETREAT® CERTIFICATION

The Zeitz Foundation's Global Ecosphere Retreat® (GER) Certification is setting a new standard in sustainability and is a driving force in promoting and developing sustainable thinking around the globe. It ensures that best practices are adhered to and innovative approaches experimented with and researched to develop sustainable solutions. The GER® certification is undertaken by those Long Run Alliance Members that have transitioned from a *commitment* to sustainability to the effective *demonstration* that their resources are sustainably managed. Once the certification is achieved, these become **Long Run Destinations** (LRDs) - (GER® certified).

### LONG RUN DESTINATIONS - GER® CERTIFIED:

LRDs GER® certified are institutions that directly manage or significantly influence the management of a natural area of conservation value with defined geographical boundaries that have *demonstrated* their ability and commitment to achieve sustainability through conservation, community, culture and commerce (the **4Cs**). They are leaders in sustainable development, vary in size, have different business activities and are situated in diverse ecosystems. They comply with national laws and regulations and respect international treaties and conventions such as the UN-Declaration of Human Rights. LRDs have undergone all steps of the rigorous GER® certification process.

### GER UNIQUE FEATURES:

The GER® certification system assesses performance and processes across the 4Cs. It helps LRDs maximize the positive and minimize the negative impacts of their activities, whilst encouraging them to strive for higher-order learning and long-term achievements.

### REQUIREMENTS & TECHNICAL APPROACH:

GER® certification requires the signing of the Long Run Charter, a declaration of intent and commitment to promoting sustainable lifestyle choices and to building a sustainable future, and a Memorandum of Understanding that states the terms and conditions under which the Zeitz Foundation grants GER® certification.

Long Run Alliance Members wishing to become LRDs (GER® certified) must undertake three steps:

1. Completion of the Compliance Checklist: an evaluation of the LRAMs compliance with a range of baseline information, systems and structures to enable the Zeitz Foundation to assess suitability for GER® certification;
2. Independent development of a **comprehensive** E4C plan: an E4C plan is a strategic planning document, which outlines outcomes, results and activities within the 4Cs over a three year period;
3. On-site assessment: After final approval of the E4C plan the LRAM will undergo an on-site assessment by the Zeitz Foundation to determine compliance and decide whether GER® certification should be granted.

Once the above steps are completed LRAMs receive their GER® certificate and as LRDs, need to submit annual reports and agree to possible compliance/verification visits by Zeitz Foundation experts.

### BENEFITS:

The main benefits of GER® certification include:

- o **One-of-a-kind certification:** GER® is a unique certification that makes your destination stand out as a leader in sustainable management practices and puts you at the pinnacle of your trade.
- o **Tangible demonstration of your commitment to sustainability:** GER® certification demonstrates that you acted upon your commitment to sustainability drawing attention to your institution's integrity and trustworthiness.
- o **Expert input to strategic planning and implementation activities:** In working toward GER® certification, you will benefit from the assistance of Zeitz Foundation experts and international sustainable development leaders, which will assist you in taking your business to the next level of sustainable development.
- o **New funding opportunities:** The Zeitz Foundation provides small grants to individual LRDs to assist in carrying out innovative projects in the areas of the 4Cs (GER® certification does not guarantee funding).
- o **Branding as centres of excellence:** Being a LRD (GER® certified) will, as a result of continuous innovation, earn your business a reputation as a centre for excellence in which novel approaches are tested and pioneered.

### RELEVANT STANDARDS:

The Zeitz Foundation applies the principle of collaboration in its certification building on or incorporating existing standards through the partnership with the Fair Labor Association and with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

### THE ZEITZ FOUNDATION:

Founded in 2008 by business entrepreneur Jochen Zeitz, the Zeitz Foundation is a non-profit organization registered in Germany, headquartered in Kenya, and with representation in the United States and the United Kingdom. The goal of the Foundation is to maintain or improve the integrity of ecosystems through effective, sustainable management practices that ensure ecosystems continue to deliver services - such as clean water - for the benefit of mankind.

**MORE INFORMATION:** To find out more, visit [www.zeitzfoundation.org](http://www.zeitzfoundation.org) and [www.thelongrun.com](http://www.thelongrun.com)