

Definition of a Global Ecosphere Retreat (G.E.R.)

A Global Ecosphere Retreat (G.E.R.) is a privately managed natural area of conservation value with identified and valued ecodiversity that is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of sustainability through achieving ecosphere safety—the balance of conservation, community, culture and commerce (4Cs)—in tourist and non-tourist sectors. For G.E.R., achieving sustainability means promoting, living, and working with a new perspective of inclusion that involves all of the needs of the land and people, and all the species and diverse interests that interconnect them. G.E.R. have achieved high ratings in sustainability practices and measures across the dimension of conservation, community, culture, and commerce (4Cs) as set forth by the Global Ecosphere Retreats certification system.

Global Ecosphere Retreats (G.E.R.) Certification Criteria:

1. Whereas a G.E.R. is a privately managed natural area of conservation value with identified and valued ecodiversity and defined geographical boundaries that is dedicated to achieving sustainability across the 4Cs in accordance with the G.E.R. certification system.
2. Whereas a G.E.R. may be located in any part of the world, may be of any size and may be situated in different ecosystems such as terrestrial, marine or coastal areas.
3. Whereas a G.E.R. complies with national laws and regulations, such as laws regarding land ownership, labor and environmental laws, regulations about conservation and community interaction, or permits to undertake responsible and ecologically sustainable commercial activities including tourism.
4. Whereas a G.E.R. respects the principles enshrined in international laws and treaties that are relevant to the particular location and always include the following:
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
 - Core Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO)
 - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
 - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
 - Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
 - Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC)
 - World Anti-Doping Code of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)
 - Conventions of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regarding the preservation and promotion of creative diversity
 - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

What qualifies as “privately managed”?

Privately-managed natural areas are natural or wilderness areas of any size that are owned or leased by individuals, communal entities, private corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other non-state actors that have rights to develop on and generate revenue from their land; predominantly, these areas, whether managed for or not-for-profit, lie outside the public sector and direct government control (neither managed nor governed by any government) and play an important role in safeguarding ecodiversity.

These can include areas whose ownership, management authority and responsibility belong to:

- private individual (such as a single land owner) or individuals (with shared ownership)
- private company
- NGO
- community
- cooperative