

Quality criteria

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Criteria for projects

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This document contains an overview of the criteria that projects must meet in order to be listed on socialbnb. It is important to highlight that the questions asked in the selection interview as well as the criteria will be adapted depending on the type of project, country, culture, etc. Furthermore, the criteria represent guiding values that can never be fully met; this is also taken into consideration during the selection interviews. This catalog has been compiled after extensive research and in cooperation with international experts. Nevertheless, there is no claim to perfection here, as the subject area is quite complex. We are aware of this and therefore we want to update it continuously according to current findings and new standards. We are therefore committed to reviewing and adapting our criteria on a regular basis and to constantly improving it with the help of our growing community.

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1 Solution of a problem

This criterion is intended to find out in particular to what extent the project actually pursues a social or ecological goal. This criterion is based on the fact that socialbnb wants to promote local solutions. Often, ideas that have been developed locally in close cooperation with the local population are the most effective. So care should be taken to ensure that the project has intensive local knowledge and an understanding of the region, the people and the local problems.

Questions asked in the selection interview:

Does the project contribute to solving a real problem, thereby helping the local population or protecting the environment? It must be clearly recognizable that the project deals intensively with the local conditions and has founded the project out of a local need.

1.1 Mission

What is the goal of the project and what problem is being addressed?

- **No Go:** It is clear that the purpose of the project is volunteering or to generate profit; volunteer tourism is practiced in orphanages.
- **Best Case:** The mission is comprehensible, the solution approaches are conclusive and structurally combat the problem. The project is consistent and designed for the long term.

1.2 Locality

To what extent is the region affected by the problem and why is the project work so important?

- **No Go:** One-time actions (e.g. one-time well construction, one-time donations, etc.).

- **Best Case:** The project addresses a local problem, taking into account local conditions, and contributes to sustainable development.

2 Organizational Culture

The aim of this criterion is to find out according to which motives the project works. The qualification of the leading person should be aligned with the focus of the project. This is especially important when dealing with sensitive issues such as pedagogy, education and medicine.

Questions asked in the selection interview:

What is the structure of the project and how are individual staff members qualified? Are employees paid fairly, treated fairly and are they offered a perspective?

2.1 Management/ Qualification

Who founded the project and for what motivations? Is the management based locally or abroad? What is the qualification (for dealing with specific project target groups) of the staff?

- **No Go:** Missionary work/ deeply religious reasons; work without any qualification, especially in sensitive areas such as pedagogy, education, medicine, etc.
- **Best Case:** The founding story is convincing, has emerged from personal experience and appears authentic with a close local connection. The qualification of the leader fits the core work of the project and he/she has important competencies and experience, such as management, pedagogy, development cooperation, etc. (depending on the project type and focus).

2.2 Employees

How many (local) employees are involved in the project, how are they trained and do they earn a regionally fair salary? Are there opportunities for further training and promotion (depending on project type and region)?

- **Best Case:** More than half of the employees are local and the salary is above average. There are fixed employment contracts and fringe benefits.

2.3 Partnerships

With which organizations/networks/associations does the project cooperate and what does this cooperation look like?

- **No Go:** Cooperation with, in our opinion, critical organizations that are contrary to our criteria, especially the protection aspects.
- **Best Case:** The project and the cooperating institutions are completely autonomous, independent and responsible. Partnerships do not restrict the project's work, but support it and pursue similar goals.

3 Empowerment

The point is based on the assumption that every project should also have the goal of passing on knowledge in order to achieve structural change.

Questions asked in the selection interview:

How does it contribute to increasing the self-determination of individuals and/or communities? Does the structure allow for self-determined representation of own interests?

3.1 Education

To what extent does the project have an educational mission (intellectual, creative, moral, scientific, artistic, humanistic development)? How important is this educational aspect in the project work and what successes have already been achieved?

- **No Go:** Volunteers independently take on the teaching of educational content.
- **Best Case:** Educational aspects are centrally considered in the project work and knowledge is passed on by qualified employees by means of training courses/workshops/training (depending on the type of project, e.g. agriculture, handicrafts, environmental education, entrepreneurship, etc.).

3.2 Reconnaissance work

How many people are reached beyond the project work? What does the educational work look like?

- **No Go:** Missionary education; restriction of human rights.
- **Best Case:** Awareness raising is done by staff according to project focus and reaches local community(ies).

3.3 Equality

Which group of people is targeted by the project work and are they treated equally? Are there barriers that might exclude certain people and thus deny inclusion?

- **No Go:** Sexism; racism; homophobia; wages below minimum wage; non-compliance with certain worker standards.
- **Best Case:** Regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, and origin, people are allowed to participate in all of the project's offerings.

3.4 Co-decision

Can people in the project (project target group and employees) participate in decision-making processes and contribute their ideas? How was cooperation with the local population during the development and implementation of the project?

- **Best case:** cooperation on an equal footing with participation in decision-making (depending on qualifications and experience) and processes without a hierarchical structure.

3.5 Independence

Is the independence of the project target group and staff ensured? Can acquired skills/equipment continue to be used?

- **No Go:** Exploitation; dependency from which those affected can no longer escape.
- **Best Case:** Microcredits; further education/training; an activity is learned or equipment is provided (e.g. sewing machines), which can be further used after the end of the project and enable the persons to gain economic advantages.

4 Transparency

This criterion is based on the fact that an essential quality feature of projects is the disclosure of finances, as well as to see if all legal documents are available to prove the status.

4.1 Code of Conduct/ Certificates

Is the organization certified or are there other official documents (NGO certificate, proof of non-profit status, code of conduct/honor, awards, etc.)? Does the organization have permission to use the premises for tourism?

- **Best Case:** The organization has documents of public recognition with written non-profit status and Code of Conduct. Depending on the type of project, there may be other certificates (e.g., a Child Protection Policy).

4.2 Financing

How is the organization financed and how is the income distributed? Is a long-term continuation of the project possible?

- **No Go:** No clarity on where revenue goes.
- **Best Case:** There is secured funding and plans for the next years to be able to ensure optimal and continuous project work. Most of the revenue goes to project work on the ground and a smaller part to the administration of the project. The funding is geared towards sustainability and innovative ideas are included.

5 Ecology

socialbnb attaches great importance to a resource-saving and environmentally conscious approach. Therefore, all projects are asked about their impact on the environment to find out how environmental protection is dealt with locally and how environmental protection measures are implemented within the scope of local possibilities.

Questions asked in the selection interview:

Are there ecological standards and/or approaches to environmental protection? How important is ecologically sustainable action in the project work, e.g. recycling, waste separation, energy saving measures, etc.?

- **No Go:** Environmental sins and pollution.
- **Best Case:** The project actively promotes the environment and ecological and resource-saving standards on site through individual measures. Environmental awareness is created through environmental education and/or information for employees.

6 Volunteering

Voluntourism is a growing phenomenon, which describes the increasing commercialization of volunteer stays abroad. In addition to well-organized, respectful and thoughtful volunteer trips that have a positive impact on conservation or human rights and aid organizations, voluntourism can also lead to problems in some cases. For example, in some projects, it may be the case that volunteers are used as substitutes for local, trained workers. Especially in projects with children, the constantly changing caregivers can lead to psychological disorders and also reinforce the image of a white saviour, especially in non-European countries. socialbnb is aware of this issue and therefore very strict in the selection of projects that also offer volunteer stays.

Questions asked in the selection interview:

What is the importance of volunteering for the project, how are volunteers prepared and followed up, and what tasks do volunteers take on? To what extent are the volunteers qualified for the work on site and how long do they help with the project?

- **No Go:** Volunteers are untrained and not qualified for the respective tasks, especially in social projects (e.g. taking over lessons alone without any pedagogical qualification and previous experience); very high accommodation costs for volunteers (volunteer offers for profit); in social projects (also see child protection): Volunteers stay less than four weeks and are considered a reference person for the project target group; for projects with wildlife (also see species protection): direct contact between volunteers and wildlife (e.g. feeding, petting, riding, etc.).
- **Best Case:** There is a structured selection process and briefing for volunteers. They must have previous experience and qualifications from the respective tasks and stay at least four weeks in the project. Volunteers pay nothing or at most a comprehensible price for their stay. Project work can continue even without the assistance of volunteers.

7 Protection

Not for every place and for every project tourism offers a meaningful added value. The criterion protection should therefore ensure to what extent the local people or those who are the focus of the projects are not disturbed by travelers, but all benefit from the stay.

Questions asked in the selection interview:

Are there protection strategies for the project target group that are essential for a stay of travelers (including volunteers)? Depending on the type of project, this will focus on one of the following aspects:

7.1 Child protection

socialbnb follows the internationally recognized [THE CODE](#) for the protection of children and young people in tourism and works closely with the child protection organization Ecpat International to ensure this.

What is the [child protection policy](#), where do volunteers and guests stay and how is it ensured that no unplanned/unqualified interaction takes place? See also socialbnb child protection policy.

- **No Go:** Direct contact between guests and children without supervision by trained and qualified staff; guests' premises are in close proximity to the staycation rooms; orphanages offer volunteering.
- **Best Case:** The project has a detailed child protection policy with code of conduct for staff, volunteers and guests. Children have separate spaces and retreats that are not entered by strangers.

7.2 Protection of species/wildlife protection

What is the conservation strategy for wildlife and to what extent do travelers/volunteers and wildlife interact? What does reintroduction look like and how are staff qualified?

- **No Go:** Non-professionals do work that should be done by animal caretakers and veterinarians (e.g. raising young animals); direct contact between wildlife and travelers/volunteers (e.g. riding, petting, feeding, etc.); release of healthy animals does not take place.
- **Best Case:** There is a code of conduct for staff, volunteers and guests which, among other things, prohibits direct contact between non-professionals and wildlife. Volunteers take over tasks such as cleaning the stables, preparing food or observing the animals. The wild animals are not bred and are released into the wild after successful project work.

7.3 Conservation

Are long-term measures taken to preserve and protect biodiversity and nature? How is such long-term guaranteed (e.g. is the local population educated and suggested values of the protected area)?

- **No Go:** Contradiction between purpose and implementation of the project, e.g. displacement of indigenous populations, cultivation of monocultures, etc.
- **Best Case:** The project has conservation concepts and involves the local population in implementation and education. With the help of environmental education measures and ecological standards, knowledge is passed on and the long-term nature of the project is supported.

7.4 Animal welfare (livestock and domesticated animals)

What is the animal welfare strategy in the project and to what extent is it communicated to visitors? What is the interaction between guests and animals like? Are the animals kept in a species-appropriate manner?

- **No Go:** Animals are chained and/or kept in crates; unqualified volunteers take care of the animals on their own; animals are dehorned and/or castrated; young animals

are separated directly from the mother from birth and raised by bottle; animals are regularly fed antibiotics and other additives.

- **Best Case:** There is an elaborated animal welfare strategy with standards such as a code of conduct for staff*, volunteers and guests. The animals are kept in a species-appropriate manner and only trained staff perform tasks such as feeding or grooming.

7.5 Cultural protection/ protection of the community

Are there protection strategies for the community on site and where do the guests stay? How has the community been introduced to tourism and how is the privacy of individual community members protected? To what extent is cross-cultural interaction encouraged? To what extent are there museums, exhibitions, and performances, and what framework is created for them?

- **No Go:** Community members are not included in the construction of the project and their privacy and daily life is disregarded; private spaces are given up to offer them to tourists as accommodation; culturally related events/activities/etc. are not taken into account in the tourist offers; Staged Authenticity.
- **Best Case:** The cultural identity of the community and/or country is respected and local regulations and norms are respected and not neglected for tourism offerings. The community is trained in tourism and not restricted in their routines. Travelers are accommodated separately from community members and have a contact person for their stay.

7.6 Protection of people with disabilities

What is the protection strategy for people with disabilities, what is the daily work routine, and what training is available? Are the tasks and activities adapted to the knowledge of the employees with disabilities so that they are neither over- nor underchallenged? Is there a

trained contact person and confidant (e.g. social worker)? Where do the travelers stay and how are the people with disabilities prepared for the arrival of travelers and volunteers?

- **No Go:** No separation between private premises of the project target group and the premises of guests; employees are not paid fairly or adequately prepared for the transition to the primary labor market and guidelines on working hours are not observed.
- **Best Case:** There is a protection strategy and a code of conduct for employees (dealing with psychological and physical violence, responsibilities for care tasks, etc.) and guests are housed separately from residents. Staff members without disabilities are trained (e.g. social worker) and are considered as contact persons.

8 External representation

What impression do the website and social media channels (if any) create? Are there press reports and/or evaluations/feedback on the project work? How is the project work presented?

- **No Go:** depictions of human or animal suffering; depiction of wildlife in direct contact with visitors*; racist/sexist/homophobic depictions or content; missionary content.
- **Best Case:** The advertising concept presents problems realistically and avoids shock images. Depictions attempt to educate about the project work and a positive image of the work is conveyed. Press reports and feedback are predominantly positive.