

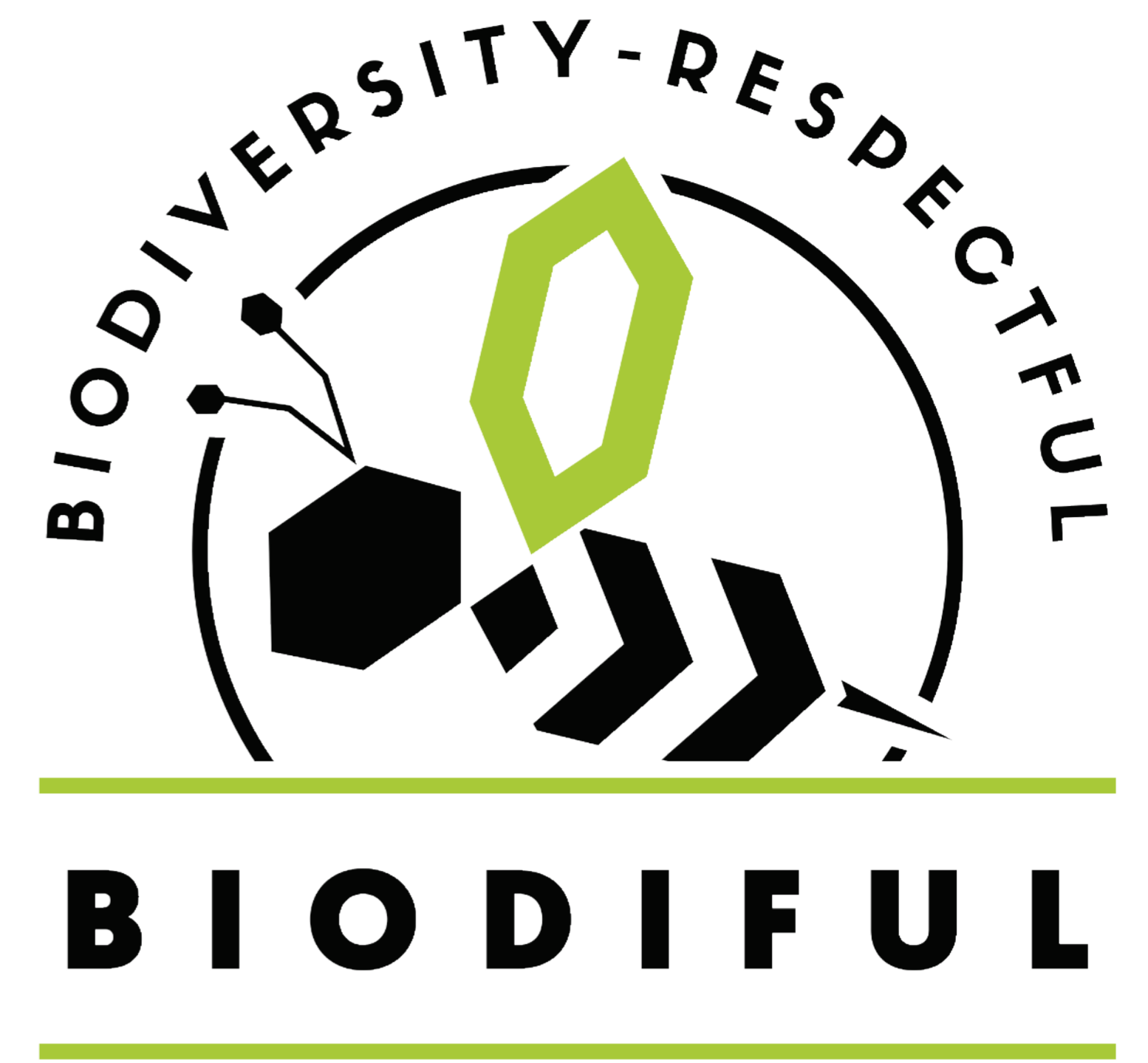
# Biodiversity and tourism - Case Sustainable Travel Finland program

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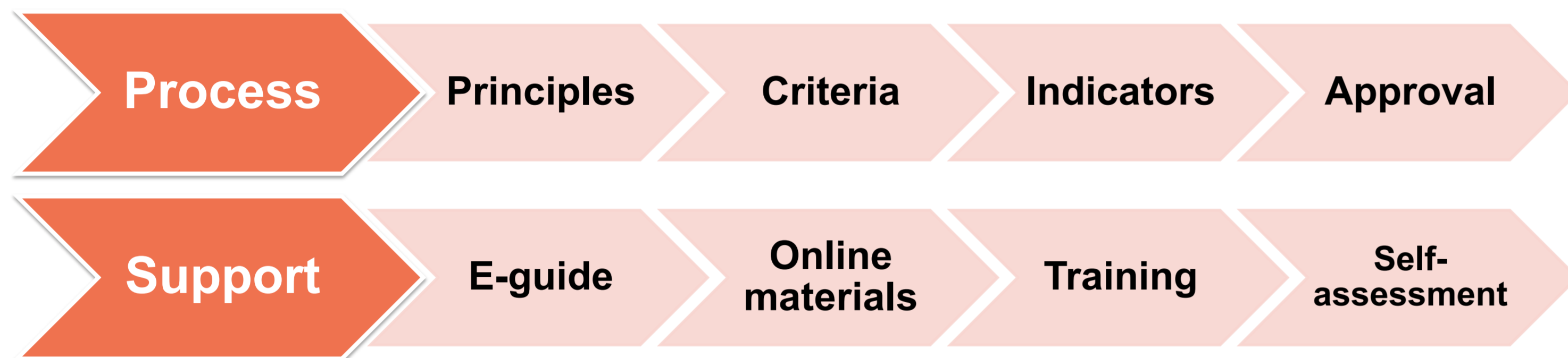
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## Sustainable Travel Finland program

Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland program (STF) offers support and proactive leadership to the Finnish tourism industry in meeting the rising sustainability demands on biodiversity protection. The aim is to transform Finland into the world's leading sustainable travel destination by 2025.

STF is a directional support framework and training program that rests on the applicants' own initiative, self-imposed activities, and self-evaluation. Demands and actions are not imposed from the outside but arise from the companies and destinations themselves, which engages the participants, supports their active self-reflection, and promotes the implementation of right sustainability measures.



The program addresses biodiversity on different levels, from planning and training to hands-on activities and financial support (See table). At least two biodiversity actions are required to qualify as an active contributor to biodiversity conservation.



Ecological sustainability criteria	Biodiversity indicators
Contribution to biodiversity conservation	The company has a biodiversity program
Climate change mitigation / carbon footprint calculation	Regular biodiversity training of staff
Reduction of fossil fuels	Litter collection
Sorting waste, recycling, and reducing produced waste	The restoration of cultural habitats, water systems, bogs and/or forests
Reduced energy consumption	Financing the restoration of the former habitats
Environmentally friendly provision of services and leave no trace -philosophy	Provision of nesting boxes for birds and other animals
Reduced water usage	Construction of a green roof
Implementation of an environmental management system	Combatting alien species and/or financing such activities
Environmental training for staff	Feeding birds
Reduced food waste	Funding nature conservation NGOs
Increased use of organic and vegetarian food	Provision of bug hotels
Use of environmentally friendly detergents	Provision of diverse habitats for fauna and flora
Environmental protection training for staff	
Adoption of circular economy principles	

## Background: The contradictory relationship of tourism and biodiversity

Tourism depends on biodiversity and ecosystem services as vital resources, but simultaneously, it also threatens their existence (Christ et al., 2003; WTO, 2010). For the tourism industry, biodiversity is a new dimension of ecological sustainability as the main focus has thus far been on traditional environmental protection and climate issues.

However, tourism affects also biodiversity loss by accelerating changes in land use, degrading habitats, exploiting species directly, accelerating climate change, increasing pollution, and introducing invasive species. All these issues need to be considered to increase the biodiversity-respectfulness of tourism.

## References

<https://www.visitfinland.fi/liiketoiminnan-kehittaminen/vastuullinen-matkailu/sustainable-travel-finland>

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