



TOURISM FOR A BETTER WORLD

## Navigating the World of Corporate and Social Responsibility in Tourism and Hospitality

This information, from the **Kitara Foundation** breaks down the important concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Social Responsibility (SR). We explain how these apply directly to your Community Based Tourism Organization (CBTO), turning your natural mission into a strategic advantage in the global market.

### 1. Defining the Core Concepts

CSR and SR are about businesses taking responsibility for their impact on society and the environment.<sup>1</sup> For CBTOs, this is not a new rule; it's a formal way of describing what you already do.

#### A. Social Responsibility (SR)

- **What it is:** The duty of **any organization or individual** to act in the best interests of the environment and society.
- **For the CBTO:** This is your **internal commitment** to your community. It's what you were created to do: protecting your local culture, conserving your natural environment, and ensuring fair treatment and equitable pay for every member.
- **Example:** You ensure the profits from homestays contribute to the **Community Development Fund (CDF)** to build a new well.

#### B. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- **What it is:** The duty of **large, external companies** (Corporations) to manage their business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society.<sup>2</sup>

- **For the CBTO:** This is how your **external partners** (e.g., large tour operators, international hotel chains, or technology partners like Equera) should act when they work with you.
- **Example:** A major tour operator chooses your CBTO over a conventional hotel chain specifically because of your high ethical standards and commitment to the CDF. They are fulfilling their CSR through that decision.

## 2. Why Social Responsibility is Your CBTO’s Strength

For a CBTO, social responsibility is not an optional add-on; it is the **core product and the mission**. Your inherent commitment to SR is what attracts high-value, ethical travelers and makes you appealing to major CSR-focused partners.

### A. The Four Pillars of CBTO Responsibility

Pillar	CBTO Action	Why it Matters to Tourists
<b>Economic</b>	<b>Equitable Benefit Sharing:</b> Transparently dividing revenue into wages, maintenance, and the <b>CDF</b> .	Tourists want to know their money directly supports the local economy and reduces leakage.
<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Conservation:</b> Minimizing waste, using local materials, protecting wildlife, and teaching guests about local ecology.	Travelers want low-impact, sustainable trips. This protects the very nature they came to see.
<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Preservation:</b> Maintaining traditional practices, respecting sacred sites, and ensuring guests follow cultural protocols.	Authenticity is the primary draw. Respectful interactions preserve your unique selling point.
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Transparency:</b> Using digital ledgers (facilitated by Equera) and holding public meetings to show the community how money is spent.	This proves your organization is trustworthy and well-managed, essential for securing external partnerships.

## 3. Navigating Corporate Partners and CSR (The Strategic Advantage)

Your strong commitment to SR is what you use to negotiate better terms with larger, external companies fulfilling their CSR goals.

### A. Choosing the Right Partners

When a large company (e.g., a hotel group, a transport firm, or a booking platform) approaches you, evaluate their CSR commitment:

- **Ask about their Policy:** Do they have a clear CSR strategy? Do they audit their social impact?
- **Check Their Commitment to Pricing:** Do they respect the pricing you set? A company with good CSR will not demand large, unsustainable discounts that undermine your benefit-sharing model.
- **Demand Transparency:** Do they clearly communicate to their customers that they are booking a CBTO and highlight the positive local impact? They should market *your* story.

## B. Leveraging Equera for CSR Proof (The Digital Link)

Partners like Equera help you showcase your Social Responsibility to the world's corporations, making you a desirable investment for their CSR funds.

- **Verifiable Impact:** The digital booking system can generate reports showing exactly how much revenue went into the CDF and how many local people (especially women/youth) were paid directly via mobile money.
- **Risk Reduction:** For a large corporation, partnering with a CBTO that uses transparent digital accounting is **low risk**. They can prove to their shareholders and customers that their CSR investment was not misused.
- **Attracting CSR Grants:** Many global companies offer grants specifically for projects related to environmental protection or women's empowerment. Your verifiable records on these topics (due to SR principles) make you an ideal applicant.

## 4. Simple Steps for CBTOs to Formalize and Market SR

You are already doing the work; now, formalize it and tell the world!

1. **Write It Down:** Create a simple, one-page **Social Responsibility Statement** that outlines your commitment to the four pillars (Economic, Environmental, Cultural, Governance).
2. **Use Data:** Whenever you report your finances (using your digital ledger), highlight the **CDF impact**. *Example: "In Q4, tourism contributed 25% of the funds needed for the new classroom."*
3. **Market It:** Include your SR statement and CDF impact prominently on your digital listings (on Equera) and in your guest briefings. Make the positive impact of their stay part of the traveler's experience.

By formally defining and measuring your inherent commitment to Social Responsibility, your CBTO transforms from a small local enterprise into a strategic, reliable, and powerful partner in the global tourism industry.

### **Simple CBTO Social Responsibility Statement**

This template provides a clear, actionable statement that your Community Based Tourism Organization (CBTO) can use internally and share externally (on booking platforms, in welcome guides, and with partners). It formalizes the inherent values of CBT, making it easy to communicate your commitment to potential travelers and partners like **Kitara Foundation** and **Equera**.

### **[CBTO Name] Social Responsibility Statement**

#### **Our Vision**

At **[CBTO Name]**, we believe that tourism is a tool for local empowerment and sustainable development. We are committed to ensuring our operations are beneficial, ethical, and transparent, prioritizing the well-being of our community, our culture, and our environment above all else.

#### **Pillar 1: Economic Responsibility (Fair Share)**

Our commitment is to maximize the financial benefit that remains within the community and ensure **equitable distribution** among our members.

- We guarantee that **[Percentage]**% of the gross revenue from every booking is retained by the local community.
- We use a transparent **Equitable Benefit-Sharing Mechanism** to allocate funds fairly to wages, maintenance, and the communal **Community Development Fund (CDF)**.
- We commit to paying fair wages and directly depositing member dividends using digital platforms (like mobile money) to ensure **traceability and financial autonomy** for all participants, especially women and youth.
- We prioritize **local procurement**, sourcing at least **[Percentage]**% of all food, materials, and services from within our immediate community.

#### **Pillar 2: Cultural Responsibility (Authenticity and Respect)**

Our cultural heritage is our most valuable asset. We are committed to sharing it respectfully and preserving its integrity.

- We ensure that all activities are developed in full consultation with **[Community Elders/Traditional Leaders]** and require the **free, prior, and informed consent** of all participating members.
- We provide a clear **Cultural Protocol Briefing** to all guests, outlining respectful behavior, appropriate dress codes, and rules regarding photography of people and sacred sites.
- We use tourism revenue to actively support and fund **[Specific Cultural Preservation Project, e.g., traditional dance training for youth, language documentation]**.

### **Pillar 3: Environmental Responsibility (Conservation)**

We recognize our duty to protect the natural environment that sustains our community and attracts our visitors.

- We commit to **low-impact operations**, minimizing waste and actively avoiding the use of single-use plastics.
- We commit to using **[Specify Resource, e.g., 5%]** of the Community Development Fund to directly support local **[Specific Conservation Project, e.g., reforestation, clean water initiatives, waste management]**.
- We educate our guests and members on local conservation challenges and best practices, such as water and energy conservation, throughout their stay.

### **Pillar 4: Governance and Accountability (Trust)**

We are accountable to our members, our guests, and our partners. We use technology to ensure maximum transparency.

- Our financial records, including the allocation and spending of the **Community Development Fund (CDF)**, are recorded on a **[Digital System, e.g., Shared Google Sheet/Accounting App]** and reviewed by an independent **[Internal Audit Committee]**.
- We hold **[Frequency, e.g., Quarterly]** public meetings for all community members to review financial performance and vote on CDF expenditure.
- We maintain an accessible **Guest Feedback System** and commit to promptly addressing any ethical or quality concerns raised by visitors or partners.

### **Our Invitation to You**

By choosing **[CBTO Name]**, you are becoming an active partner in our mission. We invite you to follow our cultural protocols and help us preserve this special place.

**Contact: [Name of CBTO Leader] | [Contact Phone Number/Email]**