

## WHAT MAKES AN ECOLOGE AUTHENTIC

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Founding GEN member, Hitesh Mehta knows what constitutes authentic ecolodges. Authenticity means that the lodge:

- serves as a driver for poverty alleviation,
- educates and informs visitors about the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the community, and
- enhances wildlife conservation efforts either directly or through graceful architectural elements that do not infringe on habitats.

But, what criteria must a lodge follow to be deemed an ecolodge? In no particular order, the criteria include:

1. community-wide planning that accommodates all stakeholders
2. environmentally friendly raw materials used for construction
3. stemming of allergens
4. use of alternative or renewable energy sources
5. conservation of energy
6. maintenance of appliances
7. application of newspaper programs
8. management of composting programs
9. provision of bulk soap items and amenities
10. supply of organic cotton towels and sheets
11. employment of guest towel and sheet re-use programs
12. donation of furniture or other over-used property materials to charity
13. use of non-disposable and durable service items
14. offer of organically-grown, locally harvested food
15. education of guests about the hotel's green practices and green membership programs
16. education of hotel staff about the importance of green business practices
17. use of gentle cleaning and laundry supplies
18. supplying of fresh air to guests
19. use of gray water recycling programs
20. provision of guestroom recycling bins
21. employment of non-smoking policies
22. provision of alternative guest transportation programs
23. use of xeric gardening methods

What other criteria are important to you?