WORKING GROUPS

Overview

The purpose of the working groups is to support the program areas of the GSTC. To optimize the impact of GSTC operations, the working groups will:

* Be advisory in nature and lend expertise and support to the GSTC, its Board and Secretariat.
* Focus on projects or issues that apply to members and augment the organization’s operations.
* Provide a recommended yearly action plan for the group, based on the mission and strategic plan of the organization. The action plan and the budget, and any changes to them, will need to be approved by the Board.

Description

Notwithstanding the capacity to create new working groups, the GSTC currently has the following working groups:

Standard Setting Working Group:

It will focus on developing complementary sets of standards applicable to all parts of the tourism supply chain and to destinations to ensure that sustainability best practices permeate all levels of the tourism marketplace.

Market Access Working Group

It will identify, develop and disseminate business-to-business solutions that will allow tourism businesses that align themselves with the GSTC to reach greater market potential and market share.

Education & Training Working Group

It will develop and compile GSTC-compatible best practices, education/training tools, case studies, and a capacity building program to empower the tourism industry and other tourism stakeholders with the resources needed to improve sustainability outcomes.

Destinations Working Group

It will identify, recommend and adapt baseline criteria for destinations. It will also seek to identify and promote destination best practices.

Membership

The working groups will be opened to and composed of members. They are designed to provide members an opportunity to be involved in areas of their special interest.

**Composition**

The working groups will be composed of up to 10 members. If the working group Chair feels that the group requires a larger membership structure it will present a proposal to the Board who will approve by consensus.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Working Group Members

**Regular attendance at meetings**. Members must attend the meetings of working group, either in person or through via conference calls. Attendance is mandatory and lack of attendance and constructive contribution will result in participant being asked to step down from the working group.

**Absence**: If there is an unavoidable absence, have an informed alternate with decision power attend the meeting who will keep the member informed of the proceedings of the group. Absence in more than three (3) meetings will result in a request by the Board for the resignation of the working group member.

**Respect the role of the Chairs** as facilitators of the group, and recognize that given the size of the working groups the Chairs will need to take an active role in moving the agenda forward.

**Tasks:** Willingness to complete working group tasks as delegated by the Chair or Vice Chair. Recognize the need to potentially align some of the work of the group with other ongoing working groups or committees.

**Communication with Secretariat:** Notify the GSTC Secretariat in advance if there are relevant materials, or other documents intended for use at working group meetings to ensure that distribution of those materials can be done in a timely manner.

**Representing the GSCT:** without attempting to represent or characterize the views of other members of the group or the GSTC as a whole.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for a working group the member must:

* be an active member of the GSTC;
* be in good standing with GSTC – including having made membership payment - and compliant with by-laws and operational manual.
* be willing to commit to approximately 2-4 hours a month to the working group, more in periods of document reviews and development of action plans;
* have the support of their employer to dedicate the expected time, proven by letter of support. ;
* demonstrate skills and expertise that are aligned with the working group functions;
* contribute and takes ownership of tasks delegated by the Chair and Vice Chair; fulfill responsibilities and assignments.
* Be a team player;
* have a positive attitude;
* honor GSTC rules, regulations, and procedures;
* be willing to represent the GSTC in a professional and dignified manner at all times;
* not have a conflict of interest with the working group or GSTC;
* demonstrate willingness and commitment to attend in person Membership Council Meetings;
* submit the application form and supporting material ;
* submit to a confidentiality agreement.

### Selection Process

* Two (2) months prior to the selection time of the working groups the Secretariat will make a call to applications.
* Members will submit a membership application to the Secretariat
* Members can submit applications at any time and the Secretariat will keep in a database for the next selection period.
* The Secretariat will review and determine if the applicant is eligible to join a working group and meets the criteria to belong to the working groups.
* The application will be provided to the working group Chair and Vice-Chair who will review and select the ten (10) top candidates and present to the Board. An additional three (3) candidates will be provided as back up.
* At any point the Secretariat, the Chair or the Board may contact the applicants to obtain further information.
* The Board, Secretariat and Vice-chair can solicit members they feel meet the requirements of the working group to join the working group.
* Category, geographical and gender balance will be sought in selecting the members

###  Criteria

Each working group will have a set of criteria that will be made available to the Board of Directors to be able to review, endorse or question the selection provided by the Chair of each working group.

All working groups will ensure a balance in category and regions.

### Term

Each member of the working group shall serve for two years with the possibility of serving a consecutive term. Members may be eligible to resubmit application after sitting out one election.

Leadership

Each working group will be led by a Chair and a Vice-Chair that are responsible for directing the working group and assuring that all the work is completed in the most efficient and effective way. The working group will elect a Secretary to convene and confirm meetings, take minutes and circulate and report back to the Secretariat.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair is responsible for directing the working group to ensure that all the work gets completed in the most efficient and effective way. A Vice-Chair will serve in the absence of the Chair and ensure continuity to work programs. The Vice Chair will not take the seat of the Chair on the Board.

Other responsibilities include:

* Convene the working groups in a timely manner.
* Participate actively in the working groups and monitor the discussions.
* Provide leadership and guidance to the working group.
* Act as an effective liaison to the other working group leaders, and to the Board of Directors.
* In coordination with the Communications Director, is responsible for keeping the WG section on the web site up-to-date.
* Submit periodic reports to the Board and the Membership Council.
* Make recommendations to the Board on the working group members.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair is responsible for directing the working group and assuring that all the work gets completed in the most efficient and effective way.

### Terms

The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve a term of two years with the possibility of serving one more term.

### **Election Process**

The Chair of the working group shall be a member of the Board, elected by its peers to serve as Chair.

The Vice-Chair is elected by the working group.

### Qualifications and Attributes

The qualifications to become a working group Chair include:

* Must be an active member of the Board.
* Must be able to convene and attend the working group on a monthly basis or when programmed, either in person or through via conference calls.
* Lack of compliance will result in the Chair being asked to step down.

Meetings

Working groups will convene once a month virtually. During their first meeting the working group will determine a calendar of meetings, which will be then set up in the members-only section of the website. It is the responsibility of the working group members to periodically check the site for updates. The Secretary will confirm the date and time of the following meeting as the last agenda item of each meeting. The working groups are expected to convene in person at the Membership Council Meetings.

A quorum for the purpose of holding and acting at any meeting of a working group shall be a simple majority of the members. Participation of either the Chair or the Vice-Chair is required.

The Chair will ensure that documents are send or posted at least two weeks in advanced of any meeting.

The members of the working groups will use the working groups section of the members only site to share documents and hold calendars. This will be a password protected site only for members of the working group. Sharing the password to this site would be against the confidentiality agreement.

Financials

The working group activities are considered as program specific expenses and derive from each of the working group strategies. Programmatic costs are variable costs and therefore will only be incurred if financial resources have been allocated. At the end of the year, the working group Chairs must submit the following year’s action plan and budget to the Board of Directors.

The action plan should include a description of the activities, outline of content, identification of project members, identification of resources needed, time line for achievement, and a budget, including line items for expenses and projected revenues.

Working with other organizations

### Liaising with other organizations

The working group is encouraged to develop collaborative relationships and liaison activities with other appropriate or similar specialty groups in other organizations so that a collaborative relationship can be developed across the globe. The Chairs should forward a request for official GSTC representation to the GSTC Secretariat who will coordinate with the Board of Directors for review. The Secretariat provide official confirmation to the designated working group and the applicable organization. The working groups must not commit GSTC to support any activities requiring GSTC resources or the GSTC name without the written approval of the Secretariat

Collaborative relationships/liaisons should serve a demonstrated purpose supporting each mission and be officially recognized by both organizations. The official liaison will act on behalf of GSTC and/or the WG and be contributing in a formal capacity to the other organization (some examples of this include serving on a committee, expert panel, task force, etc.). The official liaison is required to submit a written report to the Working Group and Secretariat for review. The liaison must be chosen within the working group and vetted by the Secretariat.

### Sponsor/Co-sponsor/Endorse Activities or Products

The Working Group may conduct a special GSTC sponsored meeting, workshop, seminar, or co-sponsor a meeting or product of another organization which is not associated with a GSTC meeting, or product. WGs must submit a request to the GSTC Secretariat who will evaluate the request with appropriate input and make a final recommendation and align with Sponsorship Policy.

Establishing a new Working Group

Any member can submit a proposal to establish a new Working Group to the Board of Directors. The proposal should include the following:

* A mission or purpose statement for the Working Group that is consistent with the GSTC mission and goals.
* A proposed budget and identification of secured funds.
* A petition of at least ten (10) GSTC members who support the development of the WG and their biographical information.

The establishment of the new Working Groups becomes effective upon Board of Directors’ approval. The member named in the initial proposal will become the Organizing Chair of the new group until the Board selects a permanent Chair.