

GSTC HOST DESTINATION SPONSOR RFP QUESTIONS HUATULCO, OAXACA, MEXICO

1) Host City Profile

The Bays of Huatulco are located in the State of Oaxaca, on the southern Pacific Coast of Mexico, and are comprised of 9 beautiful bays and 36 beaches, many of them still unspoiled and several are part of a Protected Natural Area. Huatulco is an integrally planned resort destination, developed by the Mexican Government through FONATUR (National Fund for Tourism Development), and the area was chosen because of its incredible natural beauty, but also because Oaxaca is the 5th largest but 2nd poorest State in México, and the destination is bringing much needed economic development, jobs, health and education to the coastal area of Oaxaca, and with this reducing significantly the migration of young people to the North of Mexico or as illegal immigrants to the US. Huatulco is a small destination, with only 35,000 inhabitants in the whole municipality, of which some 19,500 live in the Bays area.



The State of Oaxaca is one of the most traditional and authentic Mexican States; we have 14 different ethnic groups, each with their own language, culture, customs and traditions, and all well preserved and part of everyday life. This makes Oaxaca a unique experience for all who visit, offering its millenary history and culture, its prehispanic food, rites and festivities, as well as colorful and masterful art and handicrafts, embroidered typical dresses, music and dances.



This is what Huatulco offers:

- The history, culture, customs, traditions, colors and flavors of Oaxaca
- The unparalleled natural beauty of the bays of Huatulco, which FONATUR from the beginning has been eager to preserve as much as possible with the designation of the Protected Natural Area (11,891 ha) as well as other natural reserves, such as the Communal System of Protected Areas (8129 ha) and RAMSAR Site 1321 “Wetlands and Corals of the Coastal Area of Huatulco” (44,400ha)



- The commitment of concerned citizens and cooperation of government institutions and businesses, to implement sustainable tourism programs, such as EarthCheck, Playas Limpias (“Clean Beaches”, program by the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources), and the Equipo Verde’s “Huatulco Carbon Neutral”
- The fact that Huatulco became in 2005 the first destination on the American Continent and third in the world to be certified by Green Globe and since 2009 by EarthCheck. In 2011, became the **first tourist destination in the world to obtain the EarthCheck Gold certification**



- That Chahué Beach is the first beach in the State of Oaxaca and one of only 17 beaches in Mexico certified by the Mexican Government as a “Clean Recreational Beach”, through a very rigorous certification program



- That Huatulco always wants to do more, and with that in mind, the Equipo Verde Huatulco launched in June of 2011, during the EarthCheck Forum, its “Huatulco Carbon Neutral” program, with which the destination aims to **neutralize carbon emissions of Huatulco’s whole economic activity** (not only trips and vacations), promoting voluntary donations of 1 USD per tourist per night. These funds are then invested in UN Green Bonds and will benefit the **In Chiapas.**



- That Huatulco has two hotels (Las Brisas Huatulco and Barceló Huatulco Beach Resort), with not only national sustainability certifications, but are also certified by EarthCheck
- That the Huatulco International Airport is currently applying for its EarthCheck certification, being the first airport on the American Continent.

Pre- and Post-Meeting Local Tours

For possible pre- and post-meeting local tours and field trips, we suggest the following:

Towns & Traditions: A tour to nearby communities and towns, in the lower mountains of the Sierra Madre del Sur, which highlights traditional life in rural Oaxaca. Learn how to prepare a corn tortilla on a traditional wood stove, visit small citrus and edible cactus plantations, as well as a botanic garden with traditional medicinal plants and a beautiful waterfall, all operated through a community cooperative. The tour ends at a coffee plantation home, where you learn about the processing of locally grown organic coffee and enjoy a typical homemade meal. Tour: 1 day.



La Ventanilla Lagoon and Mazunte: Just over an hour from Huatulco, there is the community of La Ventanilla, that offers visits to the beautiful lagoon with the same name. This visit is also a community cooperative project, and leads along the wide and rough beach to the lagoon, where visitors board wooden gondolas (small boats without engine) and are pushed by their guide through mangroves and outreaching arms of the lagoon, home to an amazing number of birds, crocodiles and iguanas.

A small island holds a kind of zoo, where the locals care for exotic animals that were illegally held and seized by animal protection authorities. From La Ventanilla the tour follows the coast road to Mazunte, where you’ll visit the Mexican Turtle Center, operated by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, that is dedicated to study, protect and educate about the sea turtles.

Almost next door, there is a cooperative of local women who in their small workshop prepare all natural skincare products, such as moisturizer, soap, shampoo, mosquito spray and more. Lunch at a delightful beachside palapa in Puerto Angel. Tour: 1 day



Eco-Archeological Park Copalita (optional with bird watching): The Copalita Park is the latest addition to Huatulco’s attractions. It is located in a triangle formed by the Copalita River, the sea and the mountains, and is comprised of a recently discovered and so far only partially restored archeological site, with several small pyramids, a ball game and a large pyramid that is being worked on, all of them from the Mixtec and Chontal cultures which lived here from 1500 BC until 800 AC. But that is not all that is offered; there are winding paths through jungle vegetation and along the river, a favorite for bird watching, and a steep access to a sacrificial stone and a breathtaking vista point.

To close the visit, there is a small local Museum that showcases the most important parts of Oaxaca's cultures and history. Tour: ½ day



Hagia Sofía: This agro ecological development is located about 45 minutes from Huatulco, and offers an interesting interpretative tour which includes the different phases of cultivation of tropical fruit trees and original flowers from Southeast Asia and Mexico, as well as exotic and precious wood trees. Hagia Sofía is also a natural sanctuary for butterflies and birds, and its lagoon, the Magdalena river and the jungle invite you to return to nature and spiritual peace. Lunch and refreshments are offered on site. Tour: 1 day



Bay Tour: This is our signature tour, since much of Huatulco's beauty is only visible from or accessible by sea. It is offered with large catamarans (100 – 250 pax), private yachts, motor or sailing boats, which offer a leisurely cruise along the beautiful coastline with its promontories and cliffs, a blow hole and of course our beautiful virgin beaches, several of them part of the Protected Natural Area (under Government protection). On the way you may spot dolphins and turtles, and swim, snorkel and have a lunch of fresh fish and seafood at a quaint typical seaside palapa. Tour: ½ day



Adventure Activities: Besides the more leisurely, educative and cultural tours, of course there are also activities for the more adventurous participants. At Rancho Tangolunda, you can enjoy river rafting on the Copalita River, class IV to class I, fighting the waves up in the mountains or floating towards the river delta, passing through interesting rock formations and jungle, along the river banks rich with local flora and fauna, passing through small communities and waving to the children. Further, they offer horseback riding through the jungle, along the river and through the hills, as well as the longest zip line in Mexico. Tour: ½ - 1 day, depending on the activities.



Oaxaca City and Monte Albán: Participants who are able to arrive a few days before or stay a couple of additional nights in our State of Oaxaca, should not miss the opportunity to visit our State capital, Oaxaca City. Oaxaca is about 190 miles from Huatulco, 7 hrs by bus (in both directions nightly departures, with arrival early in the morning) or 40 min by plane. Oaxaca City, as well as the archeological site of Monte Albán, only 30 minutes from downtown Oaxaca, are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Oaxaca is undoubtedly the most impressive and spectacular colonial city in Mexico, with a large historical downtown and its centuries old large homes and mansions, many of them converted into museums, galleries, hotels and restaurants, but still guarding their classical architecture and romantic central patios.



Oaxaca's zocalo (town square) is always full of live, color, music and smiling people, and the traditional market offers a large variety of typical foods and beverages, such as mole, chapulines (grasshoppers), the string cheese used for the "real" quesadillas, exotic herbs and spices, as well as Oaxaca's legendary mezcal, distilled from the maguey cactus. In the valley of Oaxaca, the nearby towns are dedicated to traditional handicrafts, such as the black and green pottery, carpet weaving, embroidery, the carving and painting of the mystic alebrijes, and more. Suggested stay: 1 – 3 days

2) Meeting Venue

Proposed Venue: **Las Brisas Huatulco Resort**



We chose this venue, because the 4 star Las Brisas Huatulco Resort is EarthCheck certified, and also the only hotel in the State of Oaxaca with the "Clean Industry" certification, a distinction promoted by the Mexican Government for sustainable practices.

It is located on a 50 acre property on the western side of Tangolunda Bay, offers 484 rooms and suites, 4 beaches on the property (one with a coral reef), 4 restaurants (1 buffet style and 3 specialty restaurants), 3 pool and beach bars, a large variety of sport facilities, such as tennis, squash, basketball and volleyball courses, soccer field, and a well equipped gym.

The hotel is only 5 minutes from the Tangolunda Golf Course, and guests can choose from different room categories and meal plans, such as European Plan (room only), including breakfast, or all inclusive.

Las Brisas Huatulco also has the most complete Convention Center in the area, with 10 meeting rooms for up to 800 people, in the middle of a spectacular beach scenario.



Groups and convention services include: audio & video equipment rental, illumination equipment, internet access, banquets & catering services, decoration, photo and video service, live music, flower arrangements, office supply, special events planning, technical support and more.

Enclosed, you'll find a meeting room layout and fact sheet. For further information and room rates, please contact: Nadia Aldape, Director of Sales, Las Brisas Huatulco, Tel. +52 (958) 583 0200 or nadia.aldape@brisas.com.mx

3) Meeting Activities:

All events in Huatulco, such as evening receptions or dinners, networking functions, local tours and community events reflect Oaxaca's ancient history and cultures, its highly regarded and recognized art and folklore, as well as Huatulco's spectacular and unique natural environment and its people's commitment to protect it. We would be pleased to offer the following:

Welcome Cocktail at Tangolunda Golf Course The majestic century old guanacastle trees at the golf course offer an impressive stage and backdrop for a quiet and elegant reception, accompanied by romantic Mexican guitar music.

Guelaguetza and Regional Gastronomy Sampling The Guelaguetza is Oaxaca's most important fiesta, traditionally celebrated in July. However, folklore groups offer this spectacular festival of Oaxacan music and dances from the seven regions of the State all yearround, and there can be no celebration without these colorful and happy manifestation of the spirit of Oaxaca's people. The Guelaguetza will be accompanied by a wonderful array of Oaxaca's typical, mainly prehispanic food specialties. Ideally, this event would be held in Santa Cruz Bay, 10 minutes from Tangolunda Bay, at the Open Air Theatre and the adjoining gardens, but can also be staged at many other suitable locations.



Dance Festival "Mar y Tierra" Our Municipal Cultural Center offers this beautiful contemporary dance show, written and produced by a local choreographer and

presented by the Center's children dance group. The colorful and artistic dances represent Huatulco's unique sea and land fauna, and its message is that we all have to protect our environment.

Visit to the Community Todos Santos The Equipo Verde Huatulco recently competed in a one of a kind national competition called "Iniciativa Mexico", where private citizens and organization submit any kind of project that offers improvement of quality of life, such as health, home, family, human rights, sustainability, etc., in Mexico, and where the winners receive between US\$ 200,000 and \$2,500,000 to realize their projects.

The Equipo Verde Huatulco competed with "Huatulco Carbon Neutral", and out of more than 40,000 contenders, they became one of 20 finalists chosen by a board of experts. During the competition process, they had to show how the project could be applied, and for this, they chose the nearby high margin community of Todos Santos. We would like to take the GSTC members to Todos Santos, and show them how their life has improved and how sustainable resources and practices are applied.

Beach Cleaning Campaign In Huatulco we have regular beach cleaning campaigns, where schools, businesses, hotels, hospitals, as well as government institutions and private citizens participate, sometimes with up to 1,000 participants, and together we clean at least 20 beaches at a time. GSTC conventionists would be invited to join the teams and actively participate in this community effort.



Saturday Recyclable Waste Collection In Huatulco, waste separation and recycling is actively promoted and encouraged by the Equipo Verde Huatulco and local authorities. One Saturday every month, families and businesses bring their separated recyclable waste to the collection center with bins for pet, glass, paper and carton, plastic, aluminum, other metals, as well as a special container for batteries. At the collection site, the Equipo Verde Huatulco and volunteers always offer other activities, such as information booths, and/or talks about subjects related to the environment and sustainability,

and/or handicraft workshops for children and adults with recycled material, etc. The GSTC attendants would be invited to help at the collection center and/or offer a talk and/or participate with the workshops.



4) Past Meetings

In 2011, Huatulco was host city for the following international events:

40th Anniversary of the RAMSAR Convention, January 31st – February 4, 2011

With the attendance of Mr. Anada Tiéga, Secretary General of the RAMSAR Convention, the Subsecretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, the Governor of Oaxaca, and a broad range of important national and international personalities, such as directors of the UN Environment Program, World Wildlife Fund WWF, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Arizona Fish & Game Department, Convention of Migratory Species, and government representatives from the USA, Canada, Colombia, Brazil, El Salvador, Chile, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Bahamas, Jamaica, Haiti and other Caribbean islands, as well as national and international media. Total, aprox. 150 participants. Official celebration event was held at Punta Arena beach, with keynote address by Mr. Anada Tiéga. For more information, consult www.ramsar.org.



2° EarthCheck Forum, May 30th – June 2nd, 2011, with the presence of the esteemed Mr. Luigi Cabrini, Director of Sustainable Tourism, World Tourism Organization, who gave the keynote conference, the Secretary of Tourism of Mexico, EarthCheck's Director General of Marketing and its Director for the Americas, other high level government representatives, representatives of EarthCheck certified companies and destinations interested in implementing the EarthCheck program, environmental studies professors from several universities and students, as well as national and international media. www.earthcheck.org
 Both events included conferences, workshops and round table discussions, as well as lively social and community events.



32nd International Symposium on Sea Turtles, March 2012
 Hosted this year by the Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, Huatulco will be host city to this event.

5) Financial Contributions

The Mexican Government is very interested in having the 2012 GSTC Annual Meeting in Mexico, and it was its Secretariat of Tourism through the Mexico Tourism Board who informed us of the convention and encouraged us to compete for the spot of host city. Therefore, we would expect the following government institutions, non-profit organizations and business to participate and sponsor this event:

- Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico, through the Mexico Tourism Board
- FONATUR (National Fund for Tourism Development)
- Government of the State of Oaxaca, through its Secretariat of Tourism and Economic Development
- Government of the Municipality of Santa Maria Huatulco
- Equipo Verde Huatulco
- Huatulco Hotel & Motel Association (in kind)
- Interjet Airline
- Other possible participants/sponsors



6) Promotion of the Meeting

Huatulco will receive full Support of the Mexican Government through the Mexico Tourism Board and all their media partners and connections, as well as the Government of the State of Oaxaca with their partners. The Mexico Tourism Board will cover national and international media, the Oaxaca State Government will cover State, regional and local media.

- Media: TV spots and interviews in news and/or dedicated programs, radio spots and interviews in news and/or dedicated programs, principal daily newspapers, travel magazines and others
- Social Media: facebook, twitter, youtube, etc. (event name accounts), information, news notes and articles, conversations, etc.
- Press releases, newsletters, notes, etc. before, during and after the event
- Live internet transmissions of conferences and events
- Press room and virtual press room
- Links between the GSTC event website and those of the Mexico Tourism Board, the Secretariat of Tourism, the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, Oaxaca State Tourism Office, Huatulco Tourism Office, Equipo Verde Huatulco, Huatulco Hotel Association, Interjet, and other websites belonging to Huatulco commercial partners.



7) Local Logistics & Transportation

- Nearest HUB: Mexico City – flight time to Huatulco International Airport is 50 minutes
- Airlines flying from Mexico City to Huatulco:
 - Interjet (sponsor) www.interjet.com.mx
3 – 4 flights daily 150 pax/flight
 - Aeroméxico www.aeromexico.com
1 flight daily 100 pax/flight
 - Aeromar www.aeromar.com.mx
1 flight daily 50 pax/flight
 - Magnicharters www.magnicharters.com.mx
6 flights week 120 pax/flight
 - VivaAerobus www.vivaerobus.com.mx
4 flights week 150 pax/flight

- If necessary, Interjet is able to provide special charter flights from/to Mexico City and/or Cancún, on the main travel days.
- Alternative option: United/Continental offers direct non-stop flights from Houston to Huatulco, from 2 to 7 flights weekly, depending on the season. United/Continental is also code share partner with Aeromar, for their flights MEX-HUX.
- Distance from Huatulco International Airport to Tangolunda Bay, where the host and other major hotels are located, is about 18 miles, driving time 25 - 30 minutes.
- Distance from the venue hotel and other major hotels to the village of La Crucecita (our little “downtown”), is approximately 3.5 miles, 8-10 minutes.
- There are several destination management companies, offering transport in air-conditioned buses, mini-vans, and suburbans for group transfers, tours and excursions, as well as English and Spanish speaking guides.
- Public transportation is covered entirely by taxis. Costs of these are very reasonable, for example: Tangolunda – La Crucecita or Santa Cruz is 30 pesos (about \$2.50) per cab. Longer distances, for example to Maguey Bay or the Eco-Archeological Park Copalita is 100 pesos (about \$7.00). To the airport it’s 150 pesos (about \$11.00).



8) Alternate Lodging Options

Since Huatulco does not have an independent convention facility, we have chosen the Las Brisas Huatulco Hotel, details and services already outlined in point 2), because of its sustainability certifications.

As co-host hotel (accommodation), we also recommend the Barceló Huatulco Beach Resort, EarthCheck certified.

With all the information provided, we are convinced that the GSTC will agree with us, that Huatulco is the ideal destination for this important meeting, and we can assure you that Huatulco and all its partners are more than willing to do their utmost to surpass the expectation of the GSTC and its members, and that the participants will have not only a productive meeting with positive results and far reaching agreements, but will be overwhelmed by the beauty of Huatulco, and the friendliness and warmth of the people of the State of Oaxaca.

Alternate lodging options, from budget to luxury category, are all other hotels of the Huatulco Hotel Association. For more information, please consult www.hoteleshuatulco.com.mx

9) Food & Beverage / Meals

For the GSTC meeting day/s we propose the following:

- Breakfast: responsibility of each participant (the majority of hotels offer the option of room rates with breakfast included)
- Lunch: paid by participant (to GSTC or directly to host venue) or sponsored by participating member organization
- Dinner: Sponsored by Huatulco and its host partners (Mexico Tourism Board, Fonatur, Oaxaca Government and Hotel Association)

For the pre- and post-convention days, we will partner with the Huatulco Restaurant Association, the Hotel Association and other participating businesses, who will offer special discounts for GSTC meeting participants on meals and shopping.



Food and beverages in Huatulco are generally reasonably priced, depending on the type of restaurant. Breakfast runs from about \$ 5 to \$ 15, lunch from \$ 8 to \$20, and dinner from \$ 10 to \$ 25 per person. A soft drink or beer is \$1 - \$2, liquor \$3 - \$6, cocktails \$ 4 - \$8.

GRACIAS!