

Background

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council is a global, multi-stakeholder membership organization dedicated to setting baseline sustainability standards for travel and tourism and applying the standards as an Accreditation Body that governs certification of sustainable products.

Born as a strategic coalition of partners under the umbrella of the United Nations (UN), and the strong support of the UN Foundation, the UN Environmental Program and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the GSTC brings together businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, individuals and communities engaged in and striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism. Established as a membership council, the GSTC serves as the international body for promoting education, understanding and adoption of global sustainable tourism practices. At the core of its work are the GSTC Criteria, which are developed and periodically revised via extensive public consultation per the standard-setting code of the ISEAL Alliance.

Vision: Tourism fulfills its potential as a vehicle for social, cultural, and economic good while removing and avoiding any negative impacts from its activities in terms of environmental and social impacts.

Mission: To be an agent of change in the world of sustainable travel and tourism by fostering the increased knowledge, understanding, adoption and demand for sustainable tourism practices.

GSTC Criteria

The GSTC Criteria provide globally-applicable guiding principles. They serve as the basis of GSTC activities. There are two sets of criteria: GSTC Industry for the private sector and Destination Criteria for the public sector. GSTC Industry serves as an umbrella set of Criteria that guide separate subsectoral Criteria. These criteria represent the minimum requirements necessary for any travel and tourism businesses and destinations to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation. The Criteria can be adapted and expanded to the specific conditions of each region of the world and each industry sector, as the key issues for sustainability will have different emphasis under differing conditions. The GSTC Criteria form the foundation of the GSTC Integrity Program in which marks are applied to other organizations' sustainability standards.

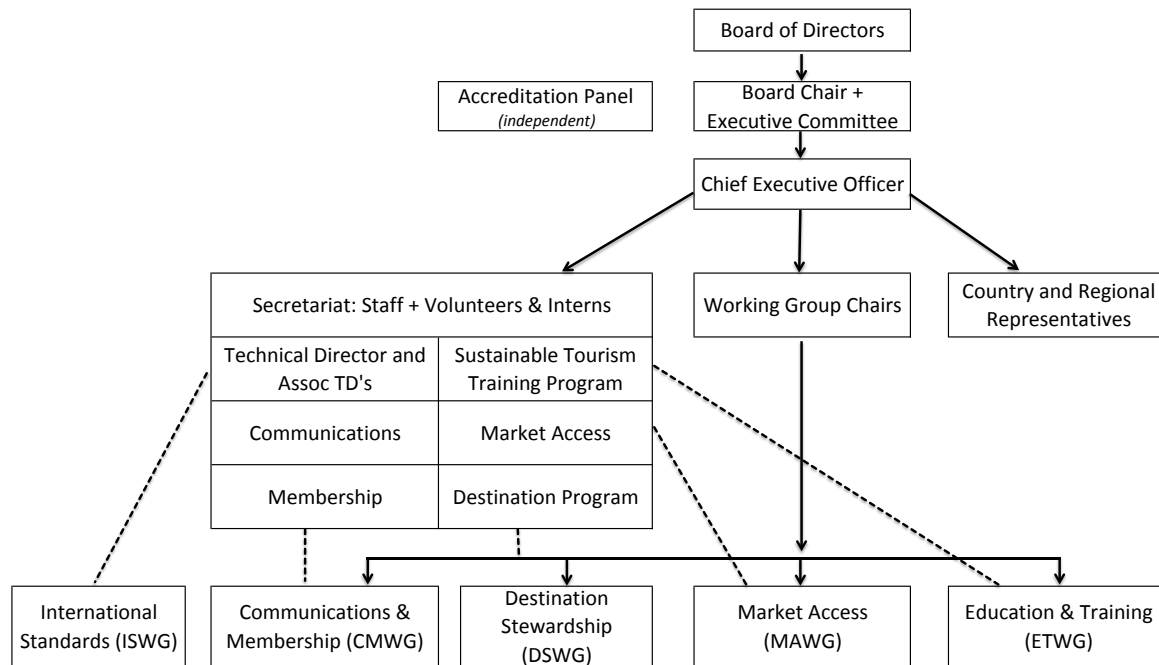
2017 Strategic Plan

Overview: GSTC will continue to promote the widespread application of the GSTC Criteria as global baseline standards for sustainable travel and tourism. The Criteria serve as vital tools for elevating good practice and policy, plus driving market demand, by all players in travel and tourism.

All activities undertaken by the organization in 2017 will be designed to support one or more of the following strategic goals:

Strategic Goal
1. Revise the GSTC Destination Criteria, managing the revision process in compliance with the Standards-Setting Code of the ISEAL Alliance
2. Encourage greater market access to sustainable product by applying the GSTC framework as a means of enhancing consumer confidence in product that is properly labeled sustainable
3. Raise awareness and education levels of all travel and tourism players of sustainable tourism concepts
4. Develop and maintain a diverse set of funding sources that sustain the mission and core activities of the organization
5. Engage in the work of the UN 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Tourism (10YFP)
6. Enhance compliance monitoring of claims made with the GSTC name and marks
7. Plan for the development of impacts reporting mechanisms

Organizational Structure - The GSTC is a membership-based not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, which represents diverse stakeholders in tourism. Its organization and activities are guided by By-Laws and are conducted through the following organizational structure:



The [Board of Directors](#) is responsible for governance oversight of the council's mandate, program of work, and operations. A semi-autonomous [Accreditation Panel](#) manages the Recognition, Approval, and Accreditation program. Working groups, with representation by a board member, undertake initiatives that support the strategic plan as it relates their designated [program areas](#) and are advisory in nature. The organization is managed by a [Secretariat](#) led by the Chief Executive Officer that leads and coordinates the implementation of the objectives and initiatives of the organization.