



GSTC-ACCREDITED
Administered by ASI
MANUAL

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

www.gstcouncil.org

To make comments on this document, please email the GSTC Technical Director

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Document Control

This is version 2.4 of the GSTC-Accredited Manual and replaces any and all previous versions.

Version Notes

This version of the GSTC-Accredited Manual has been re-structured with major revisions including changed competencies for auditors and decision makers, Frequency & Intensity, Risk Analysis and audit sampling.

This document will be updated from time to time, and users should periodically check for later versions on the GSTC.

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INTRODUCTION

GSTC Integrity Program - Overview

GSTC Integrity Program

The GSTC Integrity Program is designed to be applicable to all schemes certifying tourism enterprises for their sustainability management and performance. Relevant certification schemes and the bodies that run them vary from sizeable international operations or national schemes, some with support from government agencies, to small schemes covering local areas or particular types of tourism product.

The GSTC intends to build a long-term relationship with all certification schemes. An aim of the GSTC is to continually increase the percentage of schemes that are GSTC-Accredited.

The GSTC considers it desirable for all sustainable certification standards to be GSTC-Recognized to ensure that an overall global baseline is set for sustainable tourism standards.

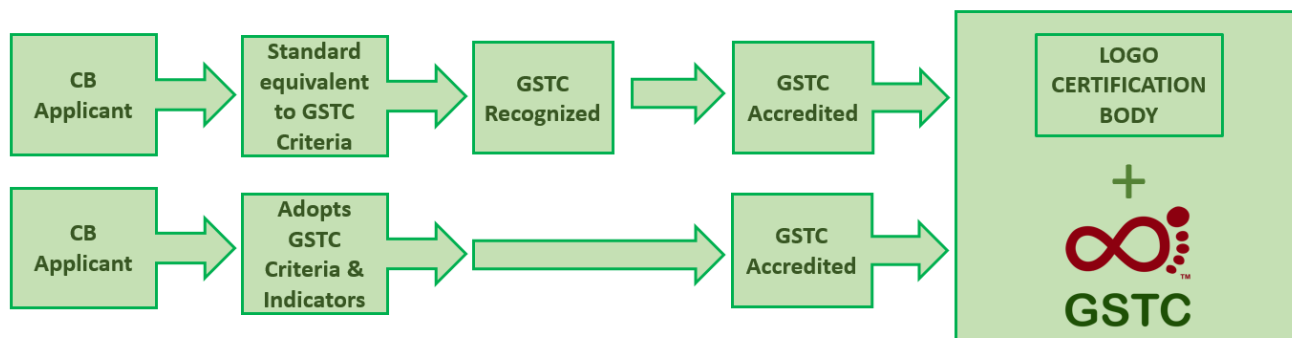
It is recognized that many standards do not currently cover all the elements of the GSTC Criteria or certifiers comply with all of the GSTC requirements for certification bodies. It may take some time for these bodies to complete the changes required to achieve compliance.

The GSTC acknowledges these challenges, and has a number of options for standard owners and CBs to gain GSTC endorsement.





- **GSTC-Recognized:** GSTC recognizes equivalence of a certification body's standard (criteria) against GSTC Criteria (Hotels, Tour Operators or Destinations). See the GSTC-Recognized Manual.
- **GSTC-Accredited / ASI administered:** Third party accreditation (by ASI) of certification body that either uses a GSTC- Recognized Standard OR certifies directly against GSTC Criteria and Indicators (GSTC-Industry, formerly Hotels, Tour Operators, and/or Destinations). See the GSTC-Accredited Manual.
- **GSTC-Accredited / GSTC administered:** GSTC approves the policies and procedures of a certification body that uses a GSTC-Recognized standard or certifies directly against GSTC Criteria and Indicators (GSTC-Industry, formerly Hotels, Tour Operators, and/or Destinations). Eligibility is limited to certification bodies that operate in a single-country; those certification bodies operating internationally must gain their GSTC Accreditation through ASI. This document, the GSTC-Accredited Manual, applies.

Not all certification schemes cover all aspects of sustainability: economic, social, cultural and environmental. For example, a number are solely covering environmental matters and may grant the use of an eco-label. These schemes would only be eligible to become GSTC-Recognized if they first transformed themselves into sustainable tourism certification programs and included all aspects of sustainability. The GSTC encourages certification schemes, where appropriate, to consider this transition.

The diagram below provides a simplified graphical depiction of the pathways of the GSTC Integrity Program and the table on the following pages summarize the processes, key aspects and benefits.



GSTC Integrity Program - Summary and Benefits

	GSTC-Recognized	GSTC-Accredited GSTC	GSTC-Accredited ASI
Summary			
GSTC recognizes equivalency of certification body's standard (criteria) against GSTC Criteria (Hotel, Tour Operator or Destinations).	✓	✓ ¹	✓
GSTC approves the policies and procedures of certification body that uses either a GSTC-Recognized standard OR certifies directly against GSTC Criteria and Indicators to certify Destinations, or for certain certification bodies operating within a single country to certify Hotels/Accommodations or Tour Operators.		✓	
Third party accreditation (by ASI) of certification body that uses either a GSTC Recognized Standard OR certifies directly against GSTC Criteria and Indicators to certify Hotels/Accommodations or Tour Operators.			✓
GSTC Logo Usage			
GSTC-Accredited Certification Program or GSTC-Accredited Certification Body may use logo (subject to license agreement).			
Certified Hotel/Tour Operator/Destination may use logo (subject to license agreement and annual fee – administered by certification body).			
Promotion by GSTC			
Certification Body promoted on GSTC website.		✓	✓
Announcement of achievement in GSTC newsletter, GSTC website and GSTC social media outlets.		✓	✓
Inclusion of Certification Body's logo on all GSTC official presentations, including Annual General Meeting, as well as all other speaking engagements and publications.		✓	✓
Certified hotels, tour operators and destinations will be listed on the GSTC website directory.		✓	✓
Certified hotels, tour operators and destinations will be prominently displayed (with a hyperlink to the individual hotel) on the GSTC website.		✓	✓
Development and publication on GSTC website of case studies (i.e. written blog post, video blog) of individual certified businesses.		✓	✓
Market Access			
Certified hotels (and soon tour operators) included in GSTC directory available to online travel agencies (OTAs)		✓	✓
Priority search results when OTA's use GSTC directory of certified businesses		✓	✓
Participation in relevant preferred procurement campaigns		✓	✓

¹ To be GSTC Accredited the certification body's standard must first be GSTC Recognised.

Background

The Need for Sustainability of Tourism

Travel and tourism account for around 10% of the world's economic activity. It is a rapidly growing sector, with international tourist arrivals forecast to grow from 1.1 billion in 2014 to around 1.8 billion in 2030".

The Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 are aimed at, inter alia, ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality and justice and tackling climate change. The significant relevance of tourism to most of the 17 SDGs has been recognised. The UNWTO is working with governments, public and private partners, development banks, international and regional financial institutions, UN agencies and international organizations to achieve the SDGs, with a special focus on Goal 8 (economic growth), Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns) and Goal 14 (marine resources) where tourism has been specifically featured.

The impact of travel and tourism on global and local environments and on host communities can be both positive and negative, providing both opportunities and responsibilities.

Negative impacts and concerns associated with travel and tourism include:

- Its contribution to climate change, being responsible for an estimated 5% of global CO₂ emissions which is growing rapidly;
- Depletion of natural and precious resources, such as the use of land and water;
- Creation of pollution of all kinds;
- Social changes and dislocation of traditional societies;
- Pressure on cultural heritage sites, natural environments and biodiversity;
- Poor labour conditions and exploitation in parts of the sector.

Travel and tourism can also deliver many positive benefits, including:

- A growing opportunity for enterprise development and employment creation, with low barriers for entry;
- Direct and indirect support for local communities, through the provision of jobs, income, services and infrastructure;
- Awareness of natural and cultural heritage and support for their conservation;
- Health, wellbeing and educational benefits for tourists and hosts, which should be accessible to all.

Sustainable tourism requires an approach to tourism development and management that recognizes and responds to these responsibilities and opportunities.

Actions that encourage, identify and promote a positive response from enterprises are crucial for the future of the tourism sector and the contribution it can make to sustainable development. The tourism sector is highly fragmented. While there are some important multinational players, many of the providers of tourism services are independent businesses and the majority are small and micro enterprises. Tourism enterprises of all sizes are responding in different ways and to different degrees to the need for sustainable tourism.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

GSTC is a multi-stakeholder initiative formed in 2010 under the umbrella of the United Nations, including amongst its founding partners UNEP, UNWTO, UN Foundation, Sabre Holdings and Rainforest Alliance, amongst others. It was formed in response to the challenges and opportunities of sustainable tourism, by merging two previous initiatives.² In 2015, GSTC merged with the Tour Operators Initiative with TOI's operations now coming within the GSTC organization.

Over 150 organizations from the public, private and voluntary sectors and from the world of tourism, environmental management and sustainable development have been contributing to the work of the GSTC and its two predecessor bodies.

The GSTC is a Membership Council with a Board of Directors. The Board provides the governance of the organization. However, the Council, which elects the Board, has responsibility for the by-laws of the GSTC, for its principles, criteria and operational guidelines, for admittance of members and for resolving disputes.

The mission of the GSTC is:

“To improve tourism’s potential to be a driver of positive conservation and economic development for communities and businesses around the world and a tool for poverty alleviation”.

The GSTC fulfills its mission by fostering increased knowledge and understanding of sustainable tourism practices and the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles.

It also works in many other ways to strengthen education, communication, knowledge-sharing and business engagement in the field of sustainable tourism and to achieve improved market access for sustainable tourism products.

A Common Agenda for Sustainable Tourism

The challenges of sustainable tourism articulated earlier encompass economic, social and environmental impacts. This broad spectrum of concern is increasingly recognized by bodies promoting sustainable tourism. UNEP and UNWTO identified an agenda for sustainable tourism based on twelve functional aims³ and showed how there are economic, social and environmental dimensions to each of them. The dimensions are seen as interrelated.

In the private sector, in tourism as well as in other economic spheres, enterprises and investment projects are encouraged to consider a triple bottom line. Many companies report on corporate social responsibility policies and actions, which address a broad range of economic, social and environmental impacts and initiatives beyond straight financial reporting. Some companies use the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative, the world’s most widely used sustainability reporting framework (www.globalreporting.org).

² The Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council

³ UNEP, UNWTO *Making Tourism More Sustainable, A Guide for Policy Makers, 2005*

The GSTC program is in line with this broad approach to sustainable tourism and encourages certification schemes to move beyond a more mono-dimensional, often environmental focus.

The principles for sustainable tourism behind the GSTC program are that:

- Sustainability objectives should be defined and actions coordinated by an effective management system
- Tourism should bring the greatest possible social and economic benefits to local communities and any negative impacts on them should be minimised
- Local cultural heritage must be respected and opportunities should be taken to strengthen its integrity and richness.
- Impacts on the global and local environment, through pollution and depletion of natural resources, should be minimised and support should be given to the conservation of local landscapes and biodiversity.

These principles of sustainable tourism are seen as relevant in all parts of the world and can be reflected in many different kinds of tourism enterprise. The overall agenda remains the same. However, key concerns about tourism impact and priorities for improving sustainability will vary from place to place. It is hoped and expected that sustainable tourism standards will be adapted to local and industry sector conditions and that they will far exceed the minimum requirements outlined in this manual.

GSTC Criteria

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has developed two sets of criteria and associated indicators:

- **GSTC-Industry:** the Global Sustainable Tourism Industry Criteria (version 3, December 2016). At this stage, GSTC-Industry is available in two versions, GSTC-Hotel and GSTC-Tour Operator, each with their own set of performance indicators;
- **GSTC- Destinations:** The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations

The development of GSTC-Industry allows the GSTC to develop sub-sector specific Indicators for this broader set of criteria, for example MICE, cruise, attractions.

GSTC Accreditation Panel

The GSTC Accreditation Panel is established by the GSTC, bylaws:

The GSTC Accreditation Panel (“the Panel”) will operate the recognition, approval and accreditation program under the umbrella of GSTC. The Panel will:

1. Establish the requirements for recognizing standards, approving certification programs, and validating the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, through Manuals for Recognition, Approval, and Accreditation; guidance documents, and other documentation of procedures;
2. Determine whether a contractor is qualified to review a standard’s conformity with the GSTC Criteria; review certification program procedures and processes; or award accreditation;
3. Declare standards to be “GSTC-Recognized”;
4. Declare certification programs to be “GSTC-Accredited”;
5. Validate and provide surveillance of accreditation body declarations of “GSTC-Accredited certification bodies”;

The Panel shall operate independently of the GSTC Board and executive staff. While appointed by the GSTC Board, the members of The Panel shall disregard any instructions from the Board or executive staff that they feel may jeopardize their independence and impartiality.

The GSTC Board shall have the discretion to accept or reject any of the Panel's recommendations or decisions. If GSTC rejects one of the Panel's recommendations or decisions, it is obligated to provide an explanation for doing so to the Panel. The Panel may choose to raise the matter at the next annual Membership Council Meeting.

Principles for the implementation of the GSTC Integrity Program

The following principles apply to all aspects of the GSTC program – including to work performed by certification scheme owners, CBs and Accreditation Bodies.

1 Integrity

Integrity should be demonstrated in every aspect of the process, requiring honesty, fairness and consistency throughout.

2 Credibility

The process should spread confidence in certification as a meaningful way of identifying and stimulating good sustainability practice in the tourism sector.

3 Impartiality

The process should not be open to any forms of influence which might raise doubts about the objectivity of the decisions taken.

4 Accessibility

Recognition of standards and accreditation should be as accessible as possible to all relevant certification schemes and certification should be as accessible as possible to all tourism enterprises. There should be no discrimination on grounds of size and location and financial barriers should be minimized.

5 Comprehensiveness

All recognized sustainable tourism standards covering sustainable tourism should address all aspects of sustainability, including socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts.

6 Rigorousness

Accreditation and certification should be robust processes and require high standards and levels of sustainability to be met.

7 Effectiveness

The process should be impacts-driven and shaped to help as many tourism enterprises as possible achieve maximum change towards sustainability. The accreditation programme should strengthen the impact of the certification schemes.

8 Transparency

The standards required and processes adopted should be transparent and available for scrutiny by stakeholders.

9 Diversity

The process should recognize and encourage the diversity of local, regional and sectoral certification schemes, including their criteria and standards, provided there is no loss of sustainability outcomes.

10 Achievability

The accreditation process must be practicable and sustainable over time and not place burdens on certification schemes that they could not meet.

Manual Structure

The Manual covers both the requirements of and accreditation processes to be implemented by a GSTC endorsed Accreditation Body and for Certification Bodies, the certification processes they must implement and the requirements and process for their accreditation.

This Manual in a number of parts.

- Part I sets out the requirements of Accreditation Bodies in their accreditation of Certification Bodies.
- Part II sets out the requirements of Certification Bodies in or order to be accredited.
- PARTS III, IV and V cover the market access benefits, use of logos and a glossary, of interest to both Accreditation and Certification Bodies.

Normative References

The following documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, become part of the GSTC Accreditation Manual.

For documents which specify a date or version number later amendments or revisions of that document do not apply as a normative requirement. Readers are encouraged to review the most recent editions and any guidance documents available to gain further insight about how the document has changed, and to consider whether or not to implement latest changes.

For documents without dates or version numbers, the latest published edition of the document referred to applies.

- ISO / IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- ISO/IEC 17067:2013 Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes
- ISO 17021-1:2015 Conformity Assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ISO / IEC 17011: 2004 Conformity assessment — General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- ISO 19011:2011 Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management system auditing
- ISO / IEC17000:2004 Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles
- ISO / IEC Guide 2: 2004 Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary
- Accreditation Audit Practice Group (AAPG) Guidance Documents:

- ISO / IAF AAPG Auditing the CB Impartiality Committee
- ISO / IAF AAPG Key Criteria for assessing the competency of CBs and their ability to deliver credible results
- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

NOTE: See also Section 17 for terms and definitions.

PART I: REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES

The section sets out requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting CBs who offer certification of clients conforming with either a GSTC-Recognized Standard or the GSTC Criteria and Indicators (e.g. Hotels, Tour Operators and/or Destinations). This section uses ISO 17011:2004 as the substantial basis with additional or specific GSTC requirements set out against specific clauses of ISO 17011.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 All accreditation bodies are required to meet minimum standards that are set down in Part I of the GSTC Accreditation Manual.
- 1.2 Accreditation Bodies will be required to enter into a license agreement with the GSTC.

2 Accreditation Body conformity with GSTC requirements

- 2.1 Accreditation bodies providing accreditation to the GSTC shall:
 - 2.1.1 Conform to ISO 17011 and additional requirements set out in Section 3.
 - 2.1.2 Be either an ISEAL member or be a signatory to the IAF MLA on accreditation.
 - 2.1.3 Have entered into a licence agreement with the GSTC
- 2.2 Accreditation bodies meeting the above criteria shall be listed as “GSTC-endorsed accreditation bodies” by the GSTC.

3 GSTC Requirements of Accreditation Bodies

- 3.1 GSTC endorsed accreditation bodies shall conform to the following requirements (section 3.4) in addition to requirements set out in ISO 17011:2004.
- 3.2 Where no text appears after a clause of ISO 17011 is referenced, accreditation bodies shall take this to mean that no additional requirements are provided.
- 3.3 Requirements for the Application of ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Conformity assessment - General requirements for the accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

ISO 17011

3.4 - GSTC-Accredited - Accreditation Body Requirements

ISO17011 - 1 Scope

ISO17011 - 2 Normative References

ISO17011 - 3 Terms and definitions

ISO17011 - 4 Accreditation Body

ISO17011 - 4.1 Legal responsibility

ISO17011 - 4.2 Structure

3.4.1 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 4.2.4

3.4.1.1 The Accreditation Body shall appoint a responsible person within their organization with authority for activities related to accreditation of GSTC CBs.

3.4.2 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 4.2.6

3.4.2.1 Where there are issues or queries regarding interpretation of GSTC requirements for CBs during the accreditation process, the Accreditation Body shall consult directly with the GSTC for clarification.

ISO17011 - 4.3 Impartiality

ISO17011 - 4.4 Confidentiality

3.4.3 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 4.4

3.4.3.1 The Accreditation Body shall share information regarding scheme specific issues with the GSTC's representative. This information shall be shared as soon as practicable and the Accreditation Body shall be responsible for follow up of the corrective actions in the case of complaints and major non conformities.

3.4.3.2 The list of information to be shared, which is not exhaustive, shall include:

- a) *accreditation status,(suspension, withdrawal, scope reduction or expiry of accreditation),*
- b) *complaints that could jeopardize the accreditation status,*
- c) *major non-conformities,*
- d) *An(at least) annual activity summary containing, as a minimum:*
 - i. *General assessment details,*
 - ii. *Head office assessment: date, location, critical location assessments, numbers of site and auditor files reviewed, Accreditation Body's assessors names, duration, general conclusions,*
 - iii. *Witness assessment: location, date, field, Accreditation Body assessor, duration, general conclusions,*
 - iv. *CB name and conclusion of reports - accreditation Status.*

- 3.4.3.3 The annual activity summary shall be in a standardized format as agreed with the GSTC.

ISO17011 - 4.5 Liability and financing

ISO17011 - 4.6 Accreditation activity

- 3.4.4 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 4.6.1
 - 3.4.4.1 If applicable, normative documents shall include all documentation relevant to a GSTC-Recognized Standard and shall be issued by a GSTC-Recognized standard owner.
 - 3.4.4.2 Normative documents shall include the relevant GSTC Criteria and Indicators.
- 3.4.5 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 4.6.2
 - 3.4.5.1 The GSTC requirements set out in the GSTC-Accreditation Manual shall be included as part of this process.

ISO17011 - 5 Management

ISO17011 - 5.1 General

ISO17011 - 5.2 Management system

ISO17011 - 5.3 Document control

ISO17011 - 5.4 Records

ISO17011 - 5.5 Non conformities and corrective actions

ISO17011 - 5.6 Preventative actions

ISO17011 - 5.7 Internal audits

ISO17011 - 5.8 Management reviews

ISO17011 - 5.9 Complaints

- 3.4.6 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 5.9
 - 3.4.6.1 All complaints associated with any GSTC -Accredited CB shall be investigated and dealt with by the relevant accreditation body, as far as possible, within 30 days of receipt. If any complaint puts GSTC-Accredited standard certificates at risk, then the standard owner and the GSTC shall be informed immediately and appropriate action taken.
 - 3.4.6.2 An approved Accreditation Body may adopt and implement a complaint and corrective action procedure.

ISO17011 - 6 Human Resources

ISO17011 - 6.1 Personnel associated with the Accreditation Body

ISO17011 - 6.2 Personnel involved in the accreditation process

- 3.4.7 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 6.2.1
 - 3.4.7.1 All Accreditation Body personnel engaged in GSTC accreditation activity shall have sufficient knowledge of the GSTC, the GSTC Criteria and Indicators and sustainable tourism.
 - 3.4.7.2 The Accreditation Body shall ensure that the decision maker and any program manager meet the personnel requirements of Section 11 (Certification Body - Decision Makers).
 - 3.4.7.3 The Accreditation Body shall ensure that the assessment team undertaking witness activities includes personnel who meet the personnel requirements of Section 10 (Certification Body -Auditors). Members of the assessment team should have "exceptional" knowledge of sustainable tourism and the GSTC Criteria and Indicators. To avoid any doubt, Section 10 is the minimum requirement.
 - 3.4.7.4 The Accreditation Body shall submit the resume of members of the assessment team proposed to be undertaking witness activities for approval by the GSTC Accreditation Panel.
- 3.4.8 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 6.2.3
 - 3.4.8.1 The Accreditation Body shall document information regarding assessors and experts in accordance with the GSTC requirements in section 6.2.1.

ISO17011 - 6.3 Monitoring

ISO17011 - 6.4 Personnel records

ISO17011 - 7 Accreditation process

ISO17011 - 7.1 Accreditation criteria and information

ISO17011 - 7.2 Application for accreditation

- 3.4.9 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.2.1
 - 3.4.9.1 If the CB is certifying against a GSTC-Recognized Standard (as per clause 5.1.1 of this Manual, see below), the CB shall demonstrate that it owns, or has made appropriate arrangements to use the GSTC-Recognized standard with the standard's owner during the application procedure.
 - 3.4.9.2 If the CAB is certifying against one or more of the GSTC Criteria and Indicators (as per clause 5.1.2 of this Manual, see below) the CAB shall demonstrate that it has a thorough understanding of the GSTC Criteria and Indicators.
- 3.4.10 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.2.3
 - 3.4.10.1 The Accreditation Body shall inform the GSTC when an application is made by a CB for GSTC-Accredited status.

ISO17011 - 7.3 Resource review

ISO17011 - 7.4 Subcontracting the assessment

ISO17011 - 7.5 Preparing for assessment

3.4.11 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.5.8

3.4.11.1 During surveillance and reassessments the following documentation shall be sampled and assessed, as a minimum:

- a) *Sample of at least 10 % or 2 auditor's training and competency records, whichever is greater, for each GSTC Criteria and Indicators and/or GSTC-Recognized Standard for which certification is offered.*
- b) *Sample of at least 2 site files, or 2 % of delivered audits, whichever is greater, for each GSTC Criteria and Indicators and/or GSTC-Recognized Standard for which certification is offered.*
- c) *Sampling of site files shall be risk based and should be done across countries, types of tourist operators certified and auditors.*

3.4.12 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.5.10

3.4.12.1 The Accreditation Body shall ensure that the GSTC documentation is included.

ISO17011 - 7.6 Document and record review

ISO17011 - 7.7 On-site assessment

3.4.13 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.7.3

3.4.13.1 At least one assessment of the CB shall be witnessed for initial accreditation for each for each GSTC Criteria and Indicators and/or GSTC-Recognized Standard for which certification is offered.

3.4.13.2 If CB's have more than 20 auditors, then witness assessments shall be carried out at a rate of at least 1 witness assessment per 20 auditors per year, auditing against any of the GSTC Criteria and Indicators and/or GSTC-Recognized Standards. Where international CB's have geographical spread then the percentage of witness audits will be proportional to the geographic spread (e.g. 30% overseas means that 1 in 3 witnessed audits will be performed overseas). The witness assessment program shall be designed to ensure that different auditors and different product categories are assessed at subsequent witnessed assessments.

3.4.13.3 The site file assessments shall include a review of:

- a) *Contracts between the CB and the client;*
- b) *Any application documentation provided by clients for certification to the CB;*
- c) *Confirmation of audit scope and duration;*
- d) *Auditor's original notes from audit and evidence of conformity;*
- e) *Documentary evidence supplied by the client for the non-conformities identified;*
- f) *Documentation of any corrective/preventative action and root cause analysis for non-conformities;*
- g) *Final audit report;*
- h) *Certification decision and certificate conformity.*

- 3.4.13.4 Sampling levels shall be increased where evidence of issues is identified during the assessment in order to establish whether the CB is meeting accreditation requirements.
- 3.4.13.5 Where objective evidence or complaints are identified between planned surveillance and reassessments, accreditation bodies shall carry out additional assessments.

ISO17011 - 7.8 Analysis of findings and assessment report

ISO17011 - 7.9 Decision making and granting accreditation

- 3.4.14 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.9.1
 - 3.4.14.1 Prior to making an accreditation decision the Accreditation Body shall provide the GSTC Accreditation Panel with the final assessment report containing the assessment team's recommendation as to whether or not accreditation should be granted.
 - 3.4.14.2 The GSTC Accreditation Panel shall have 15 business days to provide comment.
 - 3.4.14.3 The GSTC Accreditation Panel's shall indicate to the Accreditation Body whether or not it agrees with the recommendation made, and the Accreditation Body shall take the GSTC Accreditation Panels' views into account when making its accreditation decision.
- 3.4.15 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.9.5
 - 3.4.15.1 The accreditation certificate or schedule shall include the full name and version of the GSTC Criteria and Indicators and/or GSTC-Recognized Standard being applied for certification.
 - 3.4.15.2 At the time of issuing the accreditation certificate, the Accreditation Body will issue logos, terms of use and marketing and promotional guidelines as provided by the GSTC to the Accreditation Body for such distribution.
 - 3.4.15.3 A copy of the decision, and certificate evidence of distribution shall be provided to the GSTC.

ISO17011 - 7.10 Appeals

- 3.4.16 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.10.2 a)
 - 3.4.16.1 The Accreditation Body shall invite a minimum of one GSTC representative to be an independent member of any group established to investigate and make a decision upon an appeal

ISO17011 - 7.11 Reassessment and surveillance

- 3.4.17 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.11.3
 - 3.4.17.1 A maximum of two years after the initial accreditation and each re-accreditation, an on-site visit will be made to the CB, which will involve an inspection of documents, an interview with personnel, scrutiny of previous non-conformities and deficiencies, a witnessed audit, an exit interview and a written report of findings.
 - 3.4.17.2 There shall be at least one witness assessment each monitoring visit. If CB's have more than 20 auditors then witness assessments shall be carried out at a rate of at least 1 witness assessment per 20 auditors per year. Where international CB's have geographical spread then the percentage of witness audits will be proportional to the geographic spread (e.g. 30 % overseas means that 1 in 3 witnessed audits will be performed overseas). The witness assessment programme shall be designed to ensure that different auditors and different types of tourist operators are assessed at subsequent witnessed assessments.
 - 3.4.17.3 Reassessment, following the same processes as initial assessment, shall be undertaken at least every four years.
 - 3.4.17.4 If there are matters raised in the CB's annual report to the Accreditation Body that creates potential concern about continuing conformity with requirements in the Accreditation Body's view, the Accreditation Body shall decide whether or not further actions are needed, including but not limited to further audit, suspension or withdrawal of accreditation may be necessary.
 - 3.4.17.5 Should the GSTC Accreditation Panel have reason to be concerned about the ongoing conformity of a CB with requirements, it may require the Accreditation Body to conduct more frequent reports and/ or require more monitoring visits than stipulated in these requirements.
- 3.4.18 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.11.5
 - 3.4.18.1 The Accreditation Body shall inform the GSTC about the outcome of all assessment activities, usually by providing a copy of the assessment report.
- 3.4.19 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.11.6
 - 3.4.19.1 Prior to making a decision to withdraw, to reduce the scope of a certification, the Accreditation Body shall seek the views of the GSTC Accreditation Panel. The Accreditation Body shall consider the GSTC Accreditation Panel's comments in making the decision.

3.4.19.2 The Accreditation Body may suspend accreditation if this is an urgent matter to maintain the perceived integrity of the GSTC-Accredited program. If there is no urgency, the Accreditation Body shall seek the views of the GSTC Accreditation Panel and the Accreditation Body shall consider the GSTC Accreditation Panel's comments in making the decision.

3.4.19.3 The Accreditation Body shall inform the GSTC if accreditation is suspended, withdrawn or expired or if scope is reduced.

3.4.20 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.11.7

3.4.20.1 When informed of the identification of issues in a particular market, which could bring the credibility of the GSTC certification process into disrepute, the Accreditation Body shall take any appropriate action including conducting an extraordinary assessment if necessary.

ISO17011 - 7.12 Extending accreditation

3.4.21 GSTC Requirement to ISO 17011 clause 7.12

3.4.21.1 Upon an application to extend a scope to include a new GSTC-Recognized standard under an accreditation standard the CB is already accredited for, a full (i.e. on-site and witness assessments) extension assessment shall be undertaken for every new GSTC-Recognized standard.

ISO17011 - 7.13 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing accreditation

3.4.22 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.13.2

3.4.22.1 If the GSTC is aware that its requirements are not met the GSTC will inform the Accreditation Body. The Accreditation Body shall undertake an investigation of the issues raised by the GSTC and shall take appropriate action (e.g. to suspend or withdraw accreditation).

3.4.23 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 7.13.3

3.4.23.1 If the GSTC's requirements are not met, the GSTC will inform the Accreditation Body. The Accreditation Body shall undertake an investigation of the issues raised by the GSTC, who shall take appropriate action (i.e. the decision to reduce the scope of accreditation).

ISO17011 - 7.14 Records of CB's

ISO17011 - 7.15 Proficiency testing and other comparisons for laboratories

ISO17011 - 8 Responsibilities of the Accreditation Body and the CB

ISO17011 - 8.1 Obligations of the CB

3.4.24 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 8.1.1

3.4.24.1 The Accreditation Body shall require the CB to submit an annual report, copied to the GSTC, outlining the performance of the CB. The report shall refer to the previous 12 month period and include:

- a) Any changes to the structure of the CB and operation of the scheme;
- b) Brief financial summary, including forward projection to confirm ongoing viability;

- c) Any changes to the standard used;
- d) A list of the enterprises assessed for certification and certified (including the scope, type, location and contact details of the tourism business and the language the audit was undertaken and name of auditor);
- e) Royalty payment paid and owing to the GSTC;
- f) Any appeals and complaints received, with actions taken;
- g) Any issues that might affect impartiality and conflict of interest; professional development and training activity;
- h) A list of currently engaged auditors and their competence (as per section 12);
- i) A list of currently engaged decision makers and their competence (as per section 13);
- j) Results of the annual internal audit and review;
- k) Accreditation Body findings and CB response.

ISO17011 - 8.2 Obligations of the Accreditation Body

3.4.25 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 8.2.3

3.4.25.1 The Accreditation Body shall provide this information, where applicable, to the GSTC.

3.4.26 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 8.2.4

3.4.26.1 In the event of changes or revisions to a GSTC-Recognized standard, the Accreditation Body shall collaborate and communicate with the GSTC to identify the appropriate review process of the CB and to ensure that the CB is aware of and meets the additional / changed requirements in relation to accreditation.

ISO17011 - 8.3 Reference to accreditation and use of symbols

3.4.27 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 8.3.2

3.4.27.1 The Accreditation Body shall verify that 8.3.2 points (a-f) are applied in connection with the usage of the marks of the GSTC and the GSTC-Recognized standard.

3.4.28 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17011 clause 8.3.3

3.4.28.1 The Accreditation Body shall verify that 8.3.2. points (a-f) are applied in connection with the usage of the GSTC marks and appropriate action taken in the event of incorrect or misleading claims in relation to the use of such information and accreditation status.

PART II: GSTC-ACCREDITED - REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

The section sets out requirements for CBs certifying that clients conform to a GSTC recognized standard and or specific GSTC Criteria and Indicators. In addition to GSTC specific requirements for certification of sustainable tourism, this section uses ISO 17065:2012 as a basis with additional or specific GSTC requirements set out against specific clauses of ISO 17065.

4 Introduction

- 4.1 To become GSTC-Accredited, a CB shall:
 - 4.1.1 Gain accreditation from an Accreditation Body which conforms to Part I and is endorsed by the GSTC Accreditation Panel.
 - 4.1.2 Enter into a licence agreement as set out in Part IV for the use of the GSTC name, marks and/or logo.
- 4.2 All CBs are required to meet minimum standards that are set down in Part II of the GSTC Accreditation Manual.
 - 4.2.1 All CBs will be subject to assessment of their conformity to these requirements by a GSTC endorsed Accreditation Body.

5 Scope of Certification

Criteria to be Applied

- 5.1 A CB may certify against either:
 - 5.1.1 A GSTC-Recognized Standard that it owns.
 - 5.1.2 The GSTC Criteria and their Indicators and Guidance (e.g. GSTC Hotels and Tour Operators; and/or GSTC Destinations).

GSTC-Recognized Standard

- 5.2 In the case of 5.1.1, the CB shall be able to show that it owns a GSTC-Recognized certification standard and any associated trademarks and labels.
- 5.3 The CB shall assess the conformity of the client's tourism services against the requirements of a GSTC-Recognized Standard.
 - 5.3.1 All criteria in the GSTC-Recognized Standard which are equivalent to the GSTC Criteria must be mandatory for conformity.
- 5.4 The CB shall define the scope of the certification, specifying those services and locations that have been assessed against the recognized standard.

- 5.5 In the case of 5.1.1, a CB must develop a guideline/application/evaluation tool (evaluation tool) which fully adopts the relevant GSTC-Recognized Standard.
- 5.5.1 The evaluation tool shall set out guidance for compliance and assessment.
 - 5.5.2 The evaluation tool shall be supported by guidance on types of evidence required and measures expected to meet criteria and indicators for the sectors to be audited.
 - 5.5.3 If the CB operates within specific jurisdictions/countries/climates specific guidance on local application of the criteria may be included within the guideline/evaluation tool.

Adopting GSTC Criteria

- 5.6 In the case of 5.1.2, a CAB must develop a guideline/application/evaluation tool (evaluation tool) which fully adopts the relevant GSTC Criteria and Indicators (and any published GSTC guidance) as in force at the time.
- 5.6.1 The evaluation tool shall set out guidance for compliance and assessment of each GSTC criterion and indicator.
 - 5.6.2 The evaluation tool shall be supported by guidance on types of evidence required and measures expected to meet criteria and indicators for the sectors to be audited.
 - 5.6.3 If the CAB operates within specific jurisdictions/countries/climates specific guidance on local application of the criteria may be included within the guideline/evaluation tool.
- 5.7 In the case of 5.1.2, the CAB must ensure all criteria are applied as mandatory. Any exceptional circumstances where a criterion is not applied must only be in the circumstances set out in the "criteria application" section of the relevant GSTC criteria.

Reliance on Legislation

- 5.8 In some situations, where a CB is used in only one country or a smaller region (i.e. one legal jurisdiction) it may demonstrate that:
- a) the GSTC-Accredited Requirement is covered by legislation;
 - b) the specific laws must be identified;
 - c) the laws are enforced; and
 - d) the CB's evaluation tool requires demonstrated compliance with applicable laws.
- 5.9 Acceptable evidence may include:
- 5.9.1 a requirement for a legally-binding sworn statement by the organization to be certified with respect to compliance with specific, named laws and regulations;
 - 5.9.2 text from the CB's manual or standard indicating that compliance with specific, named laws and regulations will be verified during the assessment.
- 5.10 In this case the GSTC-Accredited status will only apply for the standard in that area of legal jurisdiction.

6 Languages

- 6.1 A CB may only certify using languages for which there is a GSTC-Recognized standard or in the case of 5.1.2 the relevant GSTC Criteria and Indicators have been translated into that language.
- 6.1.1 The auditor must be proficient in that language.

- 6.2 In the event an enterprise or destination being certified has a business language for which there is either a GSTC-Recognized standard or approved translation of GSTC Criteria and Indicators, however a sizable proportion of the staff of the enterprise/destination being audited speak mainly another (local) language, the auditor may undertake the Audit accompanied by a capable translator (who may be a staff member of the enterprise being audited).
- 6.2.1 In this event it is expected that the vast majority of documents are in the language of the GSTC-Recognized standard, and only spoken word translation is required. The enterprise/destination may use local language documents for training/awareness/management purposes with its' staff and stakeholders, these may be translated to the language of the GSTC-Recognized standard by the enterprise/destination for the auditors review.
- 6.3 In the event an auditor does not speak the language of the enterprise/destination an audit may be completed only with certified translation of documents and using a capable translator during the audit (who may be a staff member of the enterprise being audited).
- 6.4 Where a CB is working in a language other than English, it will provide translated documents in English as required for initial Accreditation and ongoing requirements by the Accreditation Body.
- 6.5 Any required reporting and correspondence with GSTC shall be in English.

7 GSTC-Accredited Expiry and Renewal

- 7.1 GSTC-Accredited status will apply to a certification body until the earlier of:
- 7.1.1 The certification body amends their policies, procedures or practices;
 - 7.1.2 The majority ownership of the certification body changes;
 - 7.1.3 If 5.1.1 applies, the standard used by the GSTC-Accredited program is no longer GSTC-Recognized;
 - 7.1.4 If 5.1.2 applies, the relevant GSTC Criteria are amended;
 - 7.1.5 Three years from initial GSTC-Accredited status.

Amendment of GSTC-Accredited Requirements

- 7.2 If the GSTC-Accredited Requirements have been amended by the GSTC, the GSTC Accreditation Panel will give due notice to the Accreditation Body who will inform GSTC-Accredited CBs any changes made to the GSTC-Accredited Requirements and subsequent actions that they may be required to take upon expiry of their current Approval:
- 7.2.1 A new GSTC-Accredited process may be required to be completed; or
 - 7.2.2 A GSTC-Accredited renewal process may be used by the Accreditation Body
 - 7.2.3 To avoid any doubt. if the GSTC-Accredited Manual is changed during the period of a CB's GSTC-Accredited status, no action is required of the CB until renewal upon the expiry of the GSTC-Accredited status.

Amendment of a GSTC-Recognized Standard

- 7.3 Where 5.1.1 applies the GSTC-Accredited status of a CB only applies whilst the standard is GSTC-Recognized.

- 7.4 Should a standard be no longer GSTC-Recognized the certification program has a twelve month period in which to re-apply or renew the GSTC-Recognized status of the standard in accordance with the GSTC-Recognized Manual.
- 7.4.1 To avoid any doubt the CB may not continue to certify if the standard is no longer GSTC-Recognized.

Amendment of a GSTC Criteria

- 7.5 Where 5.1.2 applies the GSTC-Accredited status of a CB only applies whilst the GSTC-Criteria version remains current.
- 7.6 If the GSTC Criteria have been amended by the GSTC, the GSTC/Accreditation Body will give due notice to GSTC-Accredited CBs of any changes made to the GSTC Criteria and subsequent actions that they may be required to take to remain GSTC-Accredited:
- 7.6.1 Attendance at GSTC provided training/awareness seminars may be required by the GSTC for CB decision makers and auditors.
- 7.6.2 A GSTC-Accredited renewal process may be required to be completed or a short form re-Accreditation process may be administered by the Accreditation Body.

Ongoing Suitability of a Certification Program

- 7.7 If at any time, should the GSTC Accreditation Panel or the Accreditation Body have reason to be concerned about the ongoing conformity of an already Accredited program with the GSTC - Accredited requirements, it may require the CB to provide further information, and may, as an ultimate sanction, withdraw the GSTC-Approved status.

8 Conformity with GSTC Requirements

- 8.1 CBs shall be accredited by a GSTC endorsed Accreditation Body with a scope of certifying to a standard which is GSTC-Recognized or with a scope of certifying to one or more GSTC Criteria.
- 8.1.1 Scope of accreditation may be further limited by the Accreditation Body as it thinks fit by defining geographical or cultural areas of operation, or types of tourism enterprises to be certified.
- 8.2 CBs shall conform to the requirements of ISO / IEC 17065.
- 8.2.1 CBs shall conform to the additional requirements for ISO 17065 set out in section 8.5.
- 8.3 CBs wishing to be accredited shall apply to a GSTC endorsed Accreditation Body and shall conform to that Accreditation Body's requirements and the requirements for CBs set out in the GSTC-Accredited Manual.
- 8.4 CBs shall have entered into a licence agreement with the GSTC prior to being granted accreditation.

ISO 17065

- 8.5 Requirements for the application of ISO 17065: 2012:

- 8.5.1 CBs shall note that accreditation bodies will interpret the requirements of ISO 17065:2012 using any guidance to ISO 17065 published by either the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or by the ISEAL Alliance (if any inconsistency, ISEAL guidance should take precedence).
- 8.5.2 CBs shall follow the requirements set out in this section.

- ISO 17065 - 1 Scope**
- ISO 17065 - 2 Normative references**
- ISO 17065 - 3 Terms and definitions**
- ISO 17065 - 4 General requirements**

- 8.5.3 CBs should note that accreditation bodies have been instructed to follow guidance to accreditation auditing contained within the Accreditation Audit Practice Group's document ISO / IAF AAPG Key Criteria for assessing the competency of CBs and their ability to deliver credible results.

ISO 17065 - 4.1 Legal and contractual matters

8.5.4 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 4.1.2.1

8.5.4.1 Upon certification, the CB shall issue their client with the:

- a) GSTC Logo; and
- b) the GSTC Logo Terms of Use;

in accordance with the GSTC Logo Terms of Issuance.

8.5.4.2 The CB shall require their client to use the GSTC Logo in accordance with the GSTC Logo terms and conditions

ISO 17065 - 4.2 Management of impartiality

8.5.5 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 4.2.10

- 8.5.5.1 Personnel who have provided consultancy services for a client shall not be used for auditing or decision making for that client for a period of a minimum of two years.
- 8.5.5.2 If following an initial audit CB personnel involved in the audit or certification decision making become involved with the client as staff, contractors or consultants within a period of two years the CB shall review the audit and all decisions arising from it to ensure that there was no conflict of interest at the time of the audit and/or certification decision.

- ISO 17065 - 4.3 Liability and financing**
- ISO 17065 - 4.4 Non-discriminatory conditions**
- ISO 17065 - 4.5 Confidentiality**
- ISO 17065 - 4.6 Publicly available information**

ISO 17065 - 5 Structural requirements

ISO 17065 - 5.1 Organizational structure and top management

ISO 17065 - 5.2 Mechanism for safeguarding impartiality

8.5.6 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 5.2.1

8.5.6.1 CBs should note that accreditation bodies have been instructed to follow guidance to accreditation auditing contained within the Accreditation Audit Practice Group's document ISO / IAF AAPG Auditing the CB Impartiality Committee.

ISO 17065 - 6 Resource requirements

ISO 17065 - 6.1 Certification body personnel

8.5.7 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 6.1.2

8.5.7.1 CBs shall ensure that their competency criteria include all competency criteria set out in sections 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the GSTC-Accredited Manual.

ISO 17065 - 6.2 Resources for evaluation

ISO 17065 - 7 Process requirements

8.5.8 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7

8.5.8.1 CB audit personnel should follow guidance on auditing provided in ISO 19011.

ISO 17065 - 7.1 General

ISO 17065 - 7.2 Application

ISO 17065 - 7.3 Application review

8.5.9 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.3.1

8.5.9.1 CBs shall use the following scope categories⁴ to describe the scope of assessment of tourist operators.

a) Hotels (including other accommodation)

b) Tour Operators (including tours)

c) Destinations

d) Other sectors once GSTC has published criteria and indicators.

ISO 17065 - 7.4 Evaluation

⁴ Tourism characteristic activities and products as extracted by the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) from the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/TSA%20RMF%202008%20edited%20whitecover.pdf>.

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- 8.5.10 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.4
 - 8.5.10.1 The CB shall use their evaluation tool as per clause 5.5 or 5.6 as the basis for evaluation.
- 8.5.11 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.4.3
 - 8.5.11.1 The CB may perform a document review and if so shall send a summary of findings to the client, requesting that any deficiencies in documentation are corrected prior to the on-site audit.
- 8.5.12 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.4.4
 - 8.5.12.1 The auditor may undertake interviews (consultation) with knowledgeable stakeholders within or external to the client in order to clarify aspects of the client's activity and performance. The auditor should undertake such consultation where there is significant doubt about the sufficiency, quality, or veracity of information supplied by a client. The client shall be informed in writing about any stakeholder consultation undertaken, but shall not be informed of any information that stakeholders request remains confidential.
 - 8.5.12.2 At the end of the on-site audit, the auditor shall conduct a closing meeting with the client to ensure that the audit process has covered all relevant matters accurately

ISO 17065 - 7.5 Review

ISO 17065 - 7.6 Certification decision

- 8.5.13 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.6
 - 8.5.13.1 The CB's decision-making entity shall authorise any changes to conditions of certification.

ISO 17065 - 7.7 Certification documentation

- 8.5.14 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.7.1
 - 8.5.14.1 The period of validity of the certification shall be not greater than three years from the date on which it was granted as shown on the certification document.

ISO 17065 - 7.8 Directory of certified products

ISO 17065 - 7.9 Surveillance

- 8.5.15 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.9.1
 - 8.5.15.1 The CB shall carry out an on-site surveillance visit at least once each two years.
 - 8.5.15.2 The CB may undertake random unannounced monitoring visits.
 - 8.5.15.3 The process of renewal of a certification shall follow all the requirements of certification.

ISO 17065 - 7.10 Changes affecting certification

ISO 17065 - 7.11 Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

ISO 17065 - 7.12 Records

ISO 17065 - 7.13 Complaints and appeals

8.5.16 GSTC Requirements to ISO 17065 Clause 7.13.8

8.5.16.1 A copy of the formal notice of the outcome of any appeal shall be sent to the GSTC and the GSTC standard owner.

ISO 17065 - 8	Management system requirements
ISO 17065 - 8.1	Options
ISO 17065 - 8.2	General management system documentation (Option A)
ISO 17065 - 8.3	Control of documents (Option A)
ISO 17065 - 8.4	Control of records (Option A)
ISO 17065 - 8.5	Management review (Option A)
ISO 17065 - 8.6	Internal audits (Option A)
ISO 17065 - 8.7	Corrective actions (Option A)
ISO 17065 - 8.8	Preventive actions (Option A)

9 Personnel Competence Criteria

9.1 All personnel involved in audit or certification decision making activities shall meet the criteria set out for the relevant role undertaken.

Personal attributes

9.2 All personnel should have the following personal attributes:

- a) **ethical**, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet;
- b) **open-minded**, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view;
- c) **diplomatic**, i.e. tactful in dealing with people;
- d) **observant**, i.e. actively aware of physical surroundings and activities;
- e) **perceptive**, i.e. instinctively aware of and able to understand situations;
- f) **versatile**, i.e. adjusts readily to different situations;
- g) **tenacious**, i.e. persistent, focused on achieving objectives;
- h) **decisive**, i.e. reaches timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis; and
- i) **itself-reliant**, i.e. acts and functions independently while interacting effectively with others.

10 Auditor Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills

- 10.1 Individuals engaged to undertake audits(which may have one or more members) must meet the following criteria.
- 10.2 **Auditing:** Third-party product and management system conformity assessment auditing techniques.
- 10.2.1 Skill Qualification:
 - 10.2.1.1 Pass IRCA / RABQSA Recognized EMS / QMS/ISO14001, ISO 19011 lead assessor course; or
 - 10.2.1.2 Registration as EMS / QMS auditor with IRCA or RABQSA; or
 - 10.2.1.3 Equivalent environmental/social/quality auditor qualification to achieve the competencies.
 - 10.2.2 Competencies:
 - 10.2.2.1 Audit principles, procedures and techniques sufficient to enable the team leader to apply those appropriate to planning and execution of different audits and ensure that audits are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.
- 10.3 **Criteria:** Understanding of the relevant GSTC Criteria and Indicators and if applicable the GSTC-Recognized standard.
- 10.3.1 Knowledge Qualification:
 - 10.3.1.1 Attendance at GSTC Auditor training of at least 4 days duration and focussed on auditing/assessing GSTC criteria (course must be delivered by an approved GSTC Auditor trainer and be at least the formal 3 day course covering the GSTC-HTO and GSTC Destinations, plus any other GSTC Criteria; and one day "On site" focussing on evaluating/auditing sustainable tourism); or
 - 10.3.1.2 Attendance and successfully pass the evaluation at the Official Auditor training course for the GSTC-Recognized standard.
 - 10.3.2 Knowledge Competencies
 - 10.3.2.1 Demonstrate understanding of GSTC Criteria and Indicators by passing examination of GSTC Criteria content.
 - 10.3.2.2 (If applicable) demonstrate understanding of GSTC-Recognized standard.
 - 10.3.2.3 An appropriate examination covering changes must be passed within three months of issue of revised GSTC Criteria and/or new standard or certification requirements.
- 10.4 **Stakeholder consultation:** Ability to consult with tourism business, regulatory agencies, industry groups, local community members and any indigenous stakeholders.
- 10.4.1 Skills Qualification:

- 10.4.1.1 Formal post high school training in consultation or facilitation techniques of at least one day; or
 - 10.4.1.2 At least two years professional experience involving stakeholder consultation.
 - 10.4.2 Skills Competencies:
 - 10.4.2.1 Ability to consult with a variety of stakeholders in a manner which builds trust and elicits responses.
 - 10.5 **Local knowledge**, including understanding of cultural issues and applying this to audit of tourism enterprises.
 - 10.5.1 Knowledge Competencies:
 - 10.5.1.1 Can explain the cultural setting, local legislative framework and risks that apply to the tourism enterprise.
 - 10.5.2 Skill Competencies
 - 10.5.2.1 Ability to work in the cultural, social economic, and legal environment of the audit.
 - 10.5.2.2 Demonstrated by experience working in the local area/country and/or having experience working in diverse cultural, social economic, and legal environment.
 - 10.6 **Language**, including understanding of local/cultural/business context.
 - 10.6.1 Skills Qualifications:
 - 10.6.1.1 Language is one of first language(s) spoken in the home; or
 - 10.6.1.2 Formal qualification of at least four years at high school; or
 - 10.6.1.3 Post high school level qualification; or
 - 10.6.1.4 Lived in country using language for minimum of one year.
 - 10.6.2 Skills Competencies
 - 10.6.2.1 Can comfortably read and speak language used by in common with the majority of personnel in the tourism enterprise.
- NOTE: See section 6 of GSTC-Accredited Manual regarding languages for audits and auditors.
- 10.7 **Sustainable tourism enterprises**, including understanding of understanding of tourism and audit of tourism enterprises.
 - 10.7.1 This section applies to auditors undertaking audits at the enterprise level.
 - 10.7.2 Knowledge Qualification:
 - 10.7.2.1 Worked in tourism industry for minimum of five years, with two of these in a position of responsibility; or
 - 10.7.2.2 Attendance at GSTC Auditor training of at least 4 days duration and focussed on auditing/assessing GSTC criteria (course must be delivered by an approved GSTC Auditor trainer and be at least the formal 3 day course covering the GSTC-HTO and GSTC Destinations; and one day "On site" focussing on evaluating/auditing sustainable tourism) or
 - 10.7.2.3 Attendance and successfully pass the evaluation at the Official Auditor training course for the GSTC-Recognized standard.
 - 10.7.3 Knowledge Competencies:

- 10.8.6.1 Verification mechanism: either through accreditation body witnessed audit or accreditation body review of two audit reports.
- 10.8.7 An audit of a sustainable tourism destination may be undertaken by a team, with the lead auditor meeting criteria 10.1-10.7 and 10.9-10.11 assisted by a sustainable tourism destination management specialist, who may not necessarily have audit skills, joining the audit team (in which case 10.8.4 and 10.8.6 do not apply to the sustainable tourism destination management specialist).
- 10.9 **Social and cultural issues**, including understanding of social and cultural issues and applying this to audit of tourism enterprises and/or destinations.
 - 10.9.1 Skill Competencies:
 - 10.9.1.1 Able to apply knowledge of social and cultural issues to sustainable tourism in an audit situation in a consistent and systematic manner.
 - 10.9.2 Verification of Competencies:
 - 10.9.2.1 Verification mechanism: either through accreditation body witnessed audit or accreditation body review of two audit reports.
- 10.10 **Economic issues**, including understanding of the tourism economy, potential economic impacts, tourism supply chain and opportunities economic contribution to local economies and applying this to audit of tourism enterprises and/or destinations.
 - 10.10.1 Skill Competencies:
 - 10.10.1.1 Able to apply knowledge of micro and macro economic factors in sustainable tourism in an audit situation in a consistent and systematic manner.
 - 10.10.2 Verification of Competencies:
 - 10.10.2.1 Verification mechanism: either through accreditation body witnessed audit or accreditation body review of two audit reports.
- 10.11 **Environmental issues**, including understanding of environmental risk issues and best practice eco-efficiency and applying this to audit of tourism enterprises and/or destinations.
 - 10.11.1 Skill Competencies:
 - 10.11.1.1 Able to apply knowledge of environmental risk issues and best practice eco-efficiency to sustainable tourism in an audit situation in a consistent and systematic manner.
 - 10.11.2 Verification of Competencies:
 - 10.11.2.1 Verification mechanism: either through accreditation body witnessed audit or accreditation body review of two audit reports.

11 Certification Decision Makers: Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills

- 11.1 Certification body decision makers must meet the following criteria.

11.2 Auditing: Third-party product and management system conformity assessment auditing techniques.

11.2.1 Skill Qualification:

11.2.1.1 Pass IRCA / RABQSA Recognized EMS / QMS/ISO14001, ISO 19011 lead assessor course; or

11.2.1.2 Registration as EMS / QMS auditor with IRCA or RABQSA; or

11.2.1.3 Equivalent environmental/social/quality auditor qualification to achieve the competencies.

11.2.2 Competencies:

11.2.2.1 Audit principles, procedures and techniques sufficient to enable the team leader to apply those appropriate to planning and execution of different audits and ensure that audits are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.

11.3 Certification: Understanding and applying the international norms for certification.

11.3.1 Skill Qualification:

11.3.1.1 Formal training of awareness of ISO 17065:12; or

11.3.1.2 At least five years as a decision maker with an ISEAL or IAF accredited certification body.

11.3.2 Competencies:

11.3.2.1 Certification principles, procedures and techniques sufficient to enable appropriate certification decisions.

11.4 Criteria: Understanding of the relevant GSTC Criteria and Indicators and if applicable the GSTC-Recognized standard.

11.4.1 Knowledge Qualification:

11.4.1.1 Attendance at GSTC Auditor training of at least 4 days duration and focussed on auditing/assessing GSTC criteria (course must be delivered by an approved GSTC Auditor trainer and be at least the formal 3 day course covering the GSTC-HTO and GSTC Destination; and one day "On site" focussing on evaluating/auditing sustainable tourism) or

11.4.1.2 Attendance and successfully pass the evaluation at the Official Auditor training course for the GSTC-Recognized standard.

11.4.2 Knowledge Competencies

11.4.2.1 Demonstrate understanding of GSTC Criteria and Indicators by passing examination of GSTC Criteria content.

11.4.2.2 (If applicable) demonstrate understanding of GSTC-Recognized standard.

11.4.2.3 An appropriate examination covering changes must be passed within three months of issue of revised GSTC Criteria and/or new standard or certification requirements

11.5 Language, including understanding of local/cultural/business context.

11.5.1 Skills Qualifications:

11.5.1.1 Language is one of first language(s) spoken in the home; or

11.5.1.2 Formal qualification of at least four years at high school; or

- 11.5.1.3 Post high school level qualification; or
- 11.5.1.4 Lived in country using language for minimum of one year.
- 11.5.2 Skills Competencies
 - 11.5.2.1 Can comfortably read and speak language used by in common with the majority of personnel in the tourism enterprise.
- 11.5.3 NOTE: This section only applies for audits and certification not undertaken in English, see section 6 of GSTC-Accredited Manual regarding languages for audits and auditors.

12 Audit Personnel Scope

Activity based scope

- 12.1 CBs shall determine whether or not personnel involved in audit are competent to undertake audits or to review audit reports and make certification decisions for each of the following scope categories:
- a) Hotels (including all accommodation)
 - b) Tours (including tour operators)
 - c) Destinations
 - d) Other sectors once GSTC has published criteria and indicators

Geographical Scope

- 12.2 Acknowledging that there may be significantly different regulatory, cultural and language issues, CBs shall determine whether or not personnel are competent to undertake audits or review audit reports and make certification decisions in each country that the CB operates in.

13 Frequency and Intensity

CB's shall set the audit frequency and intensity to be employed. Where a CB uses a risk based approach to determine audit frequency and intensity, the CB shall develop a procedure that identifies the risk factors to assess the risk level of clients, the overall risk categorization, and the resulting audit frequency and intensity associated with each risk category.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Audit Duration:** Audit duration for all types of audits is the effective time measured in auditor days required to carry out auditing activity.
2. **Auditor Day:** The duration of an auditor day is normally 8 hours and may or may not include travel time or lunch depending upon local legislation.
3. **Risk Category:** For sustainability management systems, the provisions specified in this document are based on two primary risk categories relating to the type and sensitivity of the environment.

Risk categories to determine audit frequency and intensity

The provisions specified in this document are based on two primary risk categories relating to the likelihood and consequence of the environmental impacts of an organization that fundamentally affect the auditor time, frequency and intensity of the audit.

These are:

High Risk – environmental impacts with significant likelihood and consequence (typically organizations with significant environmental impacts);

- **Minimum Frequency & intensity:** Full Onsite audit once every two years, plus a Full desk audit each year on between.
 - Onsite – Desk Audit – Onsite.

Low Risk – environmental aspects with low likelihood and consequence (typically organizations in an existing urban environment with few or minimum environmental impacts);

- **Minimum Frequency & intensity:** Full Onsite audit every two years.
 - Onsite – Surveillance - Onsite

14 Risk Assessment

14.1 Each CB before performing audits, must define the level of risk of the organization.

14.2 The organization must identify its level of environmental risk and document an effective sustainability approach, appropriate to the scope of its operations.

14.2.1 If an organization is located in a Sensitive Area, this organization will be categorized as "high" risk.

14.2.2 Sensitive areas include but are not limited to world heritage listed areas, areas set aside for environmental and/or cultural protection, marine parks, beaches, rivers, lagoons, wetlands/swamps, alpine/artic areas, tropical islands/coral reefs, national/state parks, areas set aside for indigenous people or specific national and state or regional environmental, social and cultural legislation requirements.

14.2.3 If an organization's environmental risk is categorized as "high" a documented Environmental Management System (EMS) is required.

14.2.4 If an organization's environmental risk is categorized as "low" a documented Risk Assessment and Environmental Action is required.

14.2.5 All levels of risk are subject to ratification by the CB.

Note: The Risk category of the company is determined by the above and not by company size, financial turnover (revenue), or other financial aspects.

15 Sampling within the Audit

15.1 Standards system owners shall define the sampling procedure that auditors shall use during the audit and shall provide this direction to assurance providers. The procedure shall require that the auditor, rather than the client, chooses the sample. The sampling procedure shall include, at minimum:

- 15.1.1 A description of when sampling is to be employed in the audit; and
- 15.1.2 Guidelines for the type of sampling and size of the samples to be employed in each instance.
- 15.1.3 Guidance: Sampling in the audit can include choosing which documents or records to review, which sites to visit, or what issues to focus on. Sampling procedures on-site cannot be strictly dictated ahead of time as auditors must be free to use their judgment in choosing samples. Standards system owners therefore need to provide detailed guidance that will lead to consistent on-site sampling procedures

Recommendation:

- To include audit duration and/or sampling sizes requirements in all certification requirements.

Certification Options

- There may be several certification options available to an applicant.
- The CB shall evaluate each applicant to determine which certification option(s) the applicant is eligible or and which option will be best suited to their needs.

Options for Certification

	Certification options	Applies to
1	Single	Organizations operating out of one site (a single location with one physical address)
2	Multi-Site	Organizations at more than one location (physical address). All sites are individually audited against the GSTC Standard, although not all requirements would necessarily apply to all sites.
3	Group	Organizations with numerous locations – this could be a group of individual enterprises or one company with numerous sites. Under this option, the group designates a central office function that establishes internal controls and is responsible for site compliance. The CB audits the central office and a sample of sites against the Group GSTC Standard, instead of every site receiving an audit as in a multi-site certificate.

16 Eligibility for Group certification

- 16.1 The CB shall determine that an applicant is eligible for group certification against the GSTC Standard if all the following criteria are met:
- 16.2 The proposed group's central office is a legal entity with whom a contract can be made.
- 16.3 All sites undertake substantially similar activities
 - 16.3.1 The entire group operation is within one geographic region; or if they are not, the group can be stratified for sampling.
 - 16.3.2 The same written language is used at all sites and can be read by all site managers or, if translations are provided, adequate document control procedures are in place to ensure version consistency across different languages.
 - 16.3.3 The proposed group's central office is capable of objectivity in audit and decision making.
 - 16.3.4 The proposed group's central office can demonstrate through their application an understanding of the GSTC Standard such that it is likely that they will be able to qualify for certification.

17 Ineligibility for certification

- 17.1 The CB shall check if applicants for GSTC certification:
 - 17.1.1 Have had their certificate withdrawn within the last 2 years.
 - 17.1.2 The CB shall not issue a new certificate until at least 2 years from the date that the certificate was withdrawn.
 - 17.1.3 Have had their certificate suspended within the last 6 months:
 - 17.1.3.1 The CB shall not issue a new certificate until at least 6 months from the date of suspension.
 - 17.1.3.2 Where the certificate holder has cancelled their certificate during suspension, the CB shall not issue a new certificate until at least 6 months from the date of suspension.
 - 17.1.4 The CB shall require the applicant to declare any association to entities that have been successfully prosecuted for forced labor and environmental violation.
 - 17.1.5 If an entity belonging to or currently contracted by an applicant has been successfully prosecuted for violations of laws on forced labour and environment in the last 2 years, this entity shall not be allowed to continue in the GSTC certification process.

18 Certification program with multilevel award system.

- 18.1 If a certification program gives the option to obtain an award based on the performance level or compliance, the lower award level must comply with all GSTC Criteria and hold a valid and current Recognized status in GSTC.

Example: Certification programme X award hotels in 3 levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The Bronze level of this certification program must comply with all GSTC Criteria and hold a valid and current Recognized status in GSTC.

19 Requirements For Group Certification

Introduction

- 19.1 Tourism enterprises may form a group, and be issued with one GSTC certificate. The major benefit of this approach is that the costs may be significantly lower than if each member of the group became individually certified.
- 19.2 Group certification is a practice of organizing individual enterprises into structured groups and supplementing an accredited third party audit with internal inspections. In order to qualify for group certification, the group must have an internal management system in place that instills confidence that the individual group members are meeting the requirements of the standard.
- 19.3 A group shall have a “group manager” who shall be responsible for the operation of the internal management system. The group manager may be a cooperative of group members, an association, a consultant or an auditing body.
- 19.4 This annex includes requirements for group members, for the group’s manager, for the internal management system and for CB assessment of the performance of the group.
- 19.5 CBs certifying groups shall ensure that the GSTC’s requirements for groups are followed. This may require them to circulate this Annex to their clients.
- 19.6 Group Membership
- 19.6.1 Group members shall offer similar tourism services and shall share the same language.
- 19.7 Internal Management System
- 19.7.1 The group shall have a defined and documented structure and an internal management system (IMS) with documented procedures.
- 19.8 The group manager and members shall each understand their responsibilities within the group.
- 19.9 Written procedures shall include at least the following:
- 19.9.1 Roles and responsibilities of staff, contractors, elected persons, and committees;
- 19.9.2 Approval of new members;
- 19.9.3 Record keeping requirements for both group members and the group’s manager;
- 19.9.4 Internal inspection methods;
- 19.9.5 Qualification criteria for internal inspectors; and
- 19.9.6 Processes for applying sanctions and for appeals.
- 19.10 All procedures shall be updated as necessary.

Group Manager

- 19.11 The group manager shall be responsible for implementation of the IMS, including verifying group member conformity with standards and certification requirements.
- 19.12 The IMS shall be adequately resourced with qualified personnel and financial resources to allow implementation of the IMS to ensure conformity of individual members with standards in an objective and transparent manner.
- 19.13 The group manager shall have one person or group in charge of the IMS.
- 19.14 The group manager shall manage potential and actual conflicts of interest in a manner appropriate to its scale and conditions. Individuals shall disclose potential conflicts of interest and shall not take part in work or decisions related to their potential conflict.
- 19.15 All persons in the group including management, committees, internal inspectors and others shall be competent for their tasks. The group manager shall determine the necessary competencies for various positions and provide training or take other actions to satisfy these needs. This shall include appropriate training for new staff and elected people where needed for them to fulfil their tasks.
- 19.16 Records of education and training shall be maintained.

Group Members

- 19.17 Group members shall each sign (or commit by a practical alternative) to a contract / agreement with the group manager. The group manager shall make sure that group members understand the implications of the contract. The contract shall contain at least:
- 19.17.1 A commitment by the group member to fulfill standards and certification requirements;
 - 19.17.2 A commitment by the group member to provide the group manager with required information;
 - 19.17.3 A commitment by the group member to comply with group manager instructions;
 - 19.17.4 Acceptance by the group member of internal and third party inspection;
 - 19.17.5 An obligation for the group member to report intentional or unintentional non-conformities;
 - 19.17.6 The right of members to terminate membership.
 - 19.17.7 A description of the processes to be followed if membership of the group is to be suspended or terminated.
- 19.18 All group members shall have access to standards and certification requirements specified by the group.
- 19.18.1 Standards requirements may be in any form or media.
 - 19.18.2 Documents can be an internal standard based upon an external standard developed by the group or an external standard.
- 19.19 Documents such as contracts and internal standards which the group members need to understand shall be written in a way that is appropriate to their local language, culture and knowledge.

19.20 Group members shall have adequate knowledge about standards, requirements and production methods, on the basis of appropriate education, training, skills and experience.

19.21 The group shall determine the necessary competence for group members and provide training or take other actions to satisfy these needs. Records of member training shall be maintained by the group.

Continuous Improvement

19.22 The group manager shall determine and implement plans for improving the IMS and group members' performance against standards and certification requirements. Among the information that can inform these plans are:

- 19.22.1 Internal inspection findings;
- 19.22.2 External audit findings;
- 19.22.3 Complaints and appeals;
- 19.22.4 Review of market requirements.

19.23 When setting up the IMS, the group manager and members shall carry out a risk assessment in relation to compliance with specified standard and certification requirements. The risk assessment shall include at least identification of risks at the level of group member operations and performance of the IMS.

19.24 Group management shall take relevant measures to prevent or minimize to an acceptable level the identified risks and address non-conformities. The group manager shall focus its resources on these areas.

Service Integrity

19.25 Group members shall only sell services within the scope of the IMS as certified.

19.26 Safeguards shall be in place to ensure that non-certified services are not provided by group members in a way that may imply that they are certified. .

Internal Inspections

19.27 An internal inspection shall take place to give group managers the opportunity to determine whether or not an individual group member is meeting the standards and other requirements.

19.28 Each member of the group shall be inspected annually except in circumstances that are defined by an individual certification scheme.

19.28.1 Justifications for less frequent inspection can be based on different factors including the results of risk assessments.

19.28.2 Inspections should take place at different times of the year and not be so regular as to become predictable.

19.29 New group members shall always be inspected and found to be in conformity before their services can be certified.

19.30 Internal inspectors can provide advice to group members but shall not inspect those members to whom they have provided advice, they should be independent from management and shall not audit/inspect their own work..

- 19.31 A decision by the group manager on the status in the group of individual members shall be taken annually.
- 19.31.1 This decision shall be based on internal inspections and other relevant information.
 - 19.31.2 Safeguards shall be in place to ensure that internal inspectors are not unduly influenced in their findings by group managers or group members.
- 19.32 Group members should have the right to dispute any finding that leads to their suspension or removal from the group.
- 19.33 The IMS shall include the application and enforcement of sanctions to individual group members who do not comply with the standards or other requirements.
- 19.34 The consequences of non-conformity and sanctions shall be made clear to group members.
- 19.35 Sanctions shall include, but are not limited to, exclusion from sales of certified services.
- 19.36 Records of sanctions shall allow for the easy identification of sanctioned group members.

Records

- 19.37 Records covering the relationship between the group manager and group members shall be maintained and kept up to date, including at least the following:
- 19.37.1 Contracts between the group and individual group members;
 - 19.37.2 Group member list;
 - 19.37.3 Records for selling certified services;
 - 19.37.4 Internal inspection reports;
 - 19.37.5 Non-conformities, sanctions and follow-up action arising from both internal inspections and external audits; and
 - 19.37.6 Complaints and appeals.
- 19.38 When a group member is not able to create and maintain records, the group manager shall assume responsibility for maintaining these records.
- 19.39 All group members shall be recorded in a list. This list shall be updated as necessary and shall include at least the following information for each member:
- 19.39.1 Name of the member or code assigned to the member;
 - 19.39.2 Address(es) and activities that are provided at each address;
 - 19.39.3 Certification status;
 - 19.39.4 Dates of internal inspections; and
 - 19.39.5 Any scheme-specific data needed.

Requirements for the CB auditing the Group

- 19.40 Communication between the CB and the group
- 19.41 The CB shall communicate clearly to the group manager, the standards and certification requirements for group certification, including these requirements and any additional scheme specific requirements (regardless if these are set by the CB or the standard owner).
- 19.42 There shall be a contract between the group and the CB, including a commitment by the group manager to meet the standards and certification requirements.

19.43 The group manager shall report annually to the CB, including important changes in the group's production and management practices, and comments and actions regarding any shortcomings in the system.

19.43.1 Note: The annual report can be a narrative or in the form of a template provided by the scheme or CB.

Competence of CB Personnel

19.44 CB personnel shall be competent in evaluation of group certification systems. The CB shall:

19.44.1 Determine the necessary competence for auditors and certification personnel specific to the evaluation of producer groups;

19.44.2 Provide training or take other actions to satisfy these needs;

19.44.3 Evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken;

19.44.4 Ensure that its personnel are qualified for the tasks to which they are assigned; and

19.44.5 Maintain appropriate records of education, training, skills and experience.

Evaluation of the internal management system (IMS)

19.45 The CB shall audit the group's IMS in order to evaluate its functioning and effectiveness, and to ascertain whether the IMS results in full conformity with the standards and certification requirements.

19.46 CB audits of the IMS shall be at least as frequent as for individual certification audits to the same standard.

19.47 The CB's audit of the IMS shall include assessment of conformity with the requirements set forth in this document and, in particular, that:

19.47.1 All internal procedures are in place;

19.47.2 The group members understand the standards and certification requirements;

19.47.3 A risk assessment, appropriate to the nature, scale and complexity of production, is carried out by the group;

19.47.4 Internal inspections of all group members are carried out as required by the certification scheme;

19.47.5 New group members are only accepted as certified after the record-keeping requirements are fulfilled and the internal inspection is completed;

19.47.6 Instances of non-conformity are dealt with by the group manager; and

19.47.7 Adequate records of internal inspections are maintained.

19.48 The CB shall carry out a risk assessment of all aspects of the group and its members, as well as in the IMS, to identify risks to the integrity of the certification. The risk assessment shall function as a basis for the audit and certification activities.

19.49 The auditor shall assess the competence of internal inspectors.

19.50 The CB shall audit a sample of group members to evaluate the effectiveness of the internal management system. The sample size shall be based on results of the risk assessment. The minimum number of group members to be audited annually by the CB shall be the square root of the total number of members in the group. The members to be audited shall be selected in a way that represents the whole group, based on a combination of risk-based and random selection of the sample.

19.51 The outcome of the external audit of group members shall be compared with the outcome of the groups' internal inspection.

Sanctions

19.52 Corrective action requests regarding group compliance shall be based solely on the stated standards and certification requirements.

19.53 The CB shall have a documented sanctions policy for non-conformities regarding certification of groups. The sanctions shall be applied to the group as a whole.

19.54 Failure of a group manager to detect non-conformities shall lead to sanctions. Failure of group management to act on non-conformities and apply appropriate sanctions to group members shall also lead to sanctions.

19.55 Severe non-conformities, when the IMS is not functioning or when there is a direct risk that services are not meeting the standards or that non-certified services are sold as certified, shall lead to suspension of the entire group's certification.

19.56 The CB shall follow up sanctions in a timely manner to determine if conditions have been fulfilled and shall render further sanctions where necessary.

20 Requirements For Large-Scale Tourism Operators

20.1 The GSTC may develop this section, it will cover operation of a certification scheme available for large scale tourism operators.

PART III: MARKET ACCESS

21 Publicity and Promotion

GSTC Promotion of GSTC-Accredited Certification Bodies

- 21.1 The GSTC will make publicly available a list of the GSTC-Accredited certification programs together with a brief summary of each CB, authorized for publication by the CB.
- 21.2 The GSTC will make publicly available and implement a clear policy on claims of GSTC-Accredited status of certification bodies. This will include surveillance of the use of those claims and taking action against incorrect use via CoC. (Chain of Custody).
- 21.3 GSTC may arrange publicity and promotion of GSTC-Accredited body and tourism businesses/products certified by a GSTC-Accredited certification body.

Promotion by GSTC-Accredited CB

- 21.4 A GSTC- Accredited CB is entitled to use the GSTC logo, and may make general statements that it is GSTC- Accredited.

GSTC Promotion and Market Access Benefits

- 21.5 The GSTC publishes a summary of the promotion and market access benefits on www.gstccouncil.org this is updated as required.
- 21.6 In terms of GSTC logo usage:
 - 21.6.1 A GSTC- Accredited CB may use the GSTC Logo
 - 21.6.2 A Hotel/Tour Operator/Destination certified by a GSTC- Accredited CB may use the GSTC (subject to a licence agreement being in place between the GSTC and the CB and an annual fee paid by the CB).
- 21.7 GSTC-Accredited CB's may receive the following promotion by the GSTC (subject to available resources):
 - 21.7.1 Certification Body promoted on GSTC website.
 - 21.7.2 Announcement of achievement in GSTC newsletter, GSTC website and GSTC social media outlets.
 - 21.7.3 Inclusion of Certification Body's logo on all GSTC official presentations, including Annual General Meeting, as well as all other speaking engagements and publications.
 - 21.7.4 Certified hotels, tour operators and destinations will be listed on the GSTC website directory.
 - 21.7.5 Certified hotels, tour operators and destinations will be prominently displayed (with a hyperlink to the individual hotel) on the GSTC website.
 - 21.7.6 Certified hotels, tour operators and destinations have priority search on the GSTC website directory.
 - 21.7.7 Development and publication on GSTC website of case studies (i.e. written blog post, video blog) of individual certified businesses.

- 21.8 The GSTC will endeavour to work with partners to promote GSTC Accredited CB's and their certified businesses and destination.

PART IV: USE OF GSTC MARKS

22 Use of GSTC Logos

Introduction

- 22.1 The GSTC logo, marks and trade names are protected by the GSTC.
 - 22.1.1 Trade names and marks include the names GSTCouncil, Global Sustainable Tourism Council, Travel Forever, GSTC-Recognized and GSTC-Accredited.

Licence Agreement

- 22.2 Prior to using the GSTC logo, marks or trade names users (e.g. clients, standard owners, CBs) must hold a valid licence agreement ([CBLA](#)) with the GSTC.
 - 22.2.1 [See an example Certification Body License Agreement at Appendix 1.](#)

Logo Terms of Use

- 22.3 There are three "Terms Of Use Documents" which are Appendices to the licence agreement:
 - 22.3.1 GSTC Integrity Program-Terms of Use-GSTC Logo V2017: Which set out the rules of a CB's use of GSTC Logo (see Appendix 2).
 - 22.3.2 GSTC Integrity Program-Terms of Issuance-GSTC Logo v2017: Which set out the rules for a CB giving the GSTC Logo to their certificate holders (see Appendix 3).
 - 22.3.3 GSTC Integrity Program-Terms of Use-GSTC Logo v2017: Which set out rules for use of the GSTC Logo by certificate holders (see Appendix 4)
 - 22.3.4 For the use of the GSTC logo, it is subject to a "Chain of Custody" control and identified with a unique number.
- 22.4 To avoid any doubt, once it has signed the licence agreement:
 - 22.4.1 A GSTC- Accredited CB may use the GSTC Logo in its promotion and marketing of its program.
 - 22.4.2 A GSTC- Accredited CB may use the GSTC Logo only to promote an example of what certified businesses may display.
 - 22.4.3 A GSTC-Accredited CB may distribute the GSTC Logo only when it is also accompanied by the Terms of Use (Appendix 3) to its certified businesses.
 - 22.4.4 A GSTC- Accredited CB may distribute the GSTC Logo by certificate holders only in combination with the CB Logo.
 - 22.4.5 A GSTC Logo can NOT be displayed alone by certificate holders.
- 22.5 There is a royalty fee for use of the GSTC Logo by certified products, the fee is set out in the licence agreement.

PART V: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

23 Terms and Definitions

23.1 The following have been written to explain the meaning of terms used in this document, although account has been taken of generic definitions used elsewhere.

23.2 For those terms not defined here, the hierarchy of definitions used is

- a) ISEAL standards setting code version 5
- b) ISO/IEC 17065
- c) ISO/IEC 17067
- d) ISO/IEC 17011
- e) ISO/IEC 17000
- f) ISO Guide 2.

Term	Definition
Accreditation	The process of approval by GSTC of a certification body's competence to certify organisations to a GSTC-Recognized standard
Accreditation Body	An independent entity that operates in conformity with the standard ISO/IEC 17011 and that is technically competent to accredit CBs to perform conformity assessment using a GSTC-recognized standard.
Audit	A systematic and comprehensive process of investigation through checking documents, conducting interviews, observation and other means
CB	See Certification Body or Conformity assessment body
Certification	Voluntary, third-party assessment, through an audit, of a tourism enterprise for conformity to a standard
Certification body	A body that verifies that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled.
Certification scheme	A specific, named programme of certification resulting in the granting of a certificate of conformity to a tourism enterprise by a CB along with the right to display a mark associated with the scheme . It is defined by ISO as "[the rules, procedures, and management for carrying out certification] related to specified [services], to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply." <i>After draft ISO 17067</i>
Certification scheme owner	A person or other legal entity who owns the intellectual property associated with a sustainable tourism certification scheme
Sustainable tourism standard	A set of rules and guidelines that define the requirements of tourism enterprises in delivering sustainable tourism. For GSTC recognition, the standard shall be equivalent to the GSTC Standard.
Standard owner	A person or other legal entity who owns the intellectual property associated with a sustainable tourism standard
Client	A tourism enterprise that purchases a certification service from a CB
Comparable standard	A standard that achieves the same outcomes as the GSTC standard's outcome by differing methods.
Conflict of interest	A situation where the capacity for objectivity of a person or body is at risk
Conformity Assessment	A process of checking and verifying the extent to which a tourism enterprise or certification scheme meets a specified standard and criteria
Consultancy	The provision, for a fee (directly or indirectly), of expertise to a tourism enterprise or CB on the design, management and operation of their services

Term	Definition
Equivalent standard	A standard whose requirements have a direct correspondence with the requirements with the GSTC standard. The standard may have differing presentation, or even in substance, e.g. in providing guidance on how to meet requirements. Equivalency for purposes of GSTC Recognition includes harmonized, unified, identical, unilaterally-aligned, and comparable standards. (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.8, and 6.9).
GSTC Accreditation	Accreditation provided by an Accreditation Body that is endorsed by the GSTC.
GSTC requirements for CBs	The requirements that a CB shall meet in terms of its structure, management and operational procedures
GSTC Accreditation Panel	An independent body of the GSTC that is technically competent and impartial, that will make decisions on recognizing sustainable tourism standards and certification scheme owners, and may endorse Accreditation Body recommendations to accredit CBs.
GSTC Criteria	GSTC Criteria are a common understanding of sustainable tourism, and are the minimum that any tourism business should aspire to reach. They are organized around four main themes: effective sustainability planning; maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community; enhancing cultural heritage; and reducing negative impacts to the environment. Although the criteria are initially intended for use by the accommodation and tour operation sectors, they have applicability to the entire tourism industry.
GSTC Standard	The minimum requirement of a tourism enterprise that can be recognized as fully complying with principles of sustainable tourism as identified by the GSTC and the GSTC Criteria.
GSTC-recognized standard	A sustainable tourism standard that has been evaluated by the GSTC as being equivalent to the GSTC Standard.
GTSC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
Impartiality	The ability to make judgements and take decisions that are objective, based strictly on facts and free from other influences
Non-conformity	The absence of, or failure to meet, an element of a standard or performance criteria
Third-party	Carried out by an individual or body that is independent of the entity being certified or accredited
Tourism enterprise	An entity providing one or more services to tourists.
Unilaterally aligned standard	A standard that is equivalent or comparable to the GSTC standard but contains further requirements not contained in the GSTC standard.
Levels of requirement	

Term	Definition
“will”	The body commits to undertake the specified action
‘shall’	The body must take the specified action to be in compliance
‘should’	The body is expected to take the specified action
‘may’	The body is allowed to take the specified action