



**Revision of  
Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria  
For Destinations (GSTC-D)**

**Report of first round consultation and  
suggested criteria revision  
for ISWG meeting on 16 May 2019**

3 May 2019

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**Document Control**

This report has been prepared for a meeting of ISWG on 16 May 2019

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Revision of GSTC-D

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council is revising the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (hereafter referred to as GSTC-D). The GSTC-D were developed through a stakeholder consultation process leading to their initial publication (Version 1.0) on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013. This is the first revision of the criteria.

The full context has been previously described in the document *Revision of Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D) Terms of Reference v3.0*, dated 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018. These Terms of Reference had been discussed and approved by the ISWG, and have been made available on the GSTC website at <https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-D-Revision-Terms-of-Reference-Vs3.0.pdf>.

## 1.2 Process followed

The process for revising the GSTC-D criteria is following a consultation process required by the ISEAL Standard Setting Code as set out in the ISEAL Code of Good Practice: Setting Social and Environmental Standards, Version 6.0 – December 2014 [(ISEAL) Standard-Setting Code].

Two rounds of consultation are being carried out:

- An initial consultation inviting stakeholders to have their say in the revision and development, leading to production of a first set of draft revised criteria. The results of this round are contained in this report.
- A second round of consultation inviting comments on the proposed draft criteria, due to take place from June to August 2019.

The first round of consultation has involved:

- Announcement of the process on the GSTC website, through social media, via direct emails to GSTC stakeholder contacts and through partner bodies
- Conducting an on-line survey from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 via Survey Monkey, to which interested consultees were directed
- Inviting input from a selection of organisations with a specialist interest in certain aspects of GSTC-D (ECPAT, ICOMOS, IUCN TAPAS, WWF)
- Inviting input from the GSTC's Destination Stewardship Working Group (DSWG) and its members
- Taking opportunities to conduct consultation sessions at GSTC Global Conference (Botswana, December 2018), GSTC Asia Pacific Conference (March 2019) and encouraging individuals to invite small groups to submit comments
- Receiving individual comments submitted.

### 1.3 What this report contains

The report initially presents the response to the on-line survey and other forms of consultation. The main points concerning the contents of the revised standard are summarised and a first draft is presented as an annex. A spreadsheet showing all the comments and the responses is presented as a separate file to be viewed alongside this report. Finally, next steps are outlined.

## 2 The response to the on-line survey

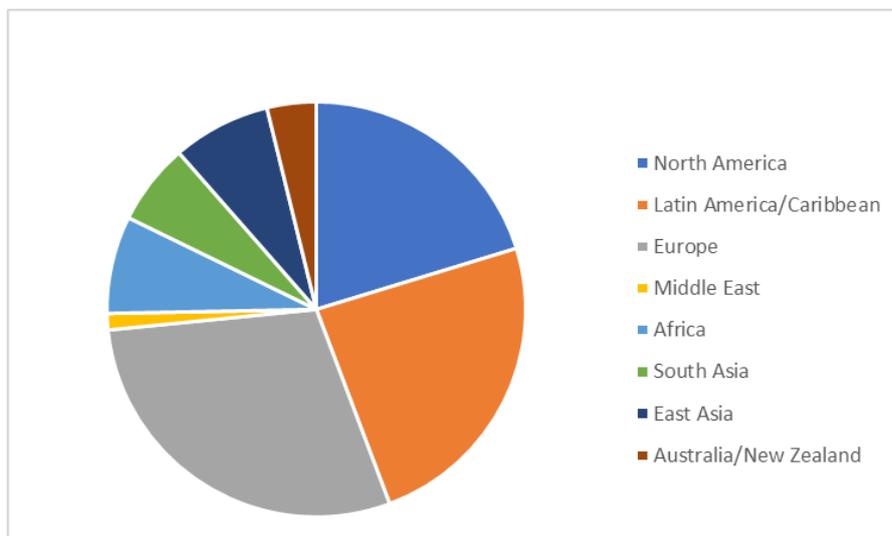
An on-line survey was posted at the end of November 2018 and closed on 31st March 2019. The survey received 88 unique responses, and generated a total of 883 comments on the GSTC-D Criteria, some of which were multi-faceted. The survey attracted a significant number of new consultees who had not previously engaged with development of GSTC criteria.

### 2.1 Details of the respondents

The survey asked a number of questions about the respondents and their previous engagement with GSTC criteria development. Names and email addresses were recorded, but have not been made public.

Respondents were primarily from Europe, Latin America/Caribbean and North America. There was modest representation of other world regions. The results are illustrated in the diagram below.

#### QX Where are you located?



Respondents were asked to select a category to describe the nature of the organisation that they represent. The highest proportion (21%) were consultants or consulting firms. The next three groups of respondents were represented in roughly equal numbers: Non-profit/NGOs (18%); Academia (13%); Travel and tourism industry (15%). Full results are given in the table below.

**QX What is the nature of the organisation that you represent?**

Nature of organisation	
Consultant	17
Non-profit/NGO	14
Academia	13
Travel and tourism industry	12
Government agency	5
Certification body	4
None	1
Destination Management Organisation or Partnership	0
Other	14

The survey attracted a significant response from those who had not previously engaged with GSTC criteria development. Amongst those that responded to the question, while 28% had previously provided feedback, 72% had no history of engagement.

## 3 Revising the content of the standard

### 3.1 Initial considerations

It is important to emphasise that this is a process of revision of the criteria; a comprehensive redevelopment or redrafting was not intended. Informed by the use to date of the GSTC-D and its continuing role as a basis for guidance to destinations, recognition of certification standards and accreditation, the following considerations have guided the approach to the revision:

- The number of criteria, at 41, is already high. An expansion of this number should be avoided if possible and rationalisation or combination should be considered favourably.
- In some destinations, the existing criteria have provided the basis for ongoing programmes of work, including monitoring activity. Therefore, removal or radical revision of individual criteria should only occur if there is a clear reason for this. Links between the previous and revised standard should be clearly traceable.
- The short titles applied to each criterion can sometimes be confusing or too generic, preventing easy assimilation and understanding of the overall GSTC-D standard. Similarly, the order in which the criteria appear is not always logical. The revision process should seek to clarify the titles of the individual criteria and change the order where needed, assisted as appropriate through grouping the criteria under sub-headings, within the framework of the overall pillars.

The Destination Stewardship Working Group (DSWG) has discussed an initial possible reordering and regrouping of the criteria. This has been very helpful and has been considered carefully alongside the individual comments from the consultees.

## 3.2 Handling the comments

In addition to the on-line survey, comments were submitted in other forms from a range of interested parties. These include bodies specifically contacted, as referred to in the introduction. All of the answers and comments relating to the specific criteria have been recorded and amalgamated with those submitted through the online consultation. In total, well over 900 separate comments have been recorded.

Each comment has been given a row in the spreadsheet “GSTC\_D Proposed resolution of comments.xlsx”. The spreadsheet has separate worksheets corresponding to each of the four sections of the criteria – A, B, C and D, plus an additional worksheet for comments on the GSTC-D criteria as a whole.

A substantial number of comments were made about existing criteria and the inclusion of revised or new criteria. Each of these comments has been separately addressed, making sure that a record of its source is maintained.

A resolution has been made on each comment based on considerations which include:

- Is the point clear?
- Is the point not essentially already covered in the criteria?
- Is the point substantive and backed up by relevant evidence and argument?
- Does the point relate to a level of detail appropriate for the criteria and, if not, could it be reflected in the supporting indicators or guidance?
- Is the point in line with points made by others?
- Is the point in line with the revised GSTC-I
- Is the point broadly in line with generally understood priorities and issues for sustainable tourism and sustainable development, for example in the Sustainable Development Goals?

The resolution of each comment takes the form of one of four alternatives, shown in the spreadsheet:

- Accept
- Partially accept (with explanation)
- Reject, with justification given
- No change required.

The spreadsheet also contains columns which give the justification or explanation. Prior to publication, it will also include recommendations for change, if any, once this has been determined.

The recommendation may identify a proposed change to the criterion, with specific wording given, and/or a suggested reflection in the indicators or guidance.

A general principle, reflecting the points made above, has been to try to keep the criteria short and relatively simple and not to make changes unless there is a clear need or reason to do so.

### 3.3 Types of comment and response

The comments vary considerably in their length and level of detail. In some cases a few key words or phrases carry a clear and sometimes weighty meaning leading to a commensurate response. However, sometimes the comment is too short for the meaning or argument to be clear. Where the comment is very detailed it has sometimes been possible to distil the meaning down to some key points that can be reflected in changes to the criteria, with more detailed aspects being considered for reflection in the indicators and guidance.

In a few places the comment has implications for terminology and definitions, which will require changes or additions to the GSTC Glossary of Sustainability Terms.

A number of comments concern the structure of the set of criteria as a whole. Consultees have pointed out overlap between the criteria and opportunities for combining them or grouping them differently. Very careful consideration has been given to this. However, the position of the criteria is significantly affected by the framework structure around the four sections: A Sustainable Management; B Socio-economic impacts; C Cultural impacts and D Environmental impacts. This makes it difficult to have multi-themed criteria. A number of alternative structures and groupings have been considered as a result of the comments, but all have been found to have drawbacks. However, in many places it has been possible to reduce the apparent overlap by clarifying the purpose and wording of individual criteria and the differentiation between them, while also introducing some rationalisation and integration.

Some comments have suggested that certain existing criteria should be split into two or more different ones. This has largely been considered to be unnecessary as often the use of the criteria (for example in assessing the equivalence of certification standards) involves them being disaggregated anyway.

Although the intention at the outset has been to seek not to increase the overall number of criteria, it was appreciated that the revision process would encourage and allow for the identification of gaps and missing issues. At the end of each section, the survey invited suggestions for new topics and, potentially, additional criteria. In most cases, the suggestions made could be met by adjustments to the existing criteria or proposals for consideration in guidance and indicators.

A final question invited general comments on the GSTC Destination Criteria, which largely reinforced points previously made or addressed issues of clarity, order and application.

### 3.4 Key topics raised and addressed

The overall response to the GSTC-D was positive and constructive. No generally negative comments were received – critical input was directed at specific issues and requirements for improvement of identified criteria.

However, a few comments suggested that the GSTC should be prepared to be more challenging:

*“We need science-based targets – Be brave, GSTC!”*

*“The criteria need to recognise implementation”; “We should move beyond encouraging to requiring”.*

While others expressed concern that the criteria were already too demanding:

*“The GSTC-D Criteria is a very useful tool that set the path for destinations. However, establishing effective operational management is still at a very basic stage in some destinations (ed).”*

*“Maybe the criteria are a bit too strict for emerging destinations (ed).”*

*“I think this is a very difficult and costly criterion to achieve, especially smaller destinations.”*

A number of consultees included unsolicited words of praise for the GSTC-D in their comments:

*“I think the GSTC Destination Criteria are an extraordinary tool to help the destinations to become sustainable. Congratulations!”*

*“It is an efficient instrument”; “Overall they just need a little fine tuning”.*

*“Congratulations on the work done so far, which is comprehensive and well articulated”*

Certain key topics were raised by a number of consultees, either directly or by implication, as being underplayed in the current criteria. While the detail is best seen within the spreadsheet, the following deserve particular mention.

- **Management responsibility.** The existence of some form of coordinating body responsible for destination management and sustainability is seen as a fundamental requirement. It needs to involve civil society, alongside the public and private sectors, and to have sufficient capacity to perform its functions. It should be the first criterion.
- **Strategy.** The destination management strategy should also include an action plan. It should be monitored and reviewed, have political support and relate to wider policies.
- **Over-tourism.** Concern about over-tourism was frequently mentioned. Comments pointed to a need for overall visitor management, including issues of visitor volume and dispersal. Regulation of operations, e.g. sub-letting, is a related topic.
- **Resident engagement and feedback.** While public participation and feedback from residents is included in the existing criteria, it was felt that it should have more emphasis and be seen as an important aspect of overall management to be covered in Pillar A. There should also be a greater emphasis on community awareness and capacity building with respect to tourism.
- **Visitor engagement.** Visitors should be better informed about sustainability and their reaction to this should be included in visitor surveys.
- **Enterprise engagement.** Tourism enterprises are key stakeholders and there should be a stronger reference to engaging with them beyond promoting sustainability standards.
- **Risk management.** The current criteria refer to crisis management but there is no proper inclusion of risk management.
- **Retention of income locally.** Support for local tourism businesses and local supply chains should be seen in the context of reducing economic leakage and fostering linkage.
- **Intangible cultural heritage.** This is a gap at the moment and should be covered specifically in the criteria.
- **Wildlife interaction and animal welfare.** This gap was identified at the time of the revision to GSTC-I, and changes made should be mirrored in the new GSTC-D.
- **Air quality.** This is a gap at the moment and should be identified as an important environmental issue.
- **Low-impact transportation.** The criteria should acknowledge the growing concern with the impacts of travel to a destination, as well as travel within it.

A general issue raised was the syntactical format of the criteria and the frequent reference to the destination 'having a system to ...' A more direct style was recommended. This has been addressed where considered appropriate.

These topics, along with certain others, have been reflected in the changes proposed in the first draft of the revised GSTC-D.

### 3.5 The draft revised GSTC-D

A first draft of the revised GSTC-D is proposed based on this consultation. It is presented in Annex 1 and 2 in two formats:

- The proposed draft GSTC-D
- A table showing each of the proposed GSTC-D criterion, set alongside the equivalent original GSTC-D criterion, where existing.

The total number of individual criteria has been reduced from 41 to 39.

In comparing the proposed new criteria with the original, it is important to note that some changes have been proposed to the grouping and ordering of the criteria. The original identifying number has been kept for clarity at this stage, but these will appear out of sequence in the newly ordered set.

To facilitate understanding, the headings of each of the four sections/pillars have been clarified and simplified to: Sustainable management; Socio-economic impacts; Cultural impacts; and Environmental impacts. Within each section a small number of sub-headings have been introduced.

## 4 Next steps

The results of the consultation and the first draft of the revised GSTC-D will be discussed by the ISWG at their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019. This may well lead to an initial revision of the first draft. The revised draft will then be the subject of a further round of public consultation, including a second online survey, due to start in early June 2019. Direct contact will be made with all those who have contributed to the first round of consultation and provided contact details. One full month would be sufficient for ISEAL compliance, but it is proposed to allow two months, meaning that the second round consultation will close sometime in August 2019.

Based on experience from the revision of GSTC-I, at least a further three months will be required for further processing, two meetings of ISWG and achieving GSTC Board Approval prior to final publication. During this time, work will be undertaken on the indicators, guidance and glossary relating to each criterion, reflecting points made in the consultation.

# Annex 1: Initial proposed Draft GSTC-D v2.0

## SECTION A: Sustainable management

### Aa) Management structure and framework

#### **A1 Destination management responsibility**

The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector, public sector and civil society. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staff capacity, including personnel with experience in sustainability, and its activities are appropriately funded.

#### **A2 Destination management strategy and action plan**

The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan that is publicly available, is suited to its scale and was developed with public participation. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. Actions and outcomes are monitored, evaluated and reviewed periodically. The strategy is politically supported and relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination.

#### **A3 Monitoring and reporting**

The destination is implementing a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social and cultural issues and the impacts of tourism on them. Results are regularly reported and the monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically.

### Ab) Stakeholder engagement

#### **A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards**

The destination regularly informs tourism enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the application of sustainability standards for enterprises consistent with the GSTC Criteria. The destination makes publicly available a list of sustainability certified or verified enterprises.

#### **A5 Resident engagement and feedback**

The destination encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making on an ongoing basis. Local communities' aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism and destination management are regularly monitored, recorded and publicly reported, and action is taken in response to them.

**A6 Local understanding of tourism**

The destination has a system to enhance local understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with tourism, including the importance of sustainability, and to build the capacity of communities to respond.

**A7 Visitor engagement and feedback**

The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the destination experience and, if necessary, to take action in response.

**A8 Promotion and information**

The destination ensures that promotion and visitor information is accurate with regard to the destination and its products, services, and sustainability claims. Promotional messages reflect the destination's values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect. Visitors are informed about the part that they can play in addressing sustainability issues in the destination.

**Ac) Managing pressure and change****A9 Managing visitor volumes**

The destination monitors and takes action, as appropriate, to reduce or increase and to manage the volume of visitors at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultures and environment.

**A10 Planning regulations and development control**

The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that control the location of development, require environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. Regulations also apply to operations, including property letting and concessions for tourism purposes. The guidelines, regulations and/or policies are designed to protect natural and cultural resources and the wellbeing of local communities. They were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process, are publicly communicated, and are enforced.

**A11 Climate change adaptation**

The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. This system pursues climate change adaptation strategies for development, siting, design, and management of facilities. The system contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the destination and to public education on climate for both residents and tourists.

**A12 Risk and crisis management**

The destination has a risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.

## SECTION B: Socio-economic impacts

### Ba) Delivering local economic benefits

#### **B1 Understanding the economic contribution of tourism**

The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. Appropriate measures may include visitor expenditure, revenue per available room, employment and investment data.

#### **B2 Decent work and career opportunities**

The destination's enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and fair wages for all.

#### **B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade**

The destination encourages the retention of tourism spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. The system promotes the development of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.

### Bb) Social wellbeing and impacts

#### **B4 Support for community**

The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.

#### **B5 Preventing exploitation**

The destination has laws, practices and an established code of conduct to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment of anyone, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated and enforced.

#### **B6 Property and user rights**

Laws and regulations regarding property rights and acquisitions exist, are documented, are enforced, comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation and do not authorize resettlement without prior informed consent and/or reasonable compensation. Laws and regulations also protect user and access rights to key resources.

#### **B7 Safety and security**

The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards affecting both visitors and residents.

#### **B8 Access for all**

Where possible, sites, facilities and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements. Where such sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved. Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities and services.

## SECTION C: Cultural impacts

### Ca) Protecting cultural heritage

#### **C1 Protection of cultural assets**

The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets, including built heritage and cultural landscapes.

#### **C2 Cultural artefacts**

The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors.

#### **C3 Intangible heritage**

The destination supports the celebration and protection of intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, cuisine and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks the involvement of local communities and provides visitors with an authentic and genuine experience.

#### **C4 Traditional access**

The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.

#### **C5 Intellectual property**

The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights.

### Cb) Visiting cultural sites

#### **C6 Visitor management and behaviour at cultural sites**

The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their carrying capacity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimizes adverse impacts. Guidelines have been prepared and published for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, which are made available to visitors and tour guides before and at the time of the visit.

#### **C7 Site interpretation**

Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages pertinent to visitors and residents.

## **SECTION D: Environmental impacts**

### **Da) Conservation of natural heritage**

#### **D1 Protection of sensitive environments**

The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impacts of tourism, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.

#### **D2 Visitor management and behaviour at natural sites**

The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their carrying capacity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimizes adverse impacts. Guidelines have been prepared and published for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, which are made available to visitors and tour guides before and at the time of the visit.

#### **D3 Wildlife interaction**

The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions. Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse impacts on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.

#### **D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare**

The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards that seek to protect animal welfare and species survival (both plants and animals). This includes their harvesting or capture, trade, display, and sale. No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities. Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.

### **Db) Resource management**

#### **D5 Energy conservation**

The destination has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.

#### **D6 Water stewardship**

The destination encourages enterprises to adopt a contextually appropriate response for measurement, monitoring, publicly reporting and managing water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In case of high water risk, contextual water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises.

#### **D7 Water quality**

The destination monitors water quality for drinking, recreational and ecological purposes using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.

## **Dc) Pollution and waste management**

### **D8 Wastewater**

The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and ensures wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely with minimal adverse effects to the local population and the environment.

### **D9 Solid waste**

The destination has targets for reducing waste generation. The destination encourages enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.

### **D10 Greenhouse gas emissions**

The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report, and mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.

### **D11 Low-impact transportation**

The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.

### **D12 Light and noise pollution**

The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.

## Annex 2: Initial proposed GSTC-D v2.0 compared with GSTC-D v1.0

SECTION A: Sustainable management	SECTION A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management
<b><u>Aa) Management structure and framework</u></b>	
<p><b>A1 Destination management responsibility</b></p> <p>The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector, public sector and civil society. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staff capacity, including personnel with experience in sustainability, and its activities are appropriately funded.</p>	<p><b>Old-A2 Destination management organization</b></p> <p>The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector and public sector. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group’s activities are appropriately funded.</p>
<p><b>A2 Destination management strategy and action plan</b></p> <p>The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan that is publicly available, is suited to its scale and was developed with public participation. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. Actions and outcomes are monitored, evaluated and reviewed periodically. The strategy is politically supported and relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination.</p>	<p><b>Old-A1 Sustainable destination strategy</b></p> <p>The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, that considers environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health, and safety, and aesthetic issues, and was developed with public participation.</p>
<p><b>A3 Monitoring and reporting</b></p> <p>The destination is implementing a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social and cultural issues and the impacts of tourism on them. Results are regularly reported and the monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically.</p>	<p><b>Old-A3 Monitoring</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism, and human rights issues. The monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically.</p>

<p><b><u>Ab) Stakeholder engagement</u></b></p>	
<p><b>A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards</b></p> <p>The destination regularly informs tourism enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the application of sustainability standards for enterprises consistent with the GSTC Criteria. The destination makes publicly available a list of sustainability certified or verified enterprises.</p>	<p><b>Old-A11 Sustainability standards</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to promote sustainability standards for enterprises consistent with the GSTC Criteria. The destination makes publicly available a list of sustainability certified or verified enterprises.</p>
<p><b>A5 Resident engagement and feedback</b></p> <p>The destination encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making on an ongoing basis. Local communities' aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism and destination management are regularly monitored, recorded and publicly reported, and action is taken in response to them.</p>	<p><b>Old-B3 Public participation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system that encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making on an ongoing basis.</p> <p><b>Old-B4 Local community opinion</b></p> <p>Local communities' aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with destination management are regularly monitored, recorded and publicly reported in a timely manner.</p>
<p><b>A6 Local understanding of tourism</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to enhance local understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with tourism, including the importance of sustainability, and to build the capacity of communities to respond.</p>	<p><b>Old-B6 Tourism awareness and education</b></p> <p>The destination provides regular programs to affected communities to enhance their understanding of the opportunities and challenges of tourism, and the importance of sustainability.</p>
<p><b>A7 Visitor engagement and feedback</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the destination experience and, if necessary, to take action in response.</p>	<p><b>Old-A10 Visitor satisfaction</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction, and, if necessary, to take action to improve visitor satisfaction.</p>
<p><b>A8 Promotion and information</b></p> <p>The destination ensures that promotion and visitor information is accurate with regard to the destination and its products, services, and sustainability claims. Promotional messages reflect the destination's values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect. Visitors are informed about the part that they can play in addressing sustainability issues in the destination.</p>	<p><b>Old-A14 Promotion</b></p> <p>Promotion is accurate with regard to the destination and its products, services, and sustainability claims. The promotional messages treat local communities and tourists authentically and respectfully.</p>

<p><b><u>Ac) Managing pressure and change</u></b></p>	
<p><b>A9 Managing visitor volumes</b></p> <p>The destination monitors and takes action, as appropriate, to reduce or increase and to manage the volume of visitors at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultures and environment.</p>	<p><b>Old-A4 Tourism seasonality management</b></p> <p>The destination dedicates resources to mitigate seasonal variability of tourism where appropriate, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultures and environment, to identify year-round tourism opportunities.</p>
<p><b>A10 Planning regulations and development control</b></p> <p>The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that control the location of development, require environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. Regulations also apply to operations, including property letting and concessions for tourism purposes. The guidelines, regulations and/or policies are designed to protect natural and cultural resources and the wellbeing of local communities. They were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process, are publicly communicated, and are enforced.</p>	<p><b>Old-A7 Planning Regulations</b></p> <p>The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that require environmental, economic, and social impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. The guidelines, regulations and/or policies are designed to protect natural and cultural resources, were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process, are publicly communicated, and are enforced.</p>
<p><b>A11 Climate change adaptation</b></p> <p>The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. This system pursues climate change adaptation strategies for development, siting, design, and management of facilities. The system contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the destination and to public education on climate for both residents and tourists.</p>	<p><b>Old-A5 Climate change adaptation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to identify risks and opportunities associated with climate change. This system encourages climate change adaptation strategies for development, siting, design, and management of facilities. The system contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the destination and to public education on climate for both residents and tourists.</p>
<p><b>A12 Risk and crisis management</b></p> <p>The destination has a risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.</p>	<p><b>Old-A13 Crisis and emergency management</b></p> <p>The destination has a crisis and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.</p>

	<b>Old criteria in Section A which are no longer separate criteria – now incorporated elsewhere</b>
<i>Now covered in New A2 - Strategy and action plan</i>	<b>Old-A6 Inventory of tourism assets and attractions</b>  The destination has an up-to-date, publicly available inventory and assessment of its tourism assets and attractions, including natural and cultural sites.
<b>SECTION B: Socio-economic impacts</b>	<b>SECTION B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts</b>
<b><u>Ba) Delivering local economic benefits</u></b>	
<b>B1 Understanding the economic contribution of tourism</b>  The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination’s economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. Appropriate measures may include visitor expenditure, revenue per available room, employment and investment data.	<b>Old-B1 Economic monitoring</b>  The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination’s economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. To the extent feasible, this should include visitor expenditure, revenue per available room, employment and investment data.
<b>B2 Decent work and career opportunities</b>  The destination’s enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and fair wages for all.	<b>Old-B2 Local career opportunities</b>  The destination’s enterprises provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety, and fair wages for all.
<b>B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade</b>  The destination encourages the retention of tourism spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. The system promotes the development of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area’s nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.	<b>Old-B9 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade</b>  The destination has a system that supports local and small- and medium-sized enterprises, and promotes and develops local sustainable products and fair trade principles that are based on the area’s nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.
<b><u>Bb) Social wellbeing and impacts</u></b>	
<b>B4 Support for community</b>  The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.	<b>Old-B8 Support for community</b>  The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.

<p><b>B5 Preventing exploitation</b></p> <p>The destination has laws, practices and an established code of conduct to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment of anyone, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated and enforced.</p>	<p><b>Old-B7 Preventing exploitation</b></p> <p>The destination has laws and established practices to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment of anyone, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated.</p>
<p><b>B6 Property and user rights</b></p> <p>Laws and regulations regarding property rights and acquisitions exist, are documented, are enforced, comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation and do not authorize resettlement without prior informed consent and/or reasonable compensation. Laws and regulations also protect user and access rights to key resources.</p>	<p><b>Old-A9 Property acquisitions</b></p> <p>Laws and regulations regarding property acquisitions exist, are enforced, comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation, and do not authorize resettlement without prior informed consent and/or reasonable compensation.</p>
<p><b>B7 Safety and security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards affecting both visitors and residents.</p>	<p><b>Old-A12 Safety and security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards.</p>
<p><b>B8 Access for all</b></p> <p>Where possible, sites, facilities and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements. Where such sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved. Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities and services.</p>	<p><b>Old-A8 Access for all</b></p> <p>Where appropriate, sites and facilities, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements. Where such sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved.</p>
<p><b>SECTION C: Cultural impacts</b></p>	<p><b>SECTION C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts</b></p>
<p><b><u>Ca) Protecting cultural heritage</u></b></p>	
<p><b>C1 Protection of cultural assets</b></p> <p>The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets, including built heritage and cultural landscapes.</p>	<p><b>Old-C1 Attraction protection</b></p> <p>The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve natural and cultural sites, including built heritage (historic and archaeological) and rural and urban scenic views.</p>

<p><b>C2 Cultural artefacts</b></p> <p>The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors.</p>	<p><b>Old-C4 Cultural heritage protection</b></p> <p>The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artifacts.</p>
<p><b>C3 Intangible heritage</b></p> <p>The destination supports the celebration and protection of intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, cuisine and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks the involvement of local communities and provides visitors with an authentic and genuine experience.</p>	
<p><b>C4 Traditional access</b></p> <p>The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.</p>	<p><b>Old-B5 Local access</b></p> <p>The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.</p>
<p><b>C5 Intellectual property</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights.</p>	<p><b>Old-C6 Intellectual property</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.</p>
<p><b><u>Cb) Visiting cultural sites</u></b></p>	
<p><b>C6 Visitor management and behaviour at cultural sites</b></p> <p>The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their carrying capacity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimizes adverse impacts. Guidelines have been prepared and published for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, which are made available to visitors and tour guides before and at the time of the visit.</p>	<p><b>Old-C2 Visitor management</b></p> <p>The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.</p> <p><b>Old-C3 Visitor behavior</b></p> <p>The destination has published and provided guidelines for proper visitor behavior at sensitive sites. Such guidelines are designed to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive sites and strengthen positive visitor behaviors.</p>
<p><b>C7 Site interpretation</b></p> <p>Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages pertinent to visitors and residents.</p>	<p><b>Old-C5 Site interpretation</b></p> <p>Accurate interpretive information is provided at natural and cultural sites. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with community collaboration, and communicated in languages pertinent to visitors.</p>

<b>SECTION D: Environmental impacts</b>	<b>SECTION D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts</b>
<u><b>Da) Conservation of natural heritage</b></u>	
<b>D1 Protection of sensitive environments</b> <p>The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impacts of tourism, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.</p>	<b>Old-D2 Protection of sensitive environments</b> <p>The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impact of tourism, conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.</p>
<b>D2 Visitor management and behaviour at natural sites</b> <p>The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their carrying capacity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimizes adverse impacts. Guidelines have been prepared and published for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, which are made available to visitors and tour guides before and at the time of the visit.</p>	<b>Old-C2 Visitor management</b> <p>The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.</p> <b>Old-C3 Visitor behavior</b> <p>The destination has published and provided guidelines for proper visitor behavior at sensitive sites. Such guidelines are designed to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive sites and strengthen positive visitor behaviors.</p>
<b>D3 Wildlife interaction</b> <p>The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions. Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse impacts on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.</p>	
<b>D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare</b> <p>The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards that seek to protect animal welfare and species survival (both plants and animals). This includes their harvesting or capture, trade, display, and sale. No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities. Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.</p>	<b>Old-D3 Wildlife protection</b> <p>The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for the harvest or capture, display, and sale of wildlife (including plants and animals).</p>

<p><b><u>Db) Resource management</u></b></p>	
<p><b>D5 Energy conservation</b></p> <p>The destination has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.</p>	<p><b>Old-D5 Energy conservation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report energy consumption, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.</p>
<p><b>D6 Water stewardship</b></p> <p>The destination encourages enterprises to adopt a contextually appropriate response for measurement, monitoring, publicly reporting and managing water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In case of high water risk, contextual water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises.</p>	<p><b>Old-D6 Water Management</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage.</p> <p><b>Old-D7 Water security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor its water resources to ensure that use by enterprises is compatible with the water requirements of the destination community.</p>
<p><b>D7 Water quality</b></p> <p>The destination monitors water quality for drinking, recreational and ecological purposes using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.</p>	<p><b>Old-D8 Water quality</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor drinking and recreational water quality using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.</p>
<p><b><u>Dc) Pollution and waste management</u></b></p>	
<p><b>D8 Wastewater</b></p> <p>The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and ensures wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely with minimal adverse effects to the local population and the environment.</p>	<p><b>Old-D9 Wastewater</b></p> <p>The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and ensures wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely with minimal adverse effects to the local population and the environment.</p>
<p><b>D9 Solid waste</b></p> <p>The destination has targets for reducing waste generation. The destination encourages enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.</p>	<p><b>Old-D10 Solid waste reduction</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.</p>

<p><b>D10 Greenhouse gas emissions</b></p> <p>The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report, and mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.</p>	<p><b>Old-D4 Greenhouse gas emissions</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize, publicly report, and mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers).</p>
<p><b>D11 Low-impact transportation</b></p> <p>The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.</p>	<p><b>Old-D12 Low-impact transportation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to increase the use of low-impact transportation, including public transportation and active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling).</p>
<p><b>D12 Light and noise pollution</b></p> <p>The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.</p>	<p><b>Old-D11 Light and noise pollution</b></p> <p>The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.</p>
	<p><b>Old criteria in Section D which are no longer separate criteria – now incorporated elsewhere</b></p>
<p><i>Now covered in New A2 - Strategy and action plan and New A12 Risk and crisis management</i></p>	<p><b>Old-D1 Environmental risks</b></p> <p>The destination has identified environmental risks and has a system in place to address them.</p>