

**GSTC Destination Criteria**

**Comparison of criteria: v2.0 vs v1.0**

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

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| **Revised GSTC-D v2 adopted 6/12/2019** | **Nearest equivalent(s) in GSTC-D v1** |
| **SECTION A: Sustainable management** | **SECTION A: Demonstrate sustainable destination 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 has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of socio- economic, cultural and environmental issues. The group is adequately funded, works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staffing (including personnel with experience in sustainability) and follows principles of sustainability and transparency in its operations and transactions. | **Old-A2 Destination management organization**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. |
| **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, was developed with stakeholder engagement and is based on sustainability principles. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. The strategy relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination. | **Old-A1 Sustainable destination strategy**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.**Old-A6 Inventory of tourism assets and attractions**The destination ~~has an up-to-date, publicly available inventory and~~ assessment of its tourism assets and attractions, including natural and cultural sites.**Old-D1 Environmental risks**The destination has identified environmental risks and has a system in place to address them. |
| **A3 Monitoring and reporting**The destination is implementing a system to monitor and respond to socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and impacts arising from tourism. Actions and outcomes are regularly monitored, evaluated and publicly reported. The monitoring system is periodically reviewed. | **Old-A3 Monitoring**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. |
| **Ab) Stakeholder engagement** |  |
| **A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards** The destination regularly informs tourism-related enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the adoption of sustainability standards, promoting the application of GSTC-I Recognized standards and GSTC-I Accredited certification schemes for tourism enterprises, where available. The destination publicizes a list of sustainability certified enterprises. | **Old-A11 Sustainability standards**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. |
| **A5 Resident engagement and feedback** The destination enables and promotes public participation in sustainable destination planning and management. Local communities’ aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism sustainability and destination management are regularly monitored and publicly reported, and action is taken in response to them. The destination has a system to enhance local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities and challenges and to build the capacity of communities to respond. | **Old-B3 Public participation**The destination has a system that encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making ~~on an ongoing basis~~.**Old-B4 Local community opinion**Local communities’ aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with destination management are regularly monitored, ~~recorded~~ and publicly reported ~~in a timely manner~~.**Old-B6 Tourism awareness and education**The destination provides regular programs to affected communities to enhance their understanding of the opportunities and challenges of tourism, and the importance of sustainability. |
| **A6 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. Visitors are informed about sustainability issues in the destination and the part that they can play in addressing them. | **Old-A10 Visitor satisfaction**The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction, and, if necessary, to take action to i~~mprove visitor satisfaction~~. |
| **A7 Promotion and information**Promotion and visitor information material about the destination is accurate with regard to its products, services, and sustainability claims. Marketing messages and other communications reflect the destination’s values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect.  | **Old-A14 Promotion**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. |
| **Ac) Managing pressure and change** |  |
| **A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities**The destination has a system for visitor management which is regularly reviewed. Action is taken to monitor and manage the volume and activities of visitors, and to reduce or increase them as necessary at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultural heritage and environment. | **Old-A4 Tourism seasonality management**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.~~ |
| **A9 Planning regulations and development control**The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies which control the location and nature 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 rental and concessions for tourism purposes. The guidelines, regulations and policies were created with public participation and are widely communicated and enforced. | **Old-A7 Planning Regulations**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. |
| **A10 Climate change adaptation**The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. Climate change adaptation strategies are pursued for the siting, design, development and management of tourism facilities. Information on predicted climate change, associated risks and future conditions is provided for residents, businesses and visitors. | **Old-A5 Climate change adaptation**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. |
| **A11 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. Procedures and resources are established for implementing the plan and it is regularly updated. | **Old-A13 Crisis and emergency management**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. |

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| **SECTION B: Socio-economic sustainability** | **SECTION B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative 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. Appropriate measures may include levels of visitor volume, visitor expenditure, employment and investment and evidence on the distribution of economic benefits. | **Old-B1 Economic monitoring**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. |
| **B2 Decent work and career opportunities**The destination encourages and supports career opportunities and training in tourism. The destination’s tourism enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for local employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and a living wage for all. | **Old-B2 Local career opportunities**The destination’s enterprises provide equal employment, training opportunities, ~~occupational safety~~, 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. It promotes the development and purchase 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. | **Old-B9 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade**~~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. |
| **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. | **Old-B8 Support for community**The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives. |
| **B5 Preventing exploitation and discrimination**The destination upholds international standards on human rights. It has laws, practices and an established code of conduct to prevent and report on human trafficking, modern slavery and commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination and harassment of or against anyone, particularly children, adolescents, women, LGBT and other minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated and enforced. | **Old-B7 Preventing exploitation**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. |
| **B6 Property and user rights**Laws and regulations regarding property rights and acquisitions are documented and enforced. They comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation and do not authorize resettlement without free prior and informed consent and fair and just compensation. Laws and regulations also protect user and access rights to key resources.  | **Old-A9 Property acquisitions**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. |
| **B7 Safety and security**The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents. | **Old-A12 Safety and security**The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards. |
| **B8 Access for all**Where practical, 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 or other special needs. Where 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. | **Old-A8 Access for all**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. |

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| **SECTION C: Cultural sustainability** | **SECTION C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative 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.  | **Old-C1 Attraction protection**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~~.  |
| **C2 Cultural artefacts**The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are enforced and publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors. | **Old-C4 Cultural heritage protection**The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artifacts. |
| **C3 Intangible heritage**The destination supports the celebration and protection of intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, gastronomy and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks to involve and benefit 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. | **Old-B5 Local 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 of communities and individuals. | **Old-C6 Intellectual property**The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals. |
| **Cb) Visiting cultural sites** |  |
| **C6 Visitor management at cultural sites**The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.  | **Old-C2 Visitor management**The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.**Old-C3 Visitor behavior**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. |
| **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. | **Old-C5 Site interpretation**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. |

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| **SECTION D: Environmental sustainability** | **SECTION D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts** |
| **Da) Conservation of natural heritage** |  |
| **D1 Protection of sensitive environments**The destination has a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. | **Old-D2 Protection of sensitive environments**The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impact of tourism, conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems, and prevent the introduction of invasive species. |
| **D2 Visitor management at natural sites**The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.  | **Old-C2 Visitor management**The destination has a visitor management system for ~~attraction~~ sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.**Old-C3 Visitor behavior**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. |
| **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 ensure animal welfare and conservation of species (animals, plants and all living organisms). This includes the harvesting or capture, trade, display, and sale of wildlife species and their products. 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. | **Old-D3 Wildlife protection**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). |
| **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. | **Old-D5 Energy conservation**The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report ~~energy consumption, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels~~. |
| **D6 Water stewardship**The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, publicly report and manage water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In cases of high water risk, water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises, to ensure that tourism use does not conflict with the needs of local communities and ecosystems. | **Old-D6 Water Management**The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage.**Old-D7 Water security**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. |
| **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.  | **Old-D8 Water quality**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. |
| **Dc) Management of waste and emissions** |  |
| **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. The destination ensures that wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely without adverse impacts on the local population and the environment. | **Old-D9 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 measures and reports on its generation of waste and sets targets for its reduction. It ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfill, with provision of a multiple-stream collection and recycling system which effectively separates waste by type. The destination encourages enterprises to avoid, reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Action is taken to eliminate or reduce single-use items, especially plastics. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably. | **Old-D10 Solid waste reduction**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. |
| **D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation** The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged. | **Old-D4 Greenhouse gas emissions**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). |
| **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 vehicles and 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. | **Old-D12 Low-impact transportation**The destination has a system to increase the use of low-impact transportation, including public transportation and active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling). |
| **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. | **Old-D11 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. |