GSTC’s Mission
and Current Activities

Randy Durband
GSTC CEO

5 December 2019
Terceira Island, The Azores, Portugal
Who is the GSTC?

Sustainable Tourism is:
“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”


GSTC was then formed in 2007 by these Founding Organizations:

UNEP    UNWTO    Sabre    Rainforest Alliance

2. GSTC Destination Criteria – 2013
   1st revision to be released December 2019

Standards-Setting Code
<table>
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<th>A(c) Managing pressure and change</th>
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<td><strong>A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities</strong></td>
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<td>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.</td>
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|  | a. The destination management strategy and action plan addresses seasonality and spread of visitation.  
  b. Variation in visitor volumes throughout the year is monitored, including in the most visited locations.  
  c. Impacts of visitor volumes and activities are identified through observation and community and stakeholder feedback.  
  d. Actions taken to manage visitor flows and impacts.  
  e. Marketing strategy and selection of target markets takes account of visit patterns, the impact of activities and destination needs. |  |
| **A9 Planning regulations and development control** |  |
|  | a. Specific policies/regulations/guidelines which control development are documented and identified.
Four Pillars of GSTC Criteria

A - Sustainable Management

B – Social Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts

C – Culture Maximize benefits to communities and culture; minimize negative impacts

D – Environment Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts
“Sustainable Tourism is about a journey...a process of becoming more and more sustainable” – GSTC

“Sustainable tourism should not be taken to refer to a specific type of tourism. Instead, it is an aspiration for the impacts of all forms of tourism.”

- UNWTO Tourism for Development Discussion Paper on the occasion of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017
The Role of Standards

- Training – education - awareness
- Standardization
- Guidelines for regulatory codes
- Measurement & Evaluation
- Basis for certification
GSTC Programs & Activities

- **Standards** – keepers of the GSTC Criteria
- **Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP)**
  - capacity-building for all stakeholders
- **Destination Stewardship**
- **Assurance**
  - accreditation of certification bodies
  - recognition of standards
- **Market Access**
  - supply-chain development
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GSTC Destination Stewardship
Roadmap to Sustainable Destinations

1. Pledge adherence to the GSTC Destination Criteria
2. GSTC training for government and key stakeholders
3. Expert impartial assessment of current practices per the GSTC-D; destination council addresses sustainability gaps
4. Council oversees program to meet sustainability standards and motivate stakeholders
5. Destination receives public recognition for achievements such as awards & certification
St. Kitts Sustainable Destination Council (SDC), St. Kitts and Nevis

• SDC was established in 2013, as a result of St. Kitts’ participation in the GSTC Early Adopters Program.
• SDC adheres to the principles of the GSTC Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D A2).
• SDC serves as an advisory council for the Ministry of Tourism, with the aim to increase opportunities for locals and tourists, and to act as destination stewards.
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), British Columbia, Canada

• TOTA implements a 10-year regional tourism strategy (2012-2022), endorsed by all its communities, which puts sustainability at its heart.

• Examples of sustainability initiatives: Protecting biodiversity in its waterways, supporting an urban wildlife corridor, installing electric car charging stations, and sustainability training for stakeholders.

• Certified by Biosphere Responsible Tourism (2017).
Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO)

- BTO is an Early Adopter of the GSTC Destination Criteria, and a long-term GSTC Member and training partner.
- BTO offers the Botswana Ecotourism Certification System, which is designed to support responsible environmental, social and cultural behavior by tourism businesses.
- Certified businesses must contribute at least 2% of their gross profits to support community-based projects, and sell locally produced handicrafts on site.
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GSTC Recognized Standards

**Actively Green**

The Actively Green standard is the core component used in the Actively Green Sustainable Business Training and Certification Program. It was launched as an innovative legacy initiative of the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Vail and Beaver Creek, Colorado, USA through a partnership with Sustainable Travel International and Town of Vail. Another component of the Program is the Mountain IDEAL destination standard for mountain resort communities.

**Adventure Green Alaska Standards**

Adventure Green Alaska began in 2007 as a statewide effort to grow sustainable tourism in Alaska and promote model businesses practicing economic, environmental and social sustainability. It is Alaska’s only sustainable tourism certification program and was created entirely by volunteers. The program came under the Alaska Travel Industry Association in 2015, whose goal was to grow the program in Alaska and increase the programs credibility through the development of a new level of standards, AGA Summit, that meet the GSTC Criteria for tour operators and accommodations.

**Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism**

The Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism and Leisure-time Industry was the first national eco-label for tourism worldwide. It was implemented in 1996 by the Austrian Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism. Almost all types of tourism businesses can be awarded for their commitment in the fields of environmentally friendly management and social responsibility through independent third-party audits on site. The Ecolabel for tourist accommodation covers businesses of any size fulfilling an advanced set of criteria developed and regularly updated in a comprehensive stakeholder process involving tourism as well as environmental experts.

**Biosphere Responsible Tourism (ITR)**

Biosphere Tourism is a standard by the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), an international organization that promotes, for more than 20 years, responsible tourism at an international level. For this, it has a Memorandum of Understanding with UNESCO, is a member of the UNWTO and promotes sustainable tourism on all fronts. Through the Biosphere brand, the RTI promotes Sustainable Development by measuring the contribution of tourism to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations and the Indicators of the Paris Agreement against Climate Change.
Certification as a form of Assurance

- Verifies the validity of claims
- Risk management
- Provides discipline for improvement
- Market access function
Levels of assurance

- **3rd-Party Certification by an Accredited Certification Body**
  - Impartial

- **2nd-Party verification**
  - Impartiality is not certain

- **1st-Party Assessment**
  - NOT impartial

- **Zero verification**
Certification Bodies Accredited to the GSTC Criteria

ISO-17065 for Certification
ISO-17021 for Accreditation
...plus other ISO standards

Standard Owner (GSTC Criteria)

Accreditation Body for GSTC

Certifying Hotels and/or Tour Operators

Certifying Destinations

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Where do we go next?

Grow certification through:
- enhanced marketing and branding
- integration into programs & systems

Online data to support:
- certification auditing
- supply chains

Impacts from certification are better communicated
GSTC 2019
GLOBAL CONFERENCE
Navigating the way forward in sustainable tourism
4th – 7th DEC 2019
Terceira Island - Azores
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GSTC Sponsors

AZORES

Towards Sustainable Tourism

TOTA

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

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GSTC2019
250 participants from 42 countries
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slido.com
or sli.do

#GSTC2019

Join and participate
Slido: let’s give it a try

Join at slido.com
#GSTC2019

What is your preferred term:
(1) sustainable
(2) responsible
Conference Themes

(A) Smart & Sustainable Destination Management

(B) Market Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Products

(C) Is Tourism Responding to Climate Change?
Conference Goals

Learn Share Partner

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS