



# GSTC Report of Change

Accreditation Manual

for Certification of Accommodation/Hotel

& Tour Operators v.3.1

30 September 2023

GSTC Report of Change

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

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### **Document Control**

This is the Report of Change on the Accreditation Manual for Certification of Accommodation/Hotel & Tour Operator, version 3.1.

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## **1. Introduction**

This report gives an overview of the change on the revision of the Accreditation Manual for Certification of Accommodation/Hotel & Tour Operators version 3.1. As GSTC ends the Accreditation services through third-party organizations and provides Accreditation services directly, the revision has been made accordingly. Additionally, this revision does not include any newly added sections, clauses, or changes to the requirements, and only focuses on updating terminology. The approval date is October 1, 2023, and It will be effective from October 13, 2023.

## **2. Methodology**

The methodology in this report is through a comprehensive review within the GSTC Accreditation Secretariat and Assurance Director.

### 3. Accreditation Manual Revision from 3.0 to 3.1

As GSTC directly conducts accreditation, related expressions have been revised. The following tables summarize these changes by section and type. Most of the modifications involve specifying GSTC as the entity responsible for the accreditation service.

#### 3.1 Scope of Change

Section	Sub-section	Correction for Expression/ Criteria Number or Typos	Delete	New Requirements
Title	Title	x		
Version Notes	Version Notes	x		
Scheme Overview	GSTC Accreditation Program	x		
Scheme Overview	GSTC Assurance Panel	x		
Scheme Overview	The following principles apply to all aspects of the GSTC program	x		
Scheme Overview	Stakeholder Engagement in Continuous Review and Improvement of GSTC Accreditation	x		
1. Manual Structure	Page 13 Background	x		

3. GSTC Requirements for GSTC Accreditation Secretariat	Page 14 Background	x		
4. Introduction	4.1.1.	x		
4. Introduction	4.2.1.	x		
5. Scope of Accreditation	5.1.2.3.2.	x		
6. Languages	6.5.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.1.3.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.3.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.4.1.2.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.4.2.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.5.3.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.7.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.8.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.8.	x		
7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.10.	x		
10. Auditor Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills	10.15	x		
19. Definitions	Accreditation Cycle	x		
19. Definitions	GSTC Accreditation	x		
19. Definitions	GSTC Assurance Panel	x		

19. Definitions	GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body		x	
Annex A	A.1.3.	x		
Annex A	A.1.4.	x		
Annex A	A1.5.	x		
Annex A	A1.6.	x		
Annex A	A1.7.	x		
Annex A	A2.2.	x		

### 3.2 Full Revision Trackers

No	Section	Version 3.0	Version 3.1	Change
1	Title	For Certification of Hotels/Accommodations & Tour Operators v3.0	For Certification of Hotels/Accommodations & Tour Operators v3.1	Title changed
2	Version Notes	The version 3.1 of the GSTC Accreditation Manual incorporates the same Section numbering as v.3.0, ranging from Section 1 to 18. In this version, As GSTC ends the Accreditation services through third-party	The version 3.1 of the GSTC Accreditation Manual incorporates the same Section numbering as v.3.0, ranging from Section 1 to 18. In this version, As GSTC ends the Accreditation services through third-party organizations and provides directly	Version Notes updated

		organizations and provides in-house Accreditation services, we modified related expressions. Please note that this revision encompasses other changes as well, beyond the ones mentioned here. Updates to this and related Manuals will be provided by the GSTC occasionally and will be distributed to currently Accredited Certification Bodies plus those with open applications for accreditation.	Accreditation services, we modified related expressions.	
3	Page 6 Scheme Overview	<b>GSTC Accreditation Program</b> Accreditation of a Certification Body that either uses a GSTC-Recognized Standards OR certifies directly against GSTC Criteria. <b>The third-party accreditation is managed by a GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body.</b>	<b>GSTC Accreditation Program</b> Accreditation of a Certification Body that either uses a GSTC-Recognized Standards OR certifies directly against GSTC Criteria.	Changed the definition
4	Page 10 Scheme Overview	<b>GSTC Assurance Panel</b> The GSTC Assurance Panel ("The Panel") performs these functions: - Declare standards to be "GSTC-Recognized Standard", according to the terms of the GSTC-Recognized Manual as approved by the CEO and the Board; - Validate and provide surveillance of <b>GSTC's</b>	<b>GSTC Assurance Panel</b> The GSTC Assurance Panel ("The Panel") performs these functions: - Declare standards to be "GSTC-Recognized Standard", according to the terms of the GSTC-Recognized Manual as approved by the CEO and the Board; - Validate and provide surveillance of	Changed the expression



		<p>contracted partner Accreditation Body declarations of "GSTC-Accredited Certification Bodies"; and</p> <p>- Function as an Accreditation Body for tourism sub sectors where GSTC does not otherwise have an external partner Accreditation Body in place.</p>	<p>GSTC-Accredited Certification Bodies; and</p> <p>- Function as an Accreditation Body for tourism sub sectors where GSTC does not otherwise have an external partner Accreditation Body in place.</p>	
5	Page 10 Scheme Overview	<p><b>Principles for the implementation of the GSTC Accreditation</b></p> <p>The following principles apply to all aspects of the GSTC program – including work performed by certification scheme owners, CBs and Accreditation Bodies:</p>	<p><b>Principles for the implementation of the GSTC Accreditation</b></p> <p>The following principles apply to all aspects of the GSTC program – including work performed by certification scheme owners and CBs:</p>	Changed the expression
6	Page 12 Scheme Overview	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement in Continuous Review and Improvement of GSTC Accreditation</b></p> <p>Certification Bodies that are accredited or are interested in accreditation, Accreditation Bodies, and other stakeholders interested in GSTC Accreditation Program, are invited to submit comments on any aspect of the program and this Manual and to submit any requests for clarification of requirements addressed in this Manual.</p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement in Continuous Review and Improvement of GSTC Accreditation</b></p> <p>Certification Bodies that are accredited or are interested in accreditation, and other stakeholders interested in GSTC Accreditation Program, are invited to submit comments on any aspect of the program and this Manual and to submit any requests for clarification of requirements addressed in this Manual or email to <a href="mailto:accreditation@gstcouncil.org">accreditation@gstcouncil.org</a> for further information and questions.</p>	Removed the expression and added email address

7	1. Manual Structure - Background	<p>The Manual covers both the requirements of and accreditation processes to be implemented by GSTC, and GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body, and for Certification Bodies, the certification processes they shall implement and the requirements and process for their accreditation.</p> <p>This Manual is arranged in four parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part I introduces an overview of the GSTC Criteria and Accreditation;</li> <li>- Part II sets out the manual structure, normative reference and requirements for GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Bodies in their accreditation of Certification Bodies;</li> <li>- Part III set out the requirements for Certification Bodies to become accredited and the market access benefits; and</li> <li>- Part IV covers the glossary and annexes.</li> </ul>	<p>The Manual covers both the requirements of and accreditation processes to be implemented by GSTC, and for Certification Bodies, the certification processes they shall implement and the requirements and process for their accreditation.</p> <p>This Manual is arranged in four parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part I introduces an overview of the GSTC Criteria and Accreditation;</li> <li>- Part II sets out the manual structure, normative reference and requirements for GSTC in the accreditation of Certification Bodies;</li> <li>- Part III set out the requirements for Certification Bodies to become accredited and the market access benefits; and</li> <li>- Part IV covers the glossary and annexes.</li> </ul>	Changed the expression
8	3. GSTC Requirements for GSTC Accreditation Secretariat	<p><b>3. GSTC Requirements for GSTC Accreditation Secretariat</b></p> <p>3.1. The GSTC and the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body shall operate with a service agreement that includes any specific requirements from GSTC beyond the</p>	<p><b>3. GSTC Accreditation Management</b></p> <p>3.1. The GSTC shall administer the accreditation for Hotel/Accommodation and for Tour Operator.</p> <p>3.2. The GSTC shall administer the complaints, appeals and disputes related to the accreditation or the certification process.</p>	Changed the title of Section 3 and changed the entire clauses

	<p>standard operating procedures of the Accreditation Body.</p> <p>3.2. Before making an accreditation decision, the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body shall provide the GSTC Assurance Panel with the accreditation evaluation report containing the assessment team's recommendation as to whether or not accreditation should be granted. The GSTC Assurance Panel shall indicate to the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body whether or not it agrees with the recommendation made.</p> <p>3.3. The GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body shall administer the accreditation for Hotel/Accommodation and for Tour Operator.</p> <p>3.4. The GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body shall administer the complaints, appeals and disputes related to the accreditation or the certification process.</p> <p>3.4.1. A copy of the formal notice of the outcome of any complaints and appeal shall be sent to the GSTC, to accreditation@gstcouncil.org within 5 days</p>		
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		of the complaint or appeal being officially closed.		
9	4. Introduction	4.1.1. Gain accreditation from a GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body or by which conforms to Part II; and 4.2.1. All CBs will be subject to an assessment of their conformity to these requirements by a GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body.	4.1.1. Gain accreditation from GSTC or by which conforms to Part II; and 4.2.1. All CBs will be subject to an assessment of their conformity to these requirements by the GSTC.	Changed the expression
10	5. Scope of Accreditation	5.1.2.3.2. A CB can be accredited for one or more than one GSTC-Recognized Standard upon scope extension request to the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body, according to its rules.	5.1.2.3.2. A CB can be accredited for one or more than one GSTC-Recognized Standard upon scope extension request to the GSTC, according to its rules.	Changed the expression
11	6. Languages	6.5. Where a CB is working in a language other than English, it will provide translated documents in English as required for initial accreditation and ongoing requirements by the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body.	6.5. Where a CB is working in a language other than English, it will provide translated documents in English as required for initial accreditation and ongoing requirements by the GSTC.	Changed the expression
12	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.1.3. The CB is in breach of the GSTC License Agreement or the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body agreement.	7.1.3. The CB is in breach of the GSTC License Agreement.	Changed the expression
13	7. Accreditation	7.3. Following a decision on, and publication of, the changed requirements, the GSTC	7.3. Following a decision on, and publication of, the changed requirements, the GSTC shall verify	Changed the expression

	Expiration and Renewal	Endorsed Accreditation Body shall verify that each GSTC-Accredited CB conforms to the changed requirements within the transition time determined by GSTC.	that each GSTC-Accredited CB conforms to the changed requirements within the transition time determined by GSTC.	
14	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.4.1.2. The measures adopted to inform society, the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body, the GSTC-Accredited CBs and current applicants for accreditation; 7.4.2 The transition implementation plan shall be established in consultation with the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body, the GSTC-Accredited CBs and other relevant interested parties.	7.4.1.2. The measures adopted to inform society, the GSTC-Accredited CBs and current applicants for accreditation; 7.4.2 The transition implementation plan shall be established in consultation with the GSTC-Accredited CBs and other relevant interested parties.	Removed the expression
15	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.5.3. The transition implementation plan shall be established in consultation with the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body, the standard owner, the GSTC-Accredited CBs and other relevant interested parties.	7.5.3. The transition implementation plan shall be established in consultation with the standard owner, the GSTC-Accredited CBs and other relevant interested parties.	Removed the expression
16	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.7. If at any time, should the GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body have reason to be concerned about the ongoing conformity of an already GSTC-Accredited CB against the GSTC-Accredited requirements, it may require the CB to provide further information,	7.7. If at any time, should the GSTC has reason to be concerned about the ongoing conformity of an already GSTC-Accredited CB against the GSTC-Accredited requirements, it may require the CB to provide further information, and may, as an ultimate sanction, withdraw the GSTC-Accredited	Changed the expression

		and may, as an ultimate sanction, withdraw the GSTC-Accredited status.	status.	
17	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.8. The suspension, cancelation, extension, withdrawal or scope reduction of accreditation shall be administered by the GSTC <b>Endorsed Accreditation Body</b> , according to its rules.	7.8. The suspension, cancelation, extension, withdrawal or scope reduction of accreditation shall be administered by the <b>GSTC</b> , according to its rules.	Changed the expression
18	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.9. In the event of non-compliance with the obligations assumed by the applicant or GSTC-Accredited CB and depending on the severity in terms of compromising the system in terms of quality and credibility of accreditation-related activities, sanctions can be established by the GSTC <b>Endorsed Accreditation Body</b> .	7.9. In the event of non-compliance with the obligations assumed by the applicant or GSTC-Accredited CB and depending on the severity in terms of compromising the system in terms of quality and credibility of accreditation-related activities, sanctions can be established by the <b>GSTC</b> .	Changed the expression
19	7. Accreditation Expiration and Renewal	7.10. A CB can request an extension or reduction of its accreditation scope. In this case, the CB shall make a formal request to the GSTC <b>Endorsed Accreditation Body</b> . The request shall indicate the reasons for the extension or reduction requested. The request shall be processed as an accreditation application. The assessment of the CB may be simplified and processed in	7.10. A CB can request an extension or reduction of its accreditation scope. In this case, the CB shall make a formal request to the <b>GSTC</b> . The request shall indicate the reasons for the extension or reduction requested. The request shall be processed as an accreditation application. The assessment of the CB may be simplified and processed in conjunction with the surveillance activities of the accreditation process:	Changed the expression

		conjunction with the surveillance activities of the accreditation process:		
20	10. Auditor Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills	10.15. Records of auditors' competence. Records shall be maintained up to date at all times to demonstrate auditors' competence. The record of auditors newly qualified for sustainable tourism auditing shall be submitted to the secretariat for GSTC <b>Endorsed Accreditation Body</b> for reviewing and managing the GSTC's list of qualified auditors.	10.15. Records of auditors' competence. Records shall be maintained up to date at all times to demonstrate auditors' competence. The record of auditors newly qualified for sustainable tourism auditing shall be submitted to the <b>GSTC Accreditation Secretariat</b> for reviewing and managing the GSTC's list of qualified auditors.	Changed the expression
21	19. Definitions	<b>Accreditation Cycle</b> : Begins at or after the initial Accreditation Decision date or decision after a Re-accreditation Assessment and shall not be longer than five years. Before the end of a cycle, a re-accreditation Assessment shall be conducted prior to cycle expiration. NOTE: usually, the accreditation cycle has a duration of 5 years. [SOURCE: adapted from ASI-PRO-101: 2019]	<b>Accreditation Cycle</b> : Begins at or after the initial Accreditation Decision date or decision after a Re-accreditation Assessment and shall not be longer than five years. Before the end of a cycle, a re-accreditation Assessment shall be conducted prior to cycle expiration. NOTE: usually, the accreditation cycle has a duration of 5 years. [SOURCE: adapted from ISO/IEC 17011:2017(E)]	Changed the Source
22	19. Definitions	<b>GSTC Accreditation</b> : Accreditation provided by <b>an Accreditation Body that is endorsed by</b> the GSTC.	<b>GSTC Accreditation</b> : Accreditation provided by the <b>GSTC</b>	Changed the expression

23	19. Definitions	<p><b>GSTC Assurance Panel</b> : scheme owners and may endorse Accreditation Body recommendations to accredit CBs.</p>	<p><b>GSTC Assurance Panel</b> : An independent body of the GSTC that is technically competent and impartial, that will make decisions on recognizing sustainable tourism standards and certification scheme owners and may endorse the GSTC Accreditation Secretariat recommendations to accredit CBs.</p>	Changed the definition
24	19. Definitions	<p><b>GSTC Endorsed Accreditation Body</b> : A qualified body authorized by the GSTC to manage the accreditation process and oversee the functions of the GSTC certification programs.</p>		Removed the definition
25	Annex A	<p>A1.3. GSTC Accredited CB submits an application for extension of technical sub scope to <b>ASI</b>:</p> <p>A1.4. <b>ASI</b> reviews the application:</p> <p>A1.5. <b>ASI</b> reviews the application:</p> <p>A1.6. <b>ASI</b> carries out the witness assessment (of a CB audit of the GSTC-Recognized Standard:</p> <p>- Major non-conformities resulting from the witness assessment shall be satisfactorily closed.</p>	<p>A1.3. GSTC Accredited CB submits an application for extension of technical sub scope to <b>GSTC</b>:</p> <p>A1.4. <b>GSTC</b> reviews the application:</p> <p>A1.5. <b>GSTC</b> reviews the application:</p> <p>A1.6. <b>GSTC</b> carries out the witness assessment (of a CB audit of the GSTC-Recognized Standard:</p> <p>- Major non-conformities resulting from the witness assessment shall be satisfactorily closed.</p> <p>A1.7. Upon a positive <b>GSTC</b> decision to extend the scope of accreditation, the CB will now be entitled to carry out audit and certification</p>	Changed the expression



		<p>A1.7. Upon a positive <b>ASI</b> decision to extend the scope of accreditation, the CB will now be entitled to carry out audit and certification services on behalf of the CS.</p> <p><b>A2.2. ASI-PRO-20-101 Accreditation Procedure v5.1 - 08 December 2020.</b></p>	<p>services on behalf of the CS.</p> <p><b>A2.2. GSTC Accreditation Procedure v1.0-date September, 2023</b></p>	
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#### 4. Acknowledgment

GSTC is pleased to announce the completion of minor revisions to the Accreditation Manual for Certification of Hotel/Accommodation and Tour Operators v.3.1. This revision is now accessible on the GSTC website. This revision is acknowledged by the GSTC Assurance Program Director.

#### 5. Next Step

The Accreditation Manual for Certification of Hotel/Accommodation & Tour Operator (Version 3.1) will be effective for use by GSTC and applied to all certification bodies. Since this revision is considered minor and nothing has changed, there will be no transition period applied for this revision. Furthermore, for the next revision, GSTC will conduct Version 3.2, which will involve a public consultation and engagement with more stakeholders.

## **6. Conclusion**

As GSTC has terminated its relationship with ASI for Accreditation Bodies, this revision aims to update and replace expressions that refer to ASI. To summarize, there have been 33 expression changes and the deletion of one definition in the current revision of the Accreditation Manual for Certification of Hotels/Accommodations and Tour Operators (Version 3.1). It's important to note that this version (v.3.1) does not differ from Version 3.0 in terms of content; only the expressions have been modified.

Furthermore, GSTC remains committed to continuous improvement and will conduct further revisions in the upcoming months to address related aspects. We will ensure active engagement from all relevant stakeholders in this process. By promoting sustainable and responsible practices in the tourism industry, GSTC continues to play a vital role in advancing global sustainable tourism standards.