

**GSTC Announcement:
Call for Accredited Certification Bodies for Destination**

Transitional Destination Certification Policy

Date : May 19, 2023
To : GSTC Accredited Certification Body for Destination
CC : GSTC Assurance Panel Chair

Purpose:

This document provides a short-term solution for occasional confusion between destinations and attractions. GSTC expects to reach greater clarity and a permanent solution on the distinction between definitions for attractions and destinations during the process of developing GSTC Attractions Criteria from Q4 2023 to Q4 2024.

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1. Eligibility for the transitional destination certification

1) Eligible candidates

The place/site having the below elements **will be eligible for** Destination Certification:

- A natural or cultural site having very limited infrastructure and buildings in a larger geographical scale (e.g., national park, wilderness, island, other types of protected areas);
- Providing multiple tourist activities regardless of accommodation or community inside; and
- Connecting tourist visits/activities with the surrounding economy in the case there is a micro community that does not have much economic activities except their own living or there is no community existing.

Note: The neighboring community will not be included in the geographical scope for certification but will be audited to community relevant criteria of GSTC Destination Criteria.

2) Ineligible candidates

The place/site having the below elements **will NOT be eligible for** Destination Certification:

- Consisting of facilities under specific theme(s): Amusement/Theme Park, museum, gallery, sports park, zoo, temple, church, stadium, concert hall, and other artificial buildings for certain activities; or
- A natural or cultural site controlled entering with clear boundaries in a small geographical scale.

Note: A certification body shall provide rationale for an interpretation of the place/site's size like small or large.

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2. Decision on the eligibility when there is a doubt:

If a CB cannot be sure if a client place/site is eligible for GSTC-D certification,

- Submit an official request to the GSTC to review the place/site.
- The GSTC Secretariat (Assurance Team) will review the case.
 - If it requires further review, the Secretariat will bring it to the Assurance Panel.
- The result will be sent to the CB.

Note: The procedure for the review will be developed by the Secretariat.

3. Transition to the Attraction Certification

- When the GSTC has the Attraction Certification Program, the certified places/sites under this new policy will be reviewed whether they fit in the definition of attraction and will be transferred to the Attraction Certification, if proper.
- The CBs will make a separate list of the destinations certified under this new policy.

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Annex A. Definition of destination for the transitional certification

GSTC uses the following two definitions;

- A tourism destination is a physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight. It is the cluster (co-location) of products and services, and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism. A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations. (<https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf>)
- A destination is a geographical area consisting of all the services and infrastructure necessary for the stay of a specific tourist or tourism segment. Destinations are the competitive units of incoming tourism. (<https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/glossary/>)