



Global Sustainable Tourism Council



**A GUIDE FOR HOTELS
AND ACCOMMODATIONS
ON HOW TO BECOME CERTIFIED**



Becoming Certified as a Sustainable Hotel/Accommodation

What is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)?

The **Global Sustainable Tourism Council** establishes and manages global sustainable standards, known as the **GSTC Criteria**. It also provides an assurance framework for sustainable tourism certification.

It was formed in 2007 as a coalition of 32 partners, initiated by the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Foundation (UN Foundation), and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The purpose was to foster an increased understanding of sustainable tourism practices and the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles.

There are two sets: **GSTC Destination Criteria** for public policy-makers and destination managers, and **GSTC Industry Criteria** for hotels and tour operators. They are the result of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism. They are arranged in four pillars: (A) Sustainable management; (B) Socioeconomic impacts; (C) Cultural impacts; and (D) Environmental impacts.

Currently, the **GSTC Mice Criteria** and **GSTC Attractions Criteria** are under development. The **GSTC Criteria** form the foundation Accreditation for Certification Bodies that certify hotels/accommodations, tour operators/transport providers, and destinations as having sustainable policies and practices in place.

The GSTC is an independent and neutral organization, legally registered in the USA as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that represents a diverse and global membership, including national and provincial governments, leading travel companies, hotels, tour operators, NGOs, individuals and communities – all striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism.

GSTC does NOT certify anything. GSTC provides Accreditation to Certification Bodies. Certification and Accreditation are different things.

Becoming Certified as a Sustainable Hotel/Accommodation

Increasingly, travelers are seeking confirmation that sustainability practices are in place. Also, travel companies are looking for a product that is not only certified sustainable but certified sustainable by a Certification Body that is GSTC Accredited.

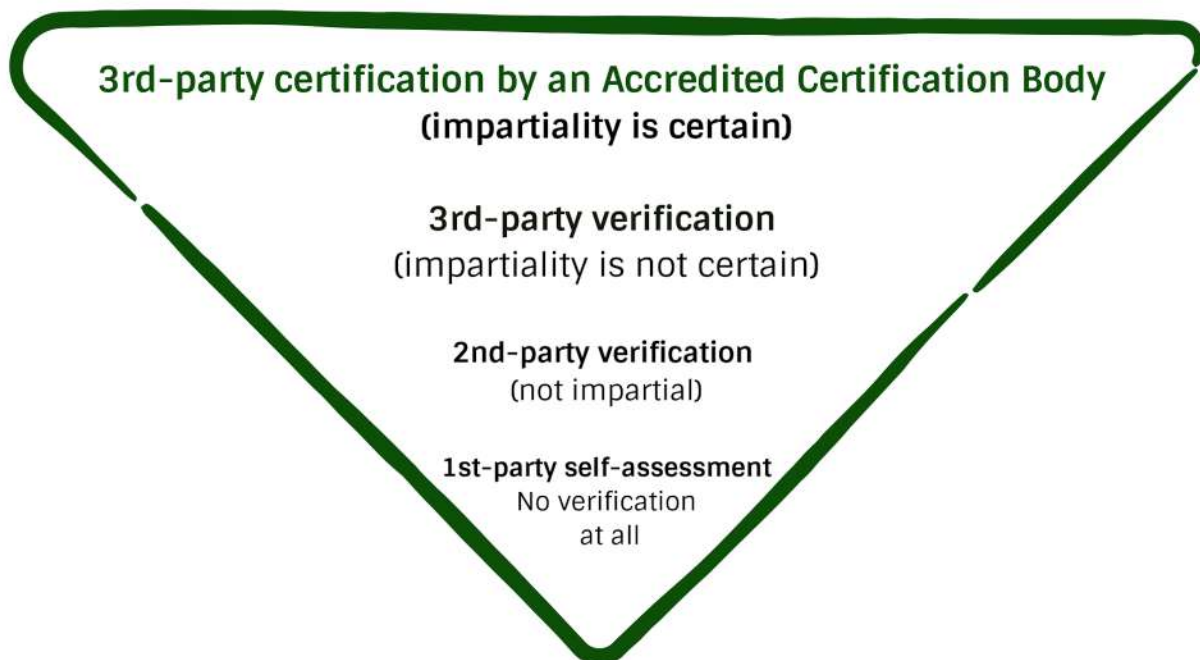
Why GSTC-Accredited?

Being certified by an Accredited Certification Body means that your tourism product or service complies with the highest social and environmental standards on the market.

Businesses certified by a GSTC-Accredited Certification Body, meeting all the GSTC Criteria (or a GSTC-Recognized Standard), have the highest level of assurance* and credibility available.

With an accredited certification, customers and buyers are assured that the business was certified in a credibly verified procedure in a transparent, impartial, and competent manner.

* General assurance levels:



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How to get started?

Choose a Certification Body (CB) from the list on our website:

www.gstcouncil.org/certification/become-certified-hotel

The organizations you see there have been accredited based on the quality of their certification process.

After working with a CB towards achieving full GSTC requirements compliance, your operation will receive its Certification by an Accredited CB.

All the Certification Bodies listed on the website have gained Accreditation to certify hotels as sustainable.



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My Hotel/Accommodation is certified

Travel providers should proudly display information regarding their certificate and the certification body that issued it. Doing so informs your stakeholders – from customers to ownership and to your supply chain – that your business is operated with sound management that looks to the future and not merely at today.

Those businesses certified by a GSTC-Accredited Certification Body can display a unique GSTC logo with a traceable code



Many owners and buyers of hotel spaces use the GSTC framework and highlight those accommodations certified by GSTC Accredited CBs. Here are a few of them:

- Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), with guidance from the GSTC, has developed the first mandatory national program for accommodations based on the GSTC Criteria and GSTC Assurance program. From 2022 through 2030, all accommodations Türkiye must be certified through a GSTC-Accredited Certification Body.
- Singapore Tourism Board announced the launch of the Hotel Sustainability Roadmap. By 2025 its goal is for 60% of hotel room stock to achieve hotel sustainability certification through a GSTC-Accredited Certification Body.
- Hilton “We continue to identify opportunities to achieve GSTC certification for our hotels to ensure the sustainability of our operations.”
- TUI Group “encourages all hotels offered to its 27 million customers to obtain certification that meets the GSTC Criteria.”
- easyJet holidays “is focused on supporting tourism destinations by committing to encouraging 100% of its contracted hotels to achieve certification by a GSTC-Accredited Certification body [...] by the end of 2025.”
- AMEX GBT “will highlight hotels and other accommodation partners as 'sustainable' that meet GSTC’s standards or, even better, are certified by a GSTC-Accredited Certification Body.”
- Booking.com is currently highlighting hotels certified by GSTC-Accredited CBs along with other standards that are Recognized by GSTC.

Question? Contact us:
info@gstccouncil.org

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