



Development of the
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

**MICE (Meetings, Incentives,
Conferences and Exhibitions) Criteria**

**Report on key findings from the 1st public
consultation**

September 28th, 2023

GSTC MICE Criteria Development - Report on key findings from the 1st public consultation

GSTC MICE Criteria Development

Report on the key findings from the first public consultation

A. Consultation period: May 11th - August 23rd, 2023

B. Outreach

1. Members of the Advisory Group and key stakeholders of the GSTC MICE criteria development: 14

a. Members of the Advisory Group: 8

- Green Key Global
- Osaka Convention Bureau
- Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (SACEOS)
- Singapore Tourism Board
- Sustainable Hospitality Alliance
- Suwon Convention & Visitor Bureau
- Visit Berlin
- Visit Oslo

b. Key stakeholders: 6

- American Express Global Business Travel
- Costa Rica Tourism Board
- Global Business Travel Association (GBTA)
- Japan Convention Service
- Meetingselect
- Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA)

2. Networks of Advisory Group and key stakeholders: Unable to attribute exact number of survey respondents to these channels.

3. Participants in 4 GSTC MICE Criteria workshops: Approx 86 in all

- a. Gunsan, Korea on September 16th, 2022 – Approx. 15
- b. Seville, Spain on December 14th, 2022 – 29
- c. Antalya, Türkiye on May 11th, 2023 – 27
- d. Bestival in Berlin, Germany on July 6th, 2023 – Over 15 (did not track exact visitors to booth)

4. **GSTC Members in GSTC's global network:** 118 MICE-related members
5. **Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups:** 41
 - a. 41 organizations from Europe (East; West and the Balkans), the Americas, Africa, Middle East were contacted to provide input on the draft.
(*list of stakeholders cannot be published upon their request)

C. Outreach Methods

1. **Survey monkey** with open ended questions on the criterion and indicators based on the GSTC MICE criteria draft v1.3. Respondents were given the option to provide inputs for:
 - a. all criteria and indicators; or
 - b. individual sections A, B, C or D.
2. Use of word file to collect comprehensive responses on the MICE criteria draft.
(*The word file was used the most by those who wanted to have an extensive discussion with their partners and other networks before providing their answers.)

3. Promotion

- a. GSTC Website www.gstcouncil.org
 - i. Home slider redirecting to the Public Consultation news page
 - ii. News post on web ([see here](#))
- b. Social Media Promotion: Post featured/pinned to the top in all channels. Total of 4 posts in all channels during June to August.
 - i. LinkedIn - Followers in July: 37792
 - Also shared on LinkedIn Groups such as: GSTC Group / Sustainability Professionals / Sustainable Tourism Latin America / TravelMole Media Group
 - LinkedIn Ads with specific MICE Target were made. N° Ads: 5 / Impressions: 44653 / Total Clicks: 473
 - LinkedIn Posts from June 26 – August 11, 2023. 256 likes, 35 reposts.
 - ii. Instagram - Followers in July: 3003
 - iii. Facebook - Followers in July: 26773
 - iv. Twitter - Followers in July: 9347
- c. GSTC Electronic Direct Mail (+12.600 subscribers)
 - i. June Newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/gstcouncil/gstc-newsletter-2023-june>
 - ii. July Newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/gstcouncil/gstc-newsletter-july-2023>
 - iii. Spanish Newsletter July
<https://mailchi.mp/gstcouncil/gstc-boletin-julio-2023> (+1300 subscribers)

- iv. Newsletter to the segment who checked the box "GSTC Criteria Revision Participation" (+2900 subscribers)
<https://mailchi.mp/gstcouncil/gstc-mice-criteria-public-consultation>
 - d. Direct communications to targeted groups of GSTC Members.
 - i. Direct mailing to MICE related GSTC Members
 - o 118 emails sent to MICE-related GSTC Members.
 - e. **Networks of Advisory Group and key stakeholders.**
 - i. Word of mouth and sharing of the GSTC MICE Criteria development news and survey through their newsletters.
4. **Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.**
- a. Data collection took place from July 5th to August 23rd, spanning a duration of 7 weeks from the following respondent profiles: groups with limited access to location/resources (e.g., conflict zones; remote areas, heritage venues); groups for diversity and inclusion (e.g., elderly, women, homeless;HIV+, indigenous communities; LGBTQ+; linguistic barriers of communication; neuro-divergent; physical disabilities); and SMEs.
 - b. Stakeholders from all continents, especially small and micro businesses were identified and contacted through email and telephone. Adjustments had to be made in our methodology - pilot tests to directly contact micro businesses yielded few results as their staff were unable to give feedback. As a result, more associations representing micro businesses were contacted.
 - i. A majority of stakeholders tended to be based in Europe or US (for example for charity status).
 - ii. Stakeholders in Asia and MICE players (Organiser/Event/Venue) were not contactable.
 - iii. Categorisation (self-identification) as Organiser/Event/Venue was done by respondents and sometimes differed to the assumed role.

D. Responses received

- 1. 169 proper responses through survey monkey
 - a. GSTC and external experts assessed that the number of responses was sufficient to meaningfully revise the draft of the Criteria.
 - b. MICE industry: 60.2%
 - c. By affiliation
 - i. Travel & Tourism industry (including private sector) 33.7%;
 - ii. Consultancy 11.8%;

- iii. Non Profit Organization (NPO) or Non Governmental Organization (NGO) 11.2%;
- iv. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and government agencies 10.7%;
- v. Academia 7.1%;
- vi. Certification body 6.5%

*Given the length of the survey, not all responses were properly answered. A 'proper' response was where the respondent answered to the definitions of the MICE and had at least answered on one of the four sections.

- 2. 10 comprehensive responses received using word file
 - a. The MICE Criteria draft version was sent to the respondents with a separate answer sheet. By not using a simple answer sheet and not the survey monkey, respondents could discuss internally offline or online and provide answers that are from the organization perspective and not a sole individual. This approach was well appreciated by the organizations because they had time to reflect on the criterion and indicator.
 - b. Organizations including Costa Rica Tourism Board, Sustainability Hospitality Alliance, Green Key Global, Resorts World Sentosa, Northflash, Grupo Heroica, Japan Convention Service, Singapore Tourism Board together with SACEOS, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) and the Disadvantaged Groups have provided answers after discussing it internally within the organization.
- 3. Response from the Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.
 - a. A report of 37 pages was received with the compiled responses of the 41 organizations mentioned in B.5.a.
 - b. The report included precise steps of stakeholder identification and their feedback.
 - c. Feedback included:
 - i. General comments on key requirements that should be included in the GSTC Criteria
 - ii. Comments received were based on the criterion/indicator's readability, measurability, feasibility, criteria to add/delete/amend
 - iii. Criteria-section specific feedback
 - iv. Consultant's additional feedback

E. Summary of key findings

1. From the survey monkey the results show the following. Please note that the following extracted suggestions and comments are examples of responses. Technical team is currently working on the revision based on raw data from the public consultation.

a. Definitions

- i. General: Some indicators are of a higher bar than existing ones for Hotels and TOs. This may affect adoption rate (especially since this is the first set of MICE Criteria) and perceived inconsistency among the sets of criteria - esp. as some venues can apply both the Hotels and MICE Criteria. For review to ensure consistency.
- ii. General: Include a preamble on the various models of MICE events (e.g., annual recurring; held on a rotating host country basis) and scale (large exhibitions to smaller conferences) to set context on the heterogeneity of the sector compared to hotels for example.
- iii. General: Make clear the entity that will be certified according to this Criteria and the boundaries e.g., if the venue is certified, does it mean that all events in the venue will be certified?

b. Sub-sectors

- i. Event organizer: An individual professional, team, or organization who plans, organizes, or is contracted to organize, and manages events for individuals, businesses, organizations, and other clients. It is also known as an event planner.
 - Agree (133); disagree (6)
 - Out of the 133 who agreed 55% were from the MICE industry.
 - Suggestions on the definition:
 - Include organizing “incentive trip” in the definition.
 - To define ‘event’ solely because travel arrangements are done by event organizers as well.
 - Acknowledgement of EOs as volunteer management roles. E.g. events at hotels/resorts are organized by in-house hotel managers and/or staff.
- ii. Venue: A closed or open place, operated or owned by a person or institution, which is designated for events, exhibitions, meetings, and conferences.
 - Agree (125), disagree (11)
 - Out of the 125 who agreed, 55% were from the MICE industry.
 - Other suggestions:
 - To include an indicator about carrying capacity: suggest to add different numbers of people (guests, organizers, exhibitors etc.).
 - Venues can be owned by companies/businesses

- To include sport venues as these may be used for events or conferences too.
- iii. Event/Exhibition: A specific occasion for which people are convened for a limited time (usually days or weeks) for a specific purpose. The event/exhibition is owned by a person, body, committee or institution, which is responsible for its management.
 - Agree (125), disagree (8)
 - Out of those who agreed, 56.8% were from the MICE industry.
 - Other suggestions:
 - An event is marketed through various advertising channels.
 - Following ISO 20121 (Sustainable Events Management) the following actors need to be identified as well: event owners (different from event organizers); workforce; supply chain (such as caterers, stand constructors, transport companies); participants; attendees; regulatory bodies; communities

c. Sections

- i. Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management
 - Clear definition of words such as organization vs. event organizer, long-term, plan (what it includes).
 - Sustainability policy to be directed by senior management,
 - Governing body should exist for managing risk analysis and mitigation plan.
 - The policy should include economic risks, intellectual property.
- ii. Section B: Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts
 - How to evaluate trade-offs between job candidacy and local employer regarding job competency.
 - Fair working conditions/ and not only equal opportunity for employment.
 - Any measurements for inclusion and equality.
- iii. Section C: Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts
 - Avoidance of cultural interactions not only with children but also with marginalized groups and unhoused folks,
 - Need clearer explanation and indicators of how events & exhibitions and venues will provide protection of cultural heritage service, and to what extent it does not impede local access,
 - Engagement with the local community before presenting the tradition and culture.

- iv. Section D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts
 - Specific guidance and targets on voluntary off-sets and minimum standards to wastewater and solid waste,
 - Assessment report should be transparent,
 - Mentioning 'non-plastic usage' is critical.