



Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Development of the
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

Attraction Criteria

Report on key findings from the 1st public consultation

April 4, 2024

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

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Report on the key findings from the first public consultation

Submission to the Singapore Tourism Board

The report sets out the process of the first public consultation for the Attraction Criteria draft v1.06. The objective of the report is to report on the period, stakeholders involved, efforts made to promote the public consultation and the key extracts summarized from the survey responses. It serves for the purpose of transparency, accountability, and reliability of the process that is clearly outlined in the GSTC Attraction Criteria development Terms of Reference.

The Attraction Criteria draft was developed by experts in the relevant field. The draft was the basis for the public consultation in which the Advisory Group, Key Stakeholders group and members of GSTC have commented on.

The summary on the key findings only refer to some extracts from the survey responses. All responses are collected by GSTC Secretariat and are communicated to the experts for the second revision of the GSTC Attraction Criteria draft.

A. Consultation period: January 15th – March 15th, 2024

B. Outreach

1. Members of the Advisory Group and key stakeholders of the GSTC Attraction criteria development:
 - a. Members of the Advisory Group¹: 6
 - Association of Singapore Attractions (Singapore)
 - International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (U.S.A)
 - Singapore Tourism Board Singapore
 - South African Tourism Services Association (South Africa)
 - The Royal Djurgården Society (Sweden)
 - U.S National Park Service (U.S.A)

¹ The Advisory Group provided high-level inputs to the Criteria draft. The Group not only participated in the official public consultation but also worked and provided continuous comments to the Criteria draft, gave recommendations on relevant publications and reports, was responsible for promoting the GSTC Attraction Criteria' first public consultation, and gave recommendations on which organizations could be suitable for the feasibility assessment. GSTC has online meetings every 3 months, to discuss and update important timelines and go through any questions or concerns.

- b. Key stakeholders²: 6
- City of Dubrovnik (Croatia)
 - Ecotourism Australia (Australia)
 - Fair Trade Tourism (South Africa)
 - Mandai Wildlife Group (Singapore)
 - Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (Sri Lanka)
 - The Blue Lagoon Island (Bahamas)
2. Networks of Advisory Group and key stakeholders: Unable to attribute the exact number of survey respondents to these channels.
3. Participants in 3 GSTC Attraction Criteria workshops: Approximately 75 in all
- a. Gunsan, Korea on September 16th, 2022 – Approx. 15
 - b. Seville, Spain on December 14th, 2022 – 29
 - c. Antalya, Turkiye on May 11th, 2023 – 27
- Note: 3a and 3b were “ground sensing” sessions conducted prior to GSTC’s partnership with STB to determine the demand and views for the GSTC Attraction Criteria.
4. GSTC Members in GSTC’s global network: 537 members³
- i. Academia(2.2%), Association (4.6%), Certification Body (8.6%), Consultancy (17.6%), Corporate and Business Travel (1.0%), Destination Management Organization (8.1%), Government Agency (2.9%), Hotel/Accommodation (5.6%), Media (1.0%), National Tourism Organization (5.9%), Non-Profit Organization (10.0%), Online Travel Agency (5.1%), Tour Operation (inbound) (8.6%), Travel Agency (4.4%).
5. Disadvantaged and under-represented groups:
- a. 47 relevant stakeholders from 23 countries who have been identified as Indigenous, have language, digital and/or geographical barriers were contacted.

² The Key Stakeholders group are experts with strong background on attraction and are key industry players who currently operate an attraction. They are also responsible for giving feedback on the Attraction Criteria draft.

³ GSTC has reached out to all of its members and not specific targets due to the following reasons: 1) the definition and therefore the boundary of attraction is not exact. This is well stated in the GSTC Attraction Criteria Development Terms of Reference. A destination, parks, museums can be regarded as an attraction. 2) a broader audience inclusion would give more perspective on how to consider sustainability on Attraction. Many people would have at least once interacted with an attraction in their life span. Given that GSTC members are strongly committed to sustainability, the members possess the right to give their voices. Please note, that only specific targets of Attraction will be given the opportunity to do the Feasibility Assessment. The Feasibility Assessment is only targeted to those who currently operate an Attraction and can provide inputs that are executed in practice. The Feasibility Assessment is therefore not open to the public and the stakeholders taking part in the assessment is carefully managed and controlled by the GSTC Secretariat.

C. Outreach Methods

1. Survey Monkey with open ended questions on the criterion and indicators based on the GSTC Attraction criteria draft v1.06 (Annex A). 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 Attraction Criteria draft. (*The word file was used the most by those who wanted to extensively discuss 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 posts on web ([see here](#)) (Annex B)
 - b. Social Media Promotion: The post was featured/pinned to the top of all channels. There were a total of 4 posts in all channels from January to March 2024.
 - i. LinkedIn - Followers as of 15th March: 41,834
 - Also shared on LinkedIn groups such as: GSTC Group / Sustainability Professionals / Sustainable Tourism Latin America /
 - TravelMole Media Group
 - LinkedIn ads with specific Attraction Targets were made.
 - a. Dates: From 18th of Jan to the 15th of March 2024
 - b. Number of ads: 10 targeted ads
 - c. Impressions: 146,443
 - d. Clicks: 876
 - ii. Instagram - Followers by 15th March 2024: 3,519
 - iii. Facebook - Followers by 15th March 2024: 27,026
 - iv. X (formerly known as Twitter) - Followers by 15th March: 9,369
 - c. GSTC Electronic Direct Mail (Annex C)
 - i. PR - Media List GSTC 'Attraction Criteria 1st Public Consultation is Now Open': <https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-attraction-criteria-first-public-consultation-open> (1,124 deliveries and 830 total opens⁴)
 - ii. January Monthly Newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-newsletter-january-2024> (11,093 deliveries and 5,277 total opens)
 - iii. February Monthly Newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-newsletter-februrary-2024> (11,141 deliveries and 4,896 total opens)

⁴ Total open means that the receiver has opened the newsletter several times.

- iv. Members Bulletin February: <https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-members-bulletin-2024-feb> (1,090 deliveries and 1,068 total opens)
- d. Direct communications to targeted groups of GSTC Members.
 - i. Direct mailing to GSTC Members
 - o 537 personalized emails sent in English and Spanish to the GSTC Members on February 28th, 2024.
 - ❖ A total of 493 emails were dispatched in English, comprising 371 sent to organization/destination members and 122 to individuals.
 - ❖ A total of 44 emails were dispatched in Spanish, 38 of which were sent to organization/destination members and 6 to individuals.
 - e. Networks of Advisory Group and key stakeholders.
 - i. Word of mouth and sharing of the GSTC Attraction Criteria development news and survey through their newsletters.
 - f. Promotion through webinars

GSTC and invited speakers of the webinars promoted the public consultation of the Attractions Criteria. For the IAAPA Sustainability Webinar, GSTC was invited to speak.

 - i. The IAAPA Sustainability Webinar, with the participation of the CEO of GSTC. IAAPA promoted the 1st Public Consultation during the webinar and later sent out an email with more details to all attendees⁵.
 - ii. "Attractions' Collective Journey to Sustainability: Insights from The Royal Djurgården Society and Parques Reunidos" – 40 participants
 - iii. "Sustainability in Austria: Leading Projects as Prerequisite for Upcoming Developments" – 21 participants
- 4. Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.
 - a. The GSTC Criteria draft was sent out to the relevant stakeholders. Data collection took place from January 20th to March 29th from the following respondent profiles: language and digital barriers, limited access to location/ resources (for example remote areas and lack of human resource), linguistic barriers.
 - b. Interviews through emails and telephone calls were conducted. Several interview attempts were made but poor internet connection and lack of human resource available in these organizations have limited the collection of responses.
 - c. Adjustments had to be made in the methodology of collecting data: to focus on those organizations who were active in giving feedback.

D. Responses received

1. 112 responses through Survey Monkey (Annex D for list of respondents)

⁵ The webinar was hosted and organized by IAAPA. GSTC was the presenter. Therefore the attendee number is not known.

- a. GSTC and external experts assessed that the number of responses was sufficient to revise the draft of the Criteria meaningfully.
 - b. 33% were from the Attractions industry. Respondents not falling within the 33% were national tourism boards or organisations overseeing attractions, which could be regarded as attractions. GSTC assessed that the responses from these organizations are meaningful and necessary, because of the similarities of destination and attraction.
 - c. By affiliation (Annex A for list of affiliations):
 - i. Travel & Tourism Industry - private enterprise 30.1%;
 - ii. Non-Profit Organization (NPO) or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) 25.6%;
 - iii. Government agency (national, provincial, municipal and other) 6.8%;
 - iv. Destination Management Organizations 3.8%;
 - v. Consultancy 18%;
 - vi. Certification Body 4.5%;
 - vii. Academia 11.3%.
2. 17 comprehensive responses were received using Word file (Annex E)
- a. The Attraction Criteria draft version was sent to the respondents with a separate answer sheet. By using an answer sheet and not the survey monkey, respondents could discuss internally offline or online and provide answers that are from the organization's perspective. This approach was well appreciated by organisations because they had time to reflect on the criterion and indicator.
 - b. Organizations (or experts from the organization) including FORREC⁶, ECPAT⁷, Green Star Hotel Certification, Royal Djurgården Society, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee (ICTC), Roundtable for Human Rights, Royal Caribbean Group, Mandai Wildlife Group, Singapore Tourism Board, The Blue Lagoon Island, World Wide Fund, University of Caribe, U.S. National Park Service and the Disadvantaged Groups have provided answers after discussing it internally within the organization.
3. GSTC has reached out to internationally recognized organizations for each of the sections B, C, and D. The organizations that were reached out to were:
- a. Section B: Roundtable for Human Rights and ECPAT

⁶ Shortened version of "for recreation". FORREC designs and plans theme parks, water parks, resorts, retail and mixed use developments and visitor attractions around the world.

⁷ ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations that works to end the sexual exploitation of children

- b. Section C: ICOMOS ICTC
- c. Section D: World Wide Fund

The organizations have provided very thorough input reflecting on their expertise and professions.

E. Summary of key findings (Annexes E and F for screenshots)

1. The summary under this section are extracts of key findings from the survey responses collected. The technical team will review all feedback received in their review of the draft criteria.
 - a. Definition of an Attraction (current draft: A Tourist Attraction is a place of interest that is owned and/or managed by an identifiable entity for the purposes of attracting visitors, operating and delivering services and/or experiences including but not limited to recreation, leisure, natural, historical, cultural, educational or religious experiences):
 - i. Suggestion: To add “primary” before “purposes of attracting” – i.e., A Tourist Attraction is a place of interest for the primary purpose of attracting visitors. ...
 - ii. Suggestion: To clarify meaning "identifiable entity" and provide further understanding of ownership and management structures.
 - b. Definition of Stakeholders of an attraction (current draft: All individuals, groups or entities that are affected by the operations of the attraction, including visitors, local community, staff, suppliers, tenants, sponsors, and owners).
 - i. Suggestion: To more clearly define the groups regarded as stakeholders by adding the underlined aspects: All individuals, groups or entities that are affected and/or have an interest in the operations and activities of the attraction, including visitors, local community, staff, suppliers, tenants, sponsors, government/local authorities, investors, and owners.
 - ii. To define the boundary of a stakeholder, whether they should be individuals/organizations only “affected by” or “with an interest in” parties.
 - c. Sections
 - i. Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management
 - A3 Reporting and Communication to add: Communication is regularly maintained between the attraction and the stakeholders.
 - A7 Location, buildings and infrastructure. If the attraction is an amusement park, to clarify how best to align with integrity and capacity evaluation. GSTC to give examples or state how to align with international (national) standards or globally accepted guidelines.

- ii. Section B: Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts
 - B1 Community Support: Initiatives and activities should be strategic and relevant to the attraction’s impact on the community. This is only partly reflected in the current draft and some project examples may not fit certain attractions – e.g., projects addressing the impacts of climate change may not be relevant to all attractions as it may not be a main impact. Instead, a risk-based assessment with corresponding mitigation should be implemented to ensure effectiveness.
 - Suggestion to rephrase B1 and include “the organization engages” rather than “organization actively supports”. The word engagement is more related to interaction and should be reflected in the Criteria.
 - iii. Section C: Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts
 - Suggestion to include in the title text: Protect, stimulate and enhance the relevance of cultural heritage for the wellbeing of communities and visitors.
 - C1.5 Inappropriate interaction in general should not happen – not only with children. Suggestion to adapt the indicator accordingly, e.g. “Measures are in place to avoid culturally inappropriate interaction, especially with vulnerable groups including children.”
 - iv. Section D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts
 - Suggest to change D3.5.5: If any, all living specimens of wild animals must be acquired in line with national and international (incl. CITES) species conservation regulations.
 - Further suggestions: If any, all living specimens of wild animals must be acquired from certified second generation-born breeding stock in human care in line with national and international (incl. CITES) species conservation regulations.
2. Response from the Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. (Annex G for the list of Disadvantaged Group)
- a. To delve into the active respondents, interviews were conducted based on the stakeholders opinion on the overall Criteria draft, their strategies in moving forward in sustainability, their suggestions to add or change any criterion or indicator. Some key responses were:
 - i. Criterion A3. Reporting and communication could be improved in terms of the use and displays of social media platforms and websites. Well thought-out pages to display information and make it easily accessible for tourists would be an example to include. (*The Eco Retreat Limited Consultation*).

- ii. A criterion for mentoring programs to the local people could be added. Not just a one-time training, but to train them as professionals, especially regarding their destination. (*The Ecotourism and Sustainable Society of Nigeria*).
- iii. Organizations that speak to a small island or ecolodge as an attraction have paid particular attention to section C. Reading through section C gives the opportunity to review the problems they face. Suggested to add “respecting the cultural heritage of the communities that an attraction is involved with”.
- iv. Overall, the Criteria draft is comprehensive and may serve as a good tool to educate staff and tourists, but it is hard to achieve for small organizations facing a lack of financial, technical, and human resources.

ANNEX A.

A-1. Survey Monkey: Attraction Criteria first public consultation



The screenshot shows the top of a SurveyMonkey survey page. At the top left is the GSTC logo (Global Sustainable Tourism Council). At the top right is an 'Exit' button. Below the header is a green bar with the text 'GSTC Attraction Criteria first public consultation'. Underneath is a yellow bar with the text '1. Introduction to the public consultation for GSTC Attraction Criteria'. The main content area contains the following text:

HAVE YOUR SAY!
The Global Sustainable Tourism Council is in the process of developing a set of criteria for the Attraction sites and businesses. The aim of this first public consultation is to gather comments and feedback on the relevance on the GSTC Attraction Criteria draft v.1.106.

Four workshops in 2022 and 2023 were held to gather the opinions and check the relevance of the GSTC-I Criteria and GSTC-D Criteria to the Attraction sites and businesses. After successfully completing the workshops and compiling the data, the GSTC Technical Team has created the first draft for the Attraction criteria and indicators by adopting and adapting the feedback collected and adding to it new criteria and indicators.

In this survey, you will be invited to:

- (1) provide any comments, suggestion and additions on the definition of the Attraction;
- (2) make specific comments to each suggested criterion and/or indicator and indicate any specific points that you feel is missing.

If you would like to add comments to a specific criterion and/or indicator, please enter the criterion identifier that you are referring to (e.g. GSTC-D A7).

[ID2u 2B 2B6O4SFKVmtWLCQ 3D#](#) fer to the GSTC Industry Criteria and GSTC Destination Criteria to compare, please click on the following:

The first public consultation for the GSTC Attraction Criteria used Survey Monkey to reach a wide range of audiences. The intention and aim of the survey was to get qualitative inputs. Respondents were invited to provide comments and suggestions on the criterion/indicator based on its auditability, measurability, and feasibility. Any additions and/or changes to the criterion and the related indicators were welcome.

A-2.

Each criterion and the related indicators were asked to the respondents where they could provide any additions and/or changes.

5. Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management

This section includes 16 criteria and 63 indicators.

A1. Sustainability management plan

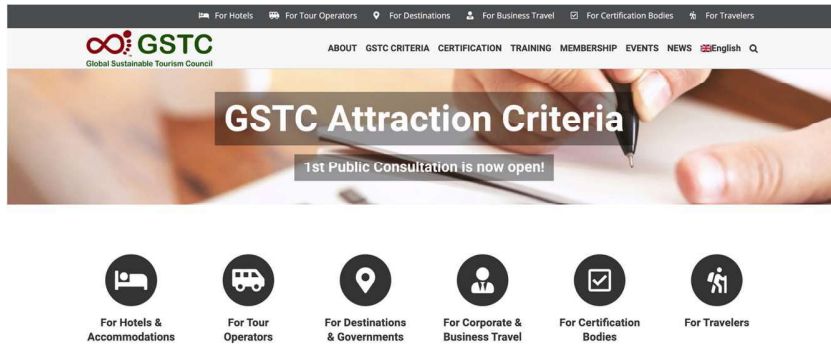
The organization has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its size and scope, addresses environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk, and crisis management issues and drives continuous improvement.

1. The Sustainability Management System is clearly documented.
2. The SM System covers environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health and safety issues.
3. The SM System includes plans to address and manage risks and crisis situations.
4. Documentary evidence shows implementation of the SM system.
5. The SM System includes a process for monitoring continuous improvement in sustainability performance.

10. Do you wish to make any changes or additions to the criterion A1? Please comment here or, if you have no comments, skip to the next.

ANNEX B.

B-1. Homeslider redirecting to the GSTC Attraction Criteria Public Consultation page



B-2. GSTC Attraction Criteria Public Consultation page <https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-attraction-criteria-first-public-consultation-open/>

*The Home Slider in B-1 leads to the above screenshot (B-2.)

The page was also translated into the Spanish language

<https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-attraction-criteria-first-public-consultation-open/?lang=es>

Abierta la Primera Consulta Pública sobre los Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC

El Consejo Global de Turismo Sostenible (GSTC) anunció en abril de 2023 el desarrollo de nuevos conjuntos de criterios, *GSTC MICE Criteria* y *GSTC Attraction Criteria*, con el apoyo del *Singapore Tourism Board STB*.

Los **Criterios MICE del GSTC** (que abarcan eventos, organizadores de eventos y eventos/exposiciones) y los **Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC** pretenden servir como estándares de sostenibilidad global para estas industrias respectivas.



Sign up for our GSTC Monthly Newsletter to receive important updates and opportunities.



Don't forget to join us on social media for the latest news!



Abierta la Primera Consulta Pública sobre los Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC

El primer periodo de consulta pública para los Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC ha comenzado y permanecerá abierto hasta el 15 de marzo de 2024 (60 días). Los profesionales del sector de la atracción están invitados a compartir sus puntos de vista durante la primera fase de consulta pública de los **Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC**.

Los **Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC** incluyen cuatro secciones: Sección A (Demostrar una gestión sostenible eficaz); Sección B (Maximizar los beneficios sociales y económicos para la comunidad local y minimizar los impactos negativos); Sección C (Maximizar los beneficios para el patrimonio cultural y minimizar los impactos negativos) y Sección D (Maximizar los beneficios para el medio ambiente y minimizar los impactos negativos).

Le invitamos a dejar aquí tus comentarios sobre el conjunto de criterios:

[CRITERIOS DE ATRACTIVOS TURÍSTICOS DEL GSTC](#)

[Las respuestas deben enviarse en inglés, pero por favor consulte el borrador de Criterios de Atractivos Turísticos del GSTC en español para apoyo aquí.]

O si prefieres comentar una sección específica en la que te sientas más seguro, haga clic en los siguientes enlaces:

As well as the draft of the Criteria <https://www.gstccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Attraction-Criteria-in-Spanish-Draft-for-the-1st-Public-Consultation.pdf>

Criterios de Atractivos del Consejo Global de Turismo Sostenible

El primer borrador (v1.06) presentado al equipo del GSTC por el Equipo Técnico

Definición de atractivo: un Atractivo Turístico es un lugar de interés que es propiedad y/o está gestionado por una entidad identificable con el fin de atraer visitantes, operar y prestar servicios y/o experiencias, incluyendo, entre otros, experiencias recreativas, de ocio, naturales, históricas, culturales, educativas o religiosas.

Partes interesadas de un atractivo: todas las personas, grupos o entidades que se ven afectados por las operaciones del atractivo, incluidos los visitantes, la comunidad local, el personal, los proveedores, los inquilinos, los patrocinadores y los propietarios.

Equipo: a tiempo completo, a tiempo parcial y temporal, incluidos voluntarios y pasantes empleados o contratados por el atractivo.

ANNEX C. Mailchimp



MEDIA RELEASE

GSTC Attraction Criteria 1st Public Consultation is Now Open



The **Global Sustainable Tourism Council® (GSTC®)** announced in April 2023 the [development of new criteria sets](#), GSTC MICE Criteria and GSTC Attraction Criteria, with support from the Singapore Tourism Board STB.

The **GSTC MICE Criteria** (covering Venues, Event Organizers, and Events/Exhibitions) and **GSTC Attraction Criteria** aim to serve as the global sustainability standards for these respective industries.

The **first public consultation period for the GSTC Attraction Criteria** has begun and will remain open until the 15th of March, 2024 (60 days). Professionals and practitioners in the attraction sector are invited to share insights during the first public consultation phase of the GSTC Attraction Criteria.

The **GSTC Attraction Criteria** includes four sections: Section A (Demonstrate effective sustainable management); Section B (Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts); Section C (Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts) and Section D (Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts).

You are more than welcome to make your comments on the whole criteria set here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9N7FKRT>

GSTC Attraction Criteria Public Consultation is Open

The first public consultation period for the GSTC Attraction Criteria has begun and will remain open until the 15th of March, 2024. Professionals and practitioners in the attraction sector are invited to share insights during the first public consultation phase of the GSTC Attraction Criteria. Share your comments and insights today!



[**Participate now**](#)

ANNEX D. List of respondents to the survey monkey (in alphabetical order)

* the list is not shared publicly

ANNEX E.

Screenshot on comprehensive answers received

SECTION A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management

Do you wish to make any changes or additions to section A? Please comment here or, if you have no comments, skip to the next.

A5 – Visitor Experience

If this point is limited to visitor satisfaction with how the attraction is managing sustainability, that seems fine. But if the concept is larger and includes visitor satisfaction with the quality of the experience, service, or product, that seems beyond the scope of the criteria. “Visitor satisfaction” with the experience shouldn’t be overseen by a set of sustainability criteria. The determination of visitor satisfaction with an experience is determined by a complex interaction of visitor expectations, the delivery of the experience, the actions of the staff, and so on. Attractions that deliver high visitor satisfaction will be successful, and those that don’t will not be viable over the long term. Maybe an attraction can be “sustainable” but deliver low visitor satisfaction.

A7.2.5

“Evidence ~~that of~~ threatened or protected...”

A7.3.4

“Waste from construction is sorted and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner that prioritizes reuse and recycling.”

Do you have any suggestions or additions to make to the criteria and/or indicators that are already included in the section?

ANNEX G.

List of Disadvantaged Group

* the list is not shared publicly