**GSTC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**November 8, 2010**

|  |
| --- |
| **PARTICIPANTS** |
| **Board Members** | **Staff** |
| Kelly Bricker | Erika Harms |
| Luigi Cabrini | Catalina Etcheverry |
| David Owen – invited as guest (UNEP) |  |
| Leilani Latimer |  |
| Charles Arden-Clarke, |  |
| Rick Parnell |  |
| Janice Lichtenwaldt |  |
| Herve Houdre |  |
| Mei Zhang |  |
| Anna Spenceley |  |
| Fabian Roman |  |
| Ronald Sanabria |  |
| Herbert Hamele |  |

***MINUTES***

The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m., Eastern time, and explained that the primary purposes of the meeting were to: (1) discuss and come to a decision on the Branding and Communications recommendations provided by the sub-committee; (2) provide an update on the accreditation process and endorsement of accreditation manual and business plan; (3) discuss the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GPST); (4) discuss working group procedures and compositions; (5) provide a staffing update; and (6) provide an update on remaining board seats and advisory board.

1. **Discussion of the Branding and Communications Guidelines**

The Chair of the Communications Working Group, Richard Edwards, was not present. In his absence, Erika opened the discussion noting that during the last Board call it was agreed to form a sub-committee to discuss the branding and communications guidelines for the GSTC. The sub-committee was composed of Amos Bien, Leilani Latimer, Richard Edwards, Erika Harms, Ronald Sanabria and Shannon Stowell. They convened telephonically in early October, with the exception of Shannon who later provided written input. The group discussed the issues of how do we use the GSTC logo and allow members to communicate their relationship with the GSTC without affecting the accreditation component.

They raised the following main issues:

* The danger of miscommunication GSTC membership versus GSTC accreditation
* The challenge of controlling the misuse of the GSTC logo and members misrepresenting their relationship to the GTSC
* The importance of making a distinction between the accreditation seal and member logo
* The need to position and create a market for the GSTC accredited product by elaborating a distinct accreditation seal

The sub-committee’s recommendations were as follows:

* We should have a GSTC member logo, a GSTC institutional logo and a GSTC accreditation seal.
* The GSTC member logo should state member on it; a disclaimer noting that it does not institute accreditation should be developed.
* The accreditation seal must be re-designed and should be distinct from the member logo but should maintain the same look and feel so that a relationship is identified between the two.
* Particular language and communication related to membership relationship to the GSTC must be developed for the logo and seal with input from the communications working group and the legal firm.

After Erika briefed the members on the sub-committee’s recommendations, the Board members raised their concerns or recommendations as follows:

* The experience of UNWTO in controlling the use of its institutional logo versus the use of the affiliate member logo was highlighted. The GSTC should acknowledge the difficulties that it will experience controlling its logo use
* The disclaimer should clearly define or distinguish the meaning of a member adopting the criteria. Members may communicate to their constituencies that they are in compliance with the GSTC but what does that mean and how can we prevent false claims?
* The example of Green Building Council [www.gbc.org](http://www.gbc.org) was highlighted. The GBC has a similar logo to the LEED certification logo. The goal of being a GBC member is about supporting the process of reaching LEED certification. This is a good example on how GBC distinguishes its member logo from LEED- through the process and messaging to members.

Following discussion, the Directors:

***RESOLVED*** *to continue with the process of having an institutional logo, a member logo and an accreditation seal with the characteristics recommended by the sub-committee; and*

***RESOLVED*** *to continue working with ISM to create the accreditation seal at an additional cost*

1. **Update on the accreditation process and endorsement of accreditation manual and business plan**

The accreditation WG Chair was not present at the meeting. Accreditation WG members were invited to provide their input and comments

Erika explained that the accreditation manual had been reviewed various times by the working group; it underwent public consultation and gathered feedback from the piloting of the accreditation manual. Once the technical manager is on board he/she will introduce the necessary changes to the manual. The accreditation standard will be based on the global sustainable tourism criteria. To be compliant with ISEAL, the GSTC will go through the criteria revision. This may entail further changes to the standard. Once the accreditation program is completed the first year will be dedicated to piloting the manual. The GSTC will work with 4 programs to define issues regarding how much we can charge and to ways in which we can improve the program. These certification programs have not been selected; they will be recommended by the accreditation program.

On the business plan side, Richard Bradley has done a great job in developing a model that meets our particular characteristics to ensure that the GSTC maintains control over the criteria but that we receive appropriate guidance in the process. The model is cognizant that we will work with national accreditation programs; it is feasible and financially viable for the GSTC to undertake.

The discussion that followed regarding the accreditation process focused on these issues.

* The deviation between the criteria and the accreditation standards and the percentage of compliance certification programs had to reach in order to become GSTC accredited

In response, Erika with the input of Ronald Sanabria, member to the accreditation WG responded as follows:

* The GSTC expects certification programs to reach 100% compliance with the accreditation program’s standard. However, the way these programs demonstrate their compliance will vary. For examples, if a certification program is compliant with their local law on labor requirements that would be sufficient to comply with the criteria on labor standards.
* The GSTC will have to come up with a way to verify that a program’s standard is in full compliance with the GSTC. Some of the requirements will need to be spelled out to ensure that these programs are in full compliance and when changes are introduced into the certification programs procedures and standards, they should be allowed enough time to adjust to the GSTC.
* We further clarified that the Council does not accredit businesses. The GSTC will accredit the certification programs that certify hotels and TOs. Certification Programs will be responsible for justifying why a criterion is not applicable to their program certifying TOs for instance.

Following discussion, the Directors:

***RESOLVED*** *to proceed with the recommendation to endorse, in principle, the accreditation manual with the understanding it will undergo changes based on the review process of the GSTC criteria in the next few months.*

***RESOLVED*** *to unanimously support the recommendations from the accreditation committee for the accreditation manual and the accreditation business plan*

1. **Discussion on the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism**

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism was born from the International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development (ITF-STD). Lead by UNEP and the Government of France, this initiative, currently established as a UNEP project, is intended to continue and expand the activities undertaken under the Marrakesh Process.

The purpose of this discussion is to understand the differences and similarities between the GSTC and the GPST. As per the GSTC Business Plan and the competitive analysis, the GPST is an entity we would collaborate with if studied carefully. On the other hand, it could create confusion and become a competitor to the GSTC.

Charles referred to the one pager on the GPST-GSTC differences that was distributed to the Board and noted that there is an understanding that these two initiatives have to be clear on what each does and should highlight areas of distinction and similarities. He noted that the discussion thus far has been between UNEP and Erika.

The main differences were highlighted as follows:

* GPST is focused on the public sector and is geared more towards developing and supporting joint projects on sustainable tourism around the world
* GPST has a set of policy recommendations resulting from the task force to help design and implement policies for sustainable tourism. As a result of this process, governments are demanding these policies through the GPST.
* GSTC is more focused on the private sector with the objective of broadly raising awareness on sustainable tourism with a strong focus on market access and accreditation.

In terms of the relationship between both initiatives, Charles noted that the GSTC would be a member to the GPST. The GSTC would not be considered as an arm of the GPST. The GSTC would be an organization under the umbrella of the GPST that would conduct activities that would contribute to the mission of promoting sustainable tourism worldwide. GPST will use the criteria as the global definition used for sustainable tourism.

The discussion was open to questions and answers. The following concerns were raised:

* The two organizations are competing for PS membership and recognition
* The name GPST is similar to the Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria which becomes confusing from a communications perspective
* There isn’t a clear mission statement for the GPST which clearly defines its focus and mandate working with governments to distinguish it from the GSTC
* We have been advocating for a common framework for sustainable tourism with the GSTC but now with the introduction of a common partnership this raises confusion
* The GPST has made a proactive approach to the PS which has raised questions and confusion amongst GSTC PS members.
* There is a lack of coordinated effort reaching out to the PS

**Recommendations**

* The GSTC offers a pool of PS members and could be a feeder organization for the implementation of GPST projects on the ground that may need PS engagement. Is there opportunity for the GSTC and GPST to collaborate on this level?
* The GSTC should become a member of the GPST and become actively engaged on the advisory or steering committee; this will enable the GSTC to bring the PS voice actively to the table.
* Can the GPST reconsider changing their name and improve communication to the general public?
* To clearly define and communicate distinction of both initiative’s missions and mandates to the public

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:30 am Eastern time. At the end of the meeting it was agreed upon that the Board would receive updates on the agenda items that were not covered during this meeting.

1. **Next steps**
* Distribute an outline and timeline on how the communications and branding guidelines and the accreditation seal will be rolled out with ISM
* Within a few months distribute the final accreditation manual and business plan with a fundraising strategy to raise USD100,000 USD.
* The GSTC Secretariat will collect feedback from board members on the GPST-GSTC one pager and put forward as recommendations to the GPST formal agenda. The GPST meeting in Costa Rica will take place the week of December 14th (Erika and Ronald will be attending this meeting)

***SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS***

**GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (GPST)**:

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council was briefed on the differences and similarities between the GSTC and the GPST, with an understanding that these two initiatives have to be clear on what each does and should highlight areas of distinction and similarities:

***BE IT RECOMMENDED to:***

* *Highlight that the GSTC offers a pool of Private Sector (PS) members and could be a feeder organization for the implementation of GPST projects on the ground that may need PS engagement. Identify if there is an opportunity for the GSTC and GPST to collaborate on this level.*
* *The GSTC should become a member of the GPST and become actively engaged on the advisory or steering committee; this will enable the GSTC to bring the PS voice actively to the table.*
* *Identify if the GPST could reconsider changing their name and improve communication to the general public*
* *Clearly define and communicate distinction of both initiative’s missions and mandates to the public*

***SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS***

**BRANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES**:

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council discussed the recommendations on branding and communications guidelines for the GSTC as outlined by the Communications sub-committee:

***BE IT RESOLVED*** *to continue with the process of having an institutional logo, a member logo and an accreditation seal with the characteristics recommended by the sub-committee; and*

***BE IT RESOLVED*** *to continue working with ISM to create the accreditation seal at an additional cost*

**UPDATE ON ACCREDITATION PROCESS AND ENDORSEMENT OF ACCREDITATION MANUAL AND BUSINESS PLAN**:

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council was briefed by the Executive Director on the status of the development of the Accreditation Manual and the Business Plan:

***BE IT RESOLVED*** *to proceed with the recommendation to endorse, in principle, the accreditation manual with the understanding it will undergo changes based on the review process of the GSTC criteria in the next few months****.***

***BE IT RESOLVED*** *to unanimously support the recommendations from the accreditation committee for the accreditation manual and the accreditation business plan*