Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

Public Standard-Setting System Report

Version 2.1

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

www.gstcouncil.org

To make comments on this document, please email td@GSTCouncil.org

Document Control

This version of the GSTC P Public Standard-Setting System Report replaces version 1.0 dated 12 December 2013.

This version includes a new format and revised numbering system, the GSTC Criteria Future Directions is added and the work program has been revised.

Contents

1 Introduction

This document describes the goals of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) to establish baseline sustainability criteria for different sectors of the tourist industry and the procedures that it uses to establish the criteria. The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria can be found at www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria.html. Additional background documents can be found at www.gstcouncil.org/resource-center.html.

2 Scope

2.1 GSTC standards currently in operation and approved

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has developed two standards to date:

> The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators (GSTC-HTO)
> Version 1: October 2008
> Version 2: March 2012
> The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D)
> Version 1: November 2013

2.2 Why and how these standards were developed

The **GSTC Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators (GSTC-HTO)** were developed because there are more than 140 different sustainable tourism standards in the world, no mechanism for harmonizing them, and different certification and verification procedures for each. Consequently there was little consumer recognition and confidence in these standards, no guarantee that they measured similar attributes, and complaints by hotels and tour operators that they were being asked to comply with different standards and had few tools for evaluating each standard and certification system. There was also concern that a number of standards evaluate only environmental aspects and do not address the social, cultural, and economic effects of tourism, both positive and negative.

A consortium of major organizations under the auspices of the United Nations developed a neutral platform to establish common ground among all the existing standards and international guidelines, incorporated and consulted stakeholders from the private sector (small, medium, and large businesses), social and environmental organizations, indigenous and community groups, and the public. Every effort was made to ensure that developed and developing countries were involved in the consultation process. There were four rounds of public consultation over an 18-month period in several languages, and outreach to every continent. The first version of the Criteria was released in October 2008. After two years of additional open consultation, the criteria were revised in 2011. An additional round of public consultation on the suggested changes took place in 2011-12, and the second version of the Criteria was released in March 2012.

The need for the **Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D)** was determined in late 2009 by the Destination Stewardship Think Tank co-convened by Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines and Sustainable Travel International. As a result, the GSTC Destination Working Group (the "Destinations WG") was formed in February 2010. The methodology for the development of the GSTC-D was approved by the Working Group in July 2011, informed by ISEAL guidelines for the development of social and environmental standards.

A working draft of criteria and related performance indicators was proposed in October 2011, incorporating the shared principles from over 37 destination guidelines and standards from around the world. The GSTC Destinations and International Standards Working Groups (WGs) reviewed the draft and submitted recommendations to the GSTC Board, which approved draft 1 of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D) on 7 March 2012, The criteria were subsequently submitted to a public consultation from 2 April – 4 August 2012 in English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, German, Catalan, and Russian, and they were pilot tested in six Early Adopter destinations in North America, Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and Asia between May and August 2012. The Draft 1 criteria were revised to incorporate the comments received from the consultation and from the early adopters. All comments were reviewed and addressed, although not necessarily adopted.

Draft 2 was approved by the GSTC Destinations and International Standards WGs in October 2012 and approved by the Board in November. Draft 2 was published for public consultation from December 1, 2012 to April 15, 2013 in English, Spanish, and Mandarin, as very few comments were received to the first survey in other languages. A second round of early adopters was used to evaluate the Draft 2 criteria and indicators between March and August 2013. Once again, every comment and suggestion was evaluated, and Draft 3 of the criteria, incorporating the results of the second public consultation and the second round of early adopters, was submitted to the Destinations WG in September 2013. After incorporating the recommendations of the WG, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D) were approved by the GSTC Board on 31 October 2013.

2.3 Terms of reference - for recent or current standards development activity

2.3.1 GSTC-D

Propose a compact and simple set of criteria and indicators for sustainable tourism at a destination level for immediate worldwide general application in most destination types but also including selected subsets (i.e. indicators should be added for specific types of destinations such as small islands, small park related gateway communities, and small urban destinations) based on the UNWTO indicators and other widely accepted principles and guidelines, certification criteria and indicators.

Propose a complete set of baseline criteria and indicators for destinations based on:

- the compact set of criteria;
- the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria;
- certification standards, indicators, criteria, and best practices from around the world; and

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- input from standards from other industries as necessary

2.4 Social, environmental and economic objectives of each standard

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations were conceived as the beginning of a process to make sustainability the standard practice in all forms of tourism.

Some of the expected uses of the criteria for hotels and tour operators (GSTC-HTO) include the following:

- Serve as basic guidelines for businesses of all sizes to become more sustainable, and help businesses choose sustainable tourism programs that fulfil these global criteria;
- Serve as guidance for travel agencies in choosing suppliers and sustainable tourism programs;
- Help consumers identify sound sustainable tourism programs and businesses;
- Serve as a common denominator for information media to recognize sustainable tourism providers;
- Help certification and other voluntary programs ensure that their standards meet a broadly-accepted baseline;
- Offer governmental, non-governmental, and private sector programs a starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements; and
- Serve as basic guidelines for education and training bodies, such as hotel schools and universities.

Some of the expected uses of the destinations criteria (GSTC-D) include the following:

- Serve as basic guidelines for destinations which wish to become more sustainable;
- Help consumers identify sound sustainable tourism destinations;
- Serve as a common denominator for information media to recognize destinations and inform the public regarding their sustainability;
- Help certification and other voluntary destination level programs ensure that their standards meet a broadly-accepted baseline;
- Offer governmental, non-governmental, and private sector programs a starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements; and
- Serve as basic guidelines for education and training bodies, such as hotel schools and universities.

The criteria indicate what should be done, not how to do it or whether the goal has been achieved. This role is fulfilled by performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation from public, NGO and private sector providers all of which are an indispensable complement to the Destination Level Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.

The criteria, in all cases, are designed to ensure that there are specific performance-based criteria, as well as a sustainability management system to ensure that the performance benchmarks continue to be met over time.

The specific objectives are to:

GSTC-HTO – oriented towards managing the actions that are under the control of a single enterprise

A. Demonstrate effective sustainable management.
B. Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts.
C. Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts.
D. Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts.
   D1   Conserving resources
   D2   Reducing pollution
   D3   Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes

GSTC-D – oriented towards managing the cumulative impacts in the destination as a whole

A. Demonstrate sustainable management of the destination.
B. Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts.
C. Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; and minimize negative impacts.
D. Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts.

2.5 Sustainability issues addressed in each standard

The criteria address environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, health and safety issues in both the sustainability management system and in the performance-based criteria. Legal compliance is required with all applicable local to international legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labour and environmental aspects).

Some specific issues addressed are:

• Training of all personnel
• Measuring and addressing customer satisfaction
• Planning, design, construction, renovation, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure
• Land and water rights, and property acquisition are legal, comply with local communal and indigenous rights, including their free, prior and informed consent, and do not require involuntary resettlement.
• Social and cultural interpretation and codes of conduct, particularly with respect to indigenous communities.
• Labor rights of employees and equal opportunities for employment, training, and advancement of disadvantaged groups.
• Access for all, including those with disabilities.
• Opportunities for local small entrepreneurs to participate in the supply chain.
• Protection of cultural heritage, including living cultures and their knowledge, customs, and traditional rights; as well as historical, sacred, and archaeological sites.
• Protection of traditional livelihoods and access to sites of importance.

- In environmental aspects, ensuring sustainable consumption, minimizing and properly treating solid and liquid wastes, reducing greenhouse gas and other emissions, and protecting biodiversity.

Many other specific issues are addressed within these categories.

2.6 Future work program

in mid 2015 the GSTC adopted strategic directions for criteria development, this is found at Appendix A.

The GSTC vision is to have three sustainable tourism criteria:

- GSTC – Country
- GSTC – Destinations
- GSTC – Industry (Sectors)
  - And detailed indicators for tourism industry sectors (based on GSTC – Industry) e.g. GSTC – Hotels and Tour Operators, GSTC – MICE, GSTC-Attractions, etc etc.

The GSTC adopted three key strategies:

- **GSTC – Industry:** Amend the GSTC HTO to encompass all tourism enterprises and create a specific set of indicators for each sector (initial sector Hotels and Tour Operators).
- **GSTC – Country:** Commence developing a new GSTC – Country.
- Developing new indicators for new sector(s).

The current program (subject to change and available resources):

- GSTC-Industry (includes revision of GSTC HTO v2.0)
  - Initial Consultation   Dec 2015-Feb 2016
  - Draft Criteria Consultation   May-June 2016
  - GSTC-Industry Adopted   July 2016
- GSTC-Country (new criteria)
  - Initial Consultation   March-April 2016
  - Draft Criteria Consultation   July-August 2016
  - GSTC-Industry Adopted   September 2016
- GSTC-Destinations
  - Criteria review and revision planned for 2017

3 Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 Stakeholder mapping

Maps were developed of interested stakeholders, based on knowledge of those sectors that are influenced or potentially influenced by tourism activities in their communities and regions. Input into the mapping process was requested from GSTC member organizations, as well as other social and environmental organizations and United Nations programs. A particular effort was made to use organizations that work with indigenous and community-based tourism to contact their bases, especially those without normal access to Internet, in order to receive their input. The consultation process used United Nations programs and other international organizations to locate interested stakeholders in all regions of the world. Consultations were conducted on every continent and in the principal languages used in the world, including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, German, Arabic, and Russian.

3.2 Stakeholder participation, comments, and responses

Stakeholders were informed of the development of the standards -- including the justification, draft criteria, and objectives -- through press releases, UN organizations and local NGOs, seminars and workshops, and direct contact with key organizations with large international networks. All interested parties were invited to participate in online surveys of each criterion or to submit comments by e-mail, through their local organizations, or in print. Workshops were held around the world for the hotel and tour operator criteria, while for the destination criteria pilot-testing was held in 11 destinations on every continent; in developed and developing countries; in urban, rural, and natural areas; ecotourism and mass tourism destinations; and in small island countries. In each case, in-person meetings were held with representatives of all stakeholder groups in the destination.

Every comment was addressed, and resolved as accepted, rejected (with justification), or partially accepted. The origin of each comment was maintained throughout the processes, in order to communicate the results to the participants.

3.3 Complaints and appeals

The complaints procedure is outlined in the document "GSTC procedures for developing global criteria for a sustainable tourism sector", found on the GSTC website resource center, section 4. Specifically:

4.1. Appeals, complaints, or objections (hereafter called "appeals") may be made by any interested party to either procedures and criteria, at any time

4.2. Appeals shall be submitted in writing, by e-mail or any other form, to the GSTC Secretariat.

4.3. All appeals on standards development procedures or criteria will be referred in the first instance to the International Standards Working Group, which shall emit a resolution within 60 days .

4.4. If the appellant wishes to pursue a second instance, the appeal will be referred to the GSTC Board of Directors, which will appoint an ad hoc or permanent appeals panel to respond within 90 days.

No complaints were received during the process of GSTC-D and GSTC-HTO version 2. For version 1 of the GSTC-HTO criteria, direct outreach was made to the only group that objected to the procedures by a number of personal meetings, exchanges of e-mail, and publishing a detailed explanation of the procedures used to develop the criteria. No further objections were received from this group.

4 Standards Development

The process for developing a GSTC standard is outlined in the document "GSTC procedures for developing global criteria for a sustainable tourism sector", found on the GSTC website resource center. The procedure follows these general steps:

- Assessment by the GSTC board, membership, and working groups of the need for developing a new standard for a sector of the tourist industry. Among the justifications to date have been:
- Multiplicity of standards in the marketplace
- Lack of consensual guidelines for sustainability in an industry sector
- Existing standards that consider only a small subset of sustainability criteria (e.g. environmental only)
- Demand by principal actors for a common set of criteria
- Evaluation of the existing standards and guidelines for the sector and related activities
- Issuing a public announcement of the initiation of the process and inviting comments
- Developing terms of reference and contracting a technical consultant to lead the process
- Compilation of the criteria for all known standards and guidelines for the sector and related activities to determine common elements
- Presenting preliminary results(a draft set of criteria) to the GSTC working groups of experts, as well as outside experts in the sector
- Refining the draft criteria and field testing them, along with potential performance indicators
- Submitting the draft criteria to public consultation using a web-based survey in multiple languages and direct outreach to likely interested parties. Inviting direct comments by e-mail or on paper and in workshops.
- Conducting field testing in parallel in a variety of sites, chosen to maximize geographic, cultural, and economic diversity. Each field test included testing the criteria and potential indicators, mapping and meeting with local stakeholders, and receiving comments in person or subsequently.
- Compiling all comments and responding to each by accepting it, rejecting it with justification, or partially accepting the comment.

- Submitting a new draft to the GSTC secretariat, expert working groups, and board for additional comments.
- Submitting the new draft criteria for public comment in those languages in which significant comments were received for the first survey.
- Repeating steps 9, 10, and 11.
- Submitting the final draft criteria the GSTC secretariat, expert working groups, and board for approval.
- Publication of the criteria in multiple languages.
- Continued field testing of performance indicators.
- Publication of suggested performance indicators, inviting comment on them, and indicating that they will be updated periodically as new information is received.
- Establishing a permanent online survey of the criteria for future revisions.

5 Structure of the Standards

5.1 Basic structure

All GSTC standards are structured with a preface that explains the objectives of the standard, possible uses, and how to determine which criteria may not be applicable under given conditions. Adaptation of the criteria to local conditions and industry sectors is encouraged.

The criteria themselves express principles, under four general categories: sustainability management, socioeconomic impacts, cultural impacts, and environmental impacts. Each criterion is divided into verifiable statements that form the benchmarking criteria for evaluating outside standards.

Suggested performance indicators and guidance are also published for each criterion, although these do not undergo a formal stakeholder evaluation process and are not considered part of the standard per se. The performance indicator sets are designed to be constantly updated as new information and innovations arise.

5.2 Determining whether an outside standard is aligned with the GSTC Criteria set

The GSTC criteria sets are intended to be used to harmonize and evaluate standards developed by other standardization bodies, enterprises, or certification schemes. They may be considered "meta-standards" with which other standards should be unilaterally aligned (i.e. the outside standard should contain more, but not fewer, criteria than the GSTC criteria). The criterion set is explicitly designed to be the minimum, not the maximum, that a standard for that industry sector should comply with to approach sustainability. A standard that is determined by the GSTC to be unilaterally aligned with the GSTC Criteria is "recognized" as equivalent and can be used for certification or verification processes that can potentially be accredited by an outside body and approved by GSTC.

All GSTC criteria sets require compliance with all applicable legislation and international agreements. All standards for international use must be aligned with all criteria. Compliance is

determined by evaluating the equivalence of each criterion of a standard with the corresponding GSTC benchmarking criterion. More than one criterion may be matched to a single GSTC criterion. Equivalence is determined by the expected outcome under local conditions, not equivalent wording.

In some cases, where a national or subnational standard owner demonstrates that a criterion is met within the scope of the standard by local legislation that is rigorously enforced, a standard can be recognized as aligned with the GSTC criteria in the absence of an equivalent criterion in a particular case.

In some cases, a standard owner may justify that a particular criterion is not applicable within the scope of that standard. For example, a standard that is used only for urban hotels in France might be exempt from requiring a code of conduct for interactions with indigenous communities.

The benchmarking matrix is evaluated by an expert chosen by the GSTC Secretariat. An initial evaluation is submitted to the standard owner, who is given the opportunity to respond to possible non-conformities by offering justifications, evaluation procedures that ensure compliance, or modifications to the standard.

Once the standard owner has responded, the equivalence matrix, the Secretariat's findings, and the supporting documentation are submitted to the GSTC Accreditation Panel, which may accept or reject the Secretariat's recommendation for full recognition, conditional recognition (for up to six months and corrective actions), or rejection. This result is then communicated to the standard owner, who must return a signed acceptance letter in the case of recognition. This letter defines the terms and conditions of the recognition.

6 Standards Review and Revision

All the GSTC criteria are available free of charge on the organization's website at www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria.html. They are further distributed by our member organizations (including the UN World Tourism Organization and UNEP), academic institutions, and industry organizations. GSTC staff and members conduct workshops and training in different parts of the world and make the criteria available in both digital and printed formats.

Comments and suggestions are invited on a continuous basis. At present, direct communication to the secretariat focal point by e-mail is invited in the preface to the suggested indicators for each set of criteria (www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-hotels-and-tour-operators.html and www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-destinations.html). By mid-2014, an ongoing web-based survey will be established for each standard. These comments will be used for further revisions of the standards, programmed for three years for the first revision and every five years subsequently. The standard review process follows steps 3-18 of the process described above under Standards Development.

To date, GSTC has evaluated over 30 independent standards for sustainable tourism and has recognized 26 as equivalent. Many of the standards that have been submitted for review, particularly those developed since 2008, are designed to be equivalent to the GSTC Criteria.

7 Membership Criteria and Governance Structure

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council is a membership organization, but membership is not required for requesting the recognition, approval, or accreditation of a sustainable tourism standard or certification process. Working group members must be GSTC members, but this is not a requirement for the independent Accreditation Panel.

Membership requirements are set out at www.gstcouncil.org/participate-in-gstc/gstc-membership-application.html. Membership categories are: travel & tourism industry, certification body, travel & trade association, public authorities, NGOs, academia, individual, intergovernmental organization, and supporting business. Dues are determined by category and annual turnover. The specific requirements for particular categories of members are:

Travel & Tourism Industry members must:

- Have a genuine commitment to continuous improvement on their environmental, social and cultural performance, including active approval and continued commitment at senior management level as demonstrated by a letter of intent signed by a CEO or equivalent decision maker;
- Demonstrate existence of a corporate policy towards sustainable tourism or commit to establishing a policy, aligned with GSTC, within 12 months of joining GSTC, or be certified by a GSTC-accredited body;

Hold appropriate license/registration to operate.

Certification programs, bodies, and standard owners must:

- If the owner of a standard, apply for or achieve Recognition of the standard within 12 months;
- If a certification program or body, apply for or achieve Approval or Accreditation within 12 months;
- If Recognition, Approval, or Accreditation is not achieved, demonstrate significant progress towards correcting non-conformities within 12 months after denial and re-apply;
- Comply with the provisions concerning the use or display of the GSTC name and trademarks.

Non-compliance with the above will result in the loss of membership.

 Public Authorities must:

- Have a commitment to adopt GSTC international criteria, within 24 months, in avenues that promote sustainability measures (i.e., as education- and awareness-raising tools; as

a voluntary standard; as a means to embed GSTC in government-owned certification programs or grading systems);

- Encourage local industry to improve sustainable performance of operations; and
- Incorporate sustainable product offering in marketing efforts.

Intergovernmental Organizations should, where possible:

- Demonstrate a commitment to disseminate information about sustainable tourism and actively promote sustainable tourism criteria; and
- Establish procurement policies using GSTC criteria when relevant.

NGOs must:

- Demonstrate commitment to participate actively to disseminate information about sustainable tourism and promote relevant criteria and research on positive actions to their own member/partner base;
- Demonstrate interest or proven experience in tourism activities; and
- Hold a certificate of incorporation/registration document, articles of incorporation or other documents showing proof of nonprofit status, granted by the government where the nonprofit is located.

Academia must:

- Apply for membership through a nationally accredited public or private academic or research institution[1];
- Agree to utilize or adapt the GSTC educational modules/programs to promote awareness and use of sustainable tourism principles;
- Adhere to best practices and ensure that academic members within the institution meet member obligations;
- Demonstrate the ability to advance the objectives of GSTC through its education network.

Individuals must:

- Be an individual professional managing or engaged in the promotion of sustainable tourism;
- Hold, or have held, a position of responsibility in the tourism industry; and
- Demonstrate a record of significant contributions in tourism activities.

The organization consists of:

- Membership, which elects the board of directors;
- Board of directors, which consists of one member from each continent, at-large members, and two non-voting members (the chair of the Accreditation Panel and an elected representative of the member certification bodies);
- Executive committee, which consists of the board chair, treasurer, and secretary;
- Secretariat: CEO, technical director, administrative assistant, and membership director
- Working groups: Education and Training, Destination Stewardship, International Standards, and Market Access;
- Accreditation Panel: experts in sustainable tourism standardization and conformity assessment

Appendix 1

GSTC Criteria - Future Directions

GSTC Criteria – Future Directions

The Vision
GSTC has three sustainable tourism criteria:
GSTC – Country
GSTC – Destinations
GSTC – Industry (Sectors)
And detailed indicators for tourism industry sectors (based on GSTC – Industry) e.g. GSTC – Hotels and Tour Operators, GSTC – MICE, GSTC–Attractions, etc etc.

Background

The GSTC has established criteria for hotels, tours operators and destinations. There is an opportunity for the GSTC to engage further with stakeholders to develop more criteria for other sectors/dimensions of sustainable tourism. Any criteria development by the GSTC should meet the stakeholder engagement requirements of the ISEAL Standards Setting Code.

This document presents three key strategies:

1. **GSTC – Industry:** Amend the GSTC HTO to encompass all tourism enterprises and create a specific set of indicators for each sector (initial sector Hotels and Tour Operators).
2. **GSTC – Country:** Commence developing a new GSTC – Country.
3. Developing new indicators for new sector(s).

NOTE: ISEAL advises standards be revised no sooner than 3 years and no later than 5 years. Therefore, GSTC–H&TOv2 are due for revision, but GSTC–D are not. Therefore GSTC Destinations Criteria are not due for revision until early 2017 are therefore not included here as a current strategy.

ISEAL Consultation/Process

For background, the development of standards under the ISEAL Standard Setting Code requires the following key tasks:

* Terms of reference (including, need, objectives and risks);
* Public summary of proposed process and work program (published);
* Stakeholder mapping;
* Balance of interests (may need to co–opt ISWG/Task Force members for specific sectors);
* Public consultation (at least 2 rounds, 60 days, meaningful opportunities to contribute by all stakeholders);
* A documented and published process taking comments into account; and
* Decision making clearly set out process (preferably consensus).

NOTE: Clause 5.11.4 requires that any major revisions follow the same process as new standard setting. In other words there is no process benefit to deciding that any scope change of the GSTC criteria is only an "amendment". However, once item 1 above is completed, item 3 (adding indicators for additional sectors will not require the full ISEAL consultation processes).

GSTC – Industry

Expand Scope of GSTC HTO to all Tourism Business

The vision is to slightly modify the current GSTC HTO to become GSTC – Industry, with core criteria addressing all tourism enterprises and amend the Hotel and Tour Operators indicators to include all current HTO aspects. This paves the way for other sectors to have indicators developed within the context of GSTC – Industry.

GSTC HTO is clearly not covering the gamut of tourism. Whilst destinations, as communities with the myriad of stakeholders, governing agencies and tourism enterprises are clearly separate, the GSTC HTO is very close to an all encompassing set of criteria for all tourism enterprises.

NOTE: Many organizations treat the GSTC HTO as all encompassing at present e.g. India has adopted the criteria with little amendment and applied to all tourism. There are a few criteria which will need to be "generalised' to cover other sectors (with the sector specific aspects put into the indicators). TD notes that there are unlikely to be many additional criteria needing development or added.

The GSTC HTO must be revised and amended with the above ISEAL consultation processes within 2 years from now anyhow (23 Feb 2017), and the process takes about year, so needs to start late 2015 at the latest. We can start now. There is an opportunity to use this process to expand the scope of the GSTC HTO to all tourism enterprises. The criteria will be as they are now, essentially overall principles. Then specific indicators for sectors can be developed. As these indicators are guidance we can use the scope expansion of the criteria as a once off to meet the ISEAL standards setting/consultation requirements and use the overall criteria to have more sectors specific indicators (e.g. MICE, Cruise Ships, Events, Attractions/Museums/Conference Centres, Marina's, Airports, Airlines). Sponsor benevolent funding and/or industry group stakeholders can be sought for these sector specific indicator development projects.

In terms of the ISEAL process, a clear needs statement can be developed given the application of GSTC HTO to other sectors by some agencies already!

HOW – It is suggested that the next revision of the GSTC HTO be a stated scope expansion to cover all tourism business (GSTC Industry). That we do this meeting ISEAL code, starting by publishing a needs statement mid this year and having consultation on a draft late this year. TD produces initial draft under guidance of ISWG.

WHO – The ISWG can be convened immediately to start the technical work on this.

WHEN –Starting now and completed by March 2016.

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GSTC – New Sectors

GSTC Industry the basis for Sector Indicators

By developing GSTC – Industry, this would mean that GSTC is only required to meet the full ISEAL three stage and extensive consultation process once and then only need to be repeated in five years time. That we then develop sector specific indicators as guidance and can do this more cost effectively with a simpler process than if we developed sector specific criteria.

We can (concurrently with the above) start to develop specific indicators for additional sectors. This could be surf tourism, cruise ships, attractions (museums, visitor centres), events, convention centres etc.

With the GSTC – Industry being the overall framework, for each sector specific indicators can be readily developed.

We can commence with this as soon as we have some sector specific engagement (as co-opted members of the ISWG and/or a "task force" reporting to the ISWG). A "Task Force" means we can engage stakeholders into the process without demanding they join GSTC (ISWG members must be GSTC members).

The cost of developing new indicators can be relatively modest for some technical drafting work (by the Technical Director or others) and analysis/reporting of consultation results. The consultation is essentially done via pages on our website and social media, if we wish to cover multiple languages (for our advisements/draft criteria/indicators and interpreting/reporting on consultation comments) either pro-bono translation or sponsorship may be required.

HOW– We can commence with this as soon as we have the GSTC – Industry and some sector specific engagement (as co-opted members of the ISWG and/or a "task force" reporting to the ISWG). A "Task Force" means we can engage stakeholders into the process without demanding they join GSTC (ISWG members must be GSTC members).

WHO – Sector specific Task Force with co-opted sector specific stakeholders alongside ISWG.

WHEN – Mid 2016 onwards.

GSTC – Country

We have had many approaches at the national level, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, Indonesia etc. These tend to look at the destination standard, however we could do a modified version of the destination standard which is at the "state" or national level (using "state" and in some larger commonwealths it may be applied to a multi-destination state or province, as well as at the whole of nation level). There will be increased emphasis on institutional arrangements, statutory and policy aspects.

Whilst UNWTO has some guidelines, there are no criteria specific to the Country level for sustainable tourism. Using the same four themes as the GSTC Destinations and a similar framework drafting an initial set of criteria for consultation is straight forward.

The framework will be to use the GSTC – D four themes:
- Demonstrate effective sustainable management
- Maximize economic benefits and minimise negative impacts
- Maximize benefits to communities, visitors and culture and minimize negative impacts
- Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts

We will develop nation level criteria to address the key issues aspects. There will be increased emphasis on institutional arrangements, statutory and policy. Economic and policy incentives toward sustainability such as taxation/duties, as well as regulation will be addressed. Links to international agreements (e.g. world heritage and ILO) will be included. Capacity building and industry/community and government partnerships will be included. Specific consideration of small nations and small island states will be able to be addressed by specific indicators.

We know a range of stakeholders we could co-opt into a Task Force for this, including Botswana, Indonesia, Mexico, Ecuador and many others.

HOW – We announce the intention now, seeking input and seeking stakeholders who wish involvement. We appoint Task Force to work alongside ISWG.

AGM WORKSHOP – We use the forthcoming AGM to run a half day workshop on "Best Practice" Sustainable Tourism at the National level – toward GSTC Country"

WHO – The ISWG can be convened immediately to start the initial work on this. After initial consultation Task Force will be convened to bring in many national level stakeholders.

WHEN –Starting now and completed by Mid 2016.

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