GSTC Strategic Plan 2019

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is a global, multi-stakeholder membership organization dedicated to setting baseline sustainability standards for travel and tourism and promoting their widespread application.

Born as a strategic coalition of partners the UN Foundation, UN Environment (formerly UNEP), the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and Rainforest Alliance, supported by many others, the GSTC brings together businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, individuals and communities engaged in and striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism. The GSTC promotes education, understanding and adoption of global sustainable tourism practices.

At the core of its work are the GSTC Criteria, which are developed and periodically revised via extensive public consultation, striving to adhere to the Standards-Setting Code of the ISEAL Alliance. The Accreditation Program is designed to adhere to the Assurance Code and Impacts Code of the ISEAL Alliance.

Vision: Tourism fulfills its potential as a vehicle for social, cultural, and economic good while removing and avoiding any negative impacts from its activities in terms of environmental and social impacts.

Mission: To be an agent of change in the world of sustainable travel and tourism by fostering the increased knowledge, understanding, adoption and demand for sustainable tourism practices.

GSTC Criteria: The GSTC Criteria provide globally-applicable guiding principles. They serve as the basis of GSTC activities. There are two sets of criteria: GSTC Industry for the private sector and Destination Criteria for the public sector. GSTC Industry serves as an umbrella set of Criteria that guide separate subsector Criteria. These criteria represent the minimum requirements necessary for any travel and tourism businesses and destinations to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation.

2019 Strategic Plan

Overview: GSTC will continue to promote the widespread application of the GSTC Criteria as global standards for sustainable travel and tourism. Sustainable procurement of travel products and services by businesses of all types is now available due the development from 2016 of GSTC-Accreditation of Certification Bodies which allows for sustainable-labeling of certified travel products.

Activities undertaken by the organization in 2019 will be designed to support one or more of the following strategic goals:

Strategic Goals	Key Activities to support the goals
1. Maintain the GSTC Criteria for relevance to current market conditions	a) Revise the GSTC Destination Criteria in compliance with the Standards-Setting Code of the ISEAL Alliance
2. Encourage sustainable procurement based on certified sustainable travel product	a) Publish directories of hotels/ accommodations, tour operators, and destinations certified sustainable by GSTC-Accredited CBs including by OTA's/Online Travel Agencies b) Promote the preferential B2B procurement based on eco-labeling of products certified by GSTC-Accredited Certification Bodies c) Encourage hotel chains to include 3rd-party certification as a component of the top tier of their internal sustainability programs
3. Be an advocate for more sustainable tourism public-sector tourism policies and destination management	a) Raise awareness of the need for public sector resources sufficient for sustainable development, planning, product development, and destination management b) Leverage the expertise of the GSTC membership network to support public sector destination management and policy-makers c) Provide candid assessments of sustainable destination management practices where our expertise is invited
4. Raise awareness and education levels of all travel and tourism players of sustainable tourism	a) Encourage the widespread usage of the GSTC Criteria for training and awareness-raising b) Continue to grow the GSTC Sustainable

concepts	Tourism Training Program (STTP) to provide more access to more tourism players
5. Maintain credibility of the GSTC framework to maximize its utilization	Adhere to the ISEAL Assurance Code
6. Provide tools for measurement and reporting of impacts from application of the GSTC Criteria	Adhere to the ISEAL Impacts Code and encourage the same throughout the travel and tourism industry
7. Operate one global conference and one or more regional-international conferences to raise awareness of the breadth of sustainability to broader groups of stakeholders	a) Promote and execute GSTC2019 Global Sustainable Tourism Conference in the Azores, Portugal December 4-7 b) Promote and execute the 2019 GSTC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand February 27-March 1
8. Ensure the organization's operational sustainability through good governance and reliable income sources	a) Members are engaged such that membership fees continue to grow b) Programs are well-managed and provide value and relevance to stakeholders

Organizational Structure

The GSTC is a membership-based, not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, which represents diverse stakeholders in tourism. Its organization and activities are guided by By-Laws and are conducted through the following organizational structure:
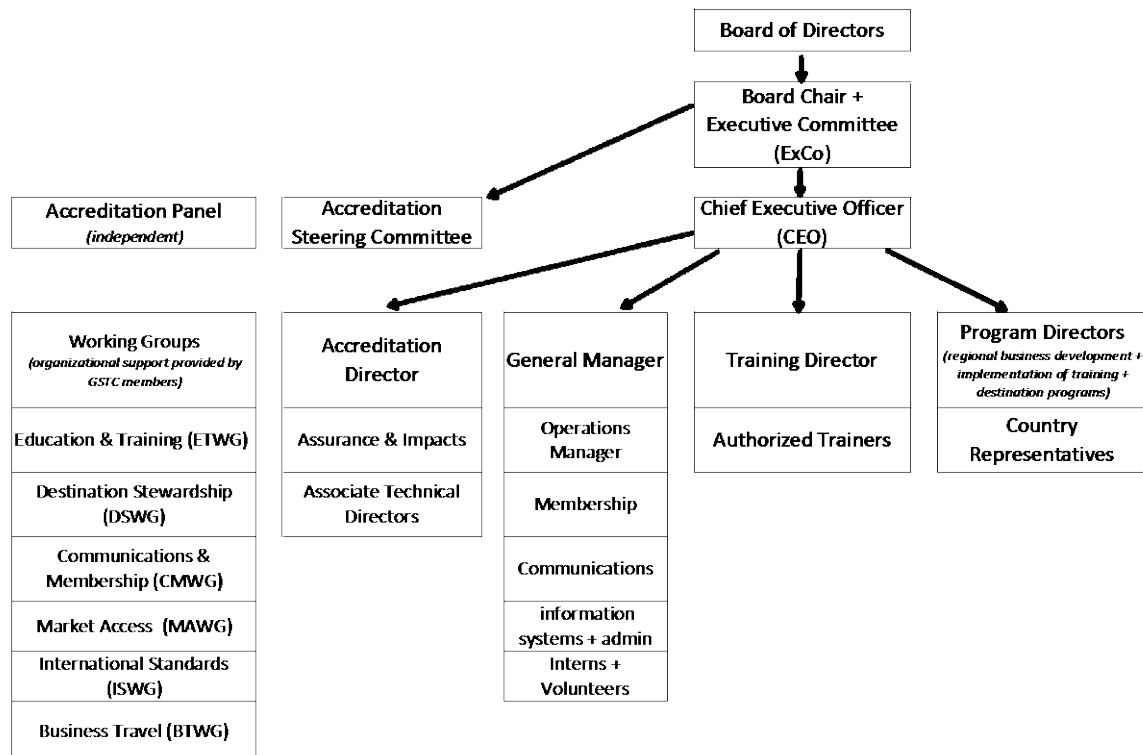
The Board of Directors is responsible for governance oversight of the council's mandate, program of work, and operations. A semi-autonomous Accreditation Panel manages the Accreditation Program and the "Recognition" of standards. Working groups, with representation by board members, undertake initiatives that support the strategic plan as it relates their designated program areas and are advisory in nature. The organization is managed by a Secretariat led by the Chief Executive Officer that leads and coordinates the implementation of the objectives and initiatives of the organization.