



GSTC MICE Criteria

For Venues, Event Organizers, and Events / Exhibitions

Summary Report on the MICE Criteria Development

February 20th, 2024

Summary Report on the GSTC MICE Criteria Development Process

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

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Document Control

This report is a summary of the Criteria development process and is publicly available on the GSTC website.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The MICE sector (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conferences/Conventions, Events/Exhibitions) plays a significant role in the tourism industry, which is anticipated to expand at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 6.6% from 2022 to 2030. The planning of sustainable events and exhibitions is related to the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically addressing Goal 12, which focuses on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

1.2 Purpose of the GSTC MICE Criteria

The MICE industry is having a significant impact on the environment, as companies organize events and exhibitions for the promotion of the local region as well as the branding of their products. Implementing sustainability requires reaching out to the development and management throughout the entire supply chain besides the end product. It is a chain of inclusive processes from making the supply chain more sustainable to supporting local employment and increasing residents' involvement to reducing single-use plastic. Transportation availability, infrastructure development, visitor facilities, and many others are essential elements in the planning, developing, and promotion of events and exhibitions.

The GSTC MICE Criteria is meant to support industry players, sustainable development initiators, and organizations from public to private to serve as a basic guideline for planning sustainable events and exhibitions and offer the starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements in MICE. For academia and institutions, the Criteria serve as a learning material for education in the MICE industry and sustainable tourism.

1.3 Development Process of the GSTC MICE Criteria

The Criteria development process was an 18-month-long journey from September 2022 to February 2024 (official period was 11 months, from April 2023). The first stakeholder engagement started before the official announcement of the Criteria development during the GSTC Regional Conference in Gunsan, Republic of Korea, in September 2022. Details of the process are shown in Figure 1 below.

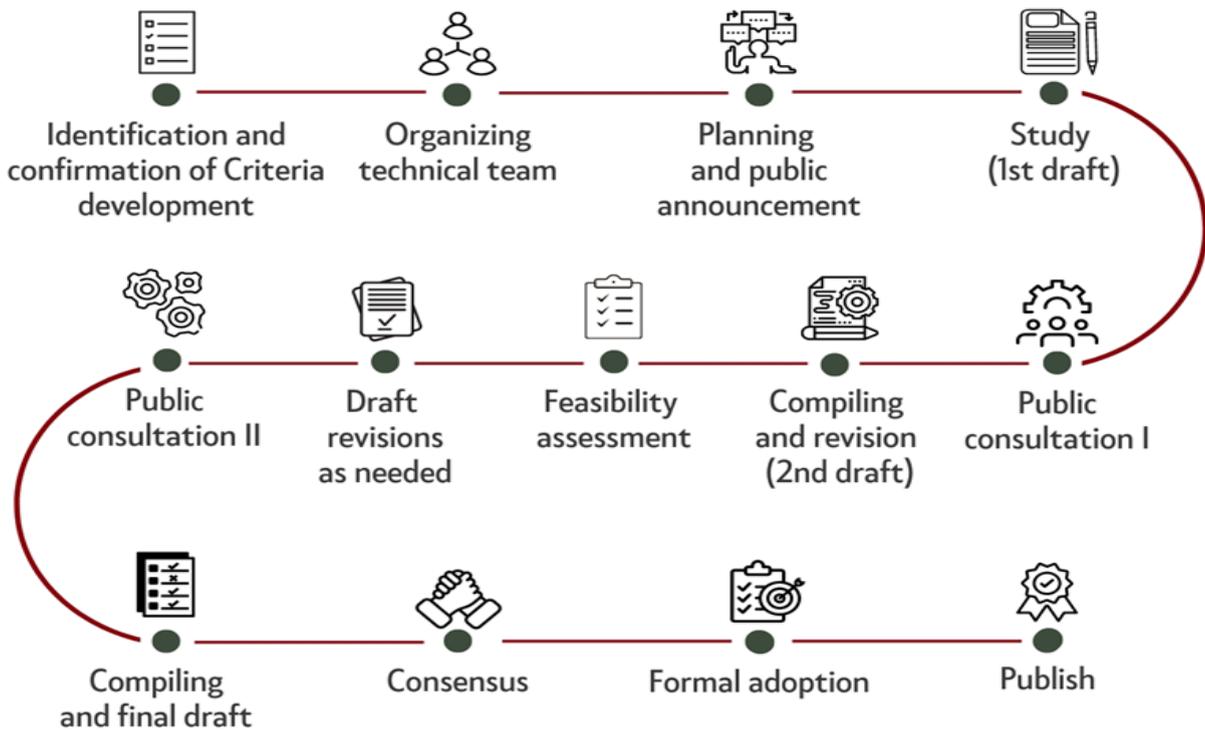


Figure 1. Development Process of the GSTC MICE Criteria

The GSTC officially started the development process with the announcement of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the GSTC MICE Criteria Development on the [GSTC website](#). The TOR follows the GSTC Standard-setting Manual v3.0 and includes GSTC's commitments to follow the ISEAL Alliance Standard Setting Code of Good Practice Version 6.0, which includes ensuring credibility, accountability, transparency of information, and stakeholder engagement along the process.

Details of the process are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. MICE Criteria Development Process

Process	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing of MICE Technical Team • Planning the public announcement • Developing Term of Reference following the ISEAL Alliance Standard Setting Code (Clause 5.1) and the GSTC Standard-Setting Manual version 3.0 • Official public announcement of the MICE Criteria development 	January - April 1st, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First MICE Criteria draft preparation • Preliminary study and preparation of a draft outline. 	April - June 15th, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Public Consultation of the first MICE Criteria draft 	June 15th - August 15th, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling and revision of the draft (creation of the second draft) 	August 16th - October 15th, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility Assessment on the second draft 	October 15th - November 15th, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling the feedback from the feasibility assessment 	November 16th - November 23rd, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Public Consultation of the third MICE Criteria draft 	November 23rd - December 31st, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling and revision of the final draft 	January 2nd - January 23rd, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus on the final draft (revision by Advisory Group and experts in the field in DEI, Accessibility in Tourism, child labor) 	January 24th - February 8th, 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption by the Board 	February 12th - February 26th, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public announcement by GSTC 	February 29th, 2024

This report outlines what actions were taken and which stakeholders were involved - the overall GSTC MICE Criteria development process.

For the feedback and comments received by the public during the public consultations, GSTC will create a whitepaper that includes the tremendous amount of comments received.

2 Criteria Development Process Management

2.1 Technical Team Composition

The GSTC Secretariat has formed a Technical Team with external experts and internal staff responsible for the management of the criteria development process. The external experts were responsible for drafting the Criteria, and the internal staff (hereinafter referred to as GSTC Secretariat) were responsible for the administrative process, including arranging calls with stakeholders.

A summary of the roles and responsibilities of each group is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. GSTC Technical Team

	GSTC Secretariat	External Experts
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So Young Lee, GSTC Project Manager Emi Kaiwa, GSTC Asia-Pacific Manager Mihee Kang, GSTC Assurance Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halil Burak Sakal (Capadoccia University, Türkiye) Byeong Cheol Lee (Kyonggi University, South Korea) Julia Spangler (Sustainability consultant at Ecosystem Events)
Role and Responsibility	General administration of the criteria development process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating the first criteria draft;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls with GSTC external technical experts, the Advisory Group, the Key Stakeholder Group, International Standards Committee, MICE working group and interested stakeholders; • Coordinating two public consultations and one feasibility assessment; • Delivering feedback to the external experts; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revising of existing MICE Criteria and relevant documents; • Revising and incorporating comments and feedback to create new drafts after each consultation; • Responding to any feedback and comments from the Advisory Group; • Coordinating the last call with the Advisory Group and presenting a summary of the final criteria draft.
Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collected responses from 239 organizations in the two public consultations; • The 1st Public consultation report (uploaded on the GSTC website); • Final review and edition of the final draft of the GSTC MICE Criteria to submit to the GSTC Board of Directors for the approval and adoption; • Publishment of the final GSTC MICE Criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the first criteria draft; • Revising the draft after each public consultation; • Preparation of the final draft.

2.2 Advisory Group and Key Stakeholders Group Composition

The GSTC Secretariat has contacted organizations based on their expertise in the relevant field and their location to form the Advisory Group and Key Stakeholders Group. GSTC Secretariat has ensured that global coverage was ascertained in the groups.

Table 3. GSTC MICE Criteria Advisory Group and Key Stakeholders Group

	Advisory Group	Key Stakeholders Group
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (Global) • Visit Berlin (Europe) • Visit Oslo (Europe) • Green Key Global (America) • Osaka Convention Bureau (Asia) • Suwon Convention & Visitor Bureau (Asia) • Singapore Tourism Board (Asia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Express Global Business Travel (Global) • Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (Costa Rica Tourism Board)/ (America) • International Congress & Convention Association (Global) • Meeting Select (Europe) • The Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (Europe-Asia) • Japan Convention Service (Asia)
Role and Responsibility	<p>High-level feedback during the Criteria development process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing continuous and high-level feedback on the drafts; • Active participation in the two public consultations and feasibility assessment; • Reaching out to their partners to promote the GSTC MICE Criteria development; • Recommending feasibility assessment participants to the GSTC technical team; • Attending regular calls with the GSTC technical team. 	<p>Practical feedback reflecting the industry's voices during the Criteria development process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing continuous feedback on the drafts; • Active participation in the two public consultations and feasibility assessment; • Reaching out to their partners to promote the GSTC MICE Criteria development and encourage them to join public consultation and feasibility assessment;

2.3 Public Consultation

The GSTC Secretariat created the MICE Criteria draft in a survey format using Survey Monkey. The MICE Criteria public consultations were promoted on the GSTC website, newsletter, and social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) to engage the wider public.

The link was also sent to all attendees during the three workshops who wished to get further information and participate in the MICE Criteria draft.

Table 4. Two Public Consultations

	1st Public Consultation (June 15th – August 15th, 2023)	2nd Public Consultation (November 23rd - December 31st, 2023)
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on each criterion and indicator of the GSTC MICE Criteria draft v1.3; To get recommendations, changes, or additional sentences or words to the criterion and/or indicator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on each criterion and indicator of the GSTC MICE Criteria v3.02. To get recommendations, changes, or additional sentences or words to the criterion and/or indicator
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of an online survey application (Survey Monkey) Requesting Advisory Group and Key Stakeholders group to reach out to their partners Contracting two organizations to reach out to the disadvantaged groups Reaching out to the public via different GSTC social media accounts (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) in addition to the GSTC Website announcement and newsletters Paid promotion on LinkedIn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of an online survey application (Survey monkey) Requesting Advisory Group and Key Stakeholders group to reach out to their partners Contracting one organization to reach out to the disadvantaged groups Reaching out to the public via different GSTC social media accounts (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) in addition to the GSTC Website announcement and newsletters Paid promotion on LinkedIn

Results of the two public consultations

Various stakeholders from nearly all regions have contributed to the draft through the two public consultations. 140 organizations from around the world, of which 55% were from the MICE industry, have provided their input in the public consultations. (See Figure 2).

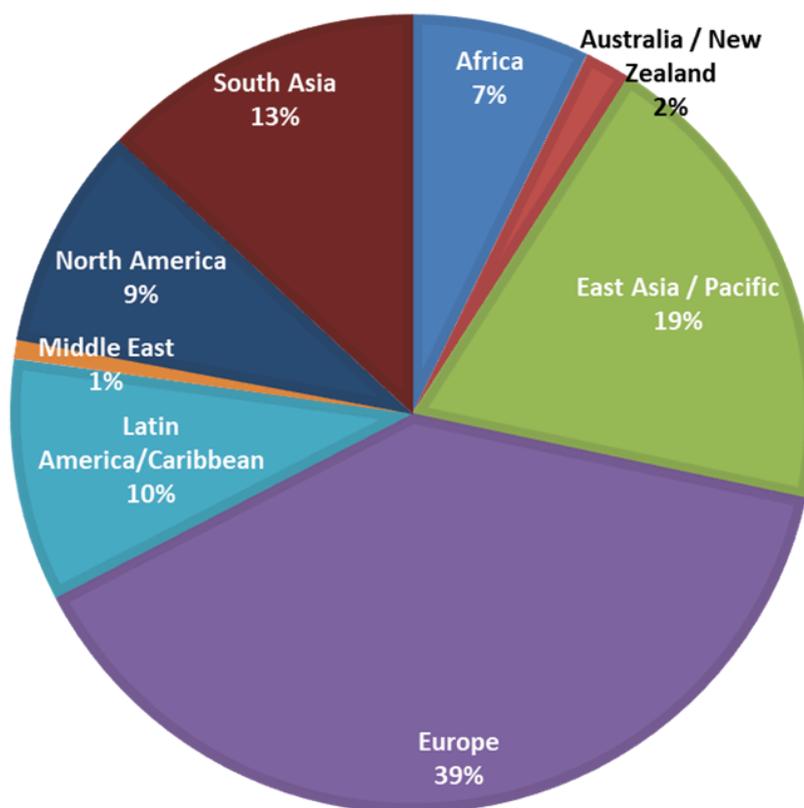


Figure 2. Geographical scope of the MICE Criteria development participants

Stakeholders from academia, certification bodies, consulting, Destination Management Organizations, government agencies (national, provincial, municipal, or other), non-profit or non-governmental organizations, travel and tourism industry (private enterprise or any sector) have contributed to the MICE Criteria development. Responses by affiliation is shown in Figure 3., where organizations from the travel & tourism sector contributed the most followed by non-profit organizations or non-governmental organizations.

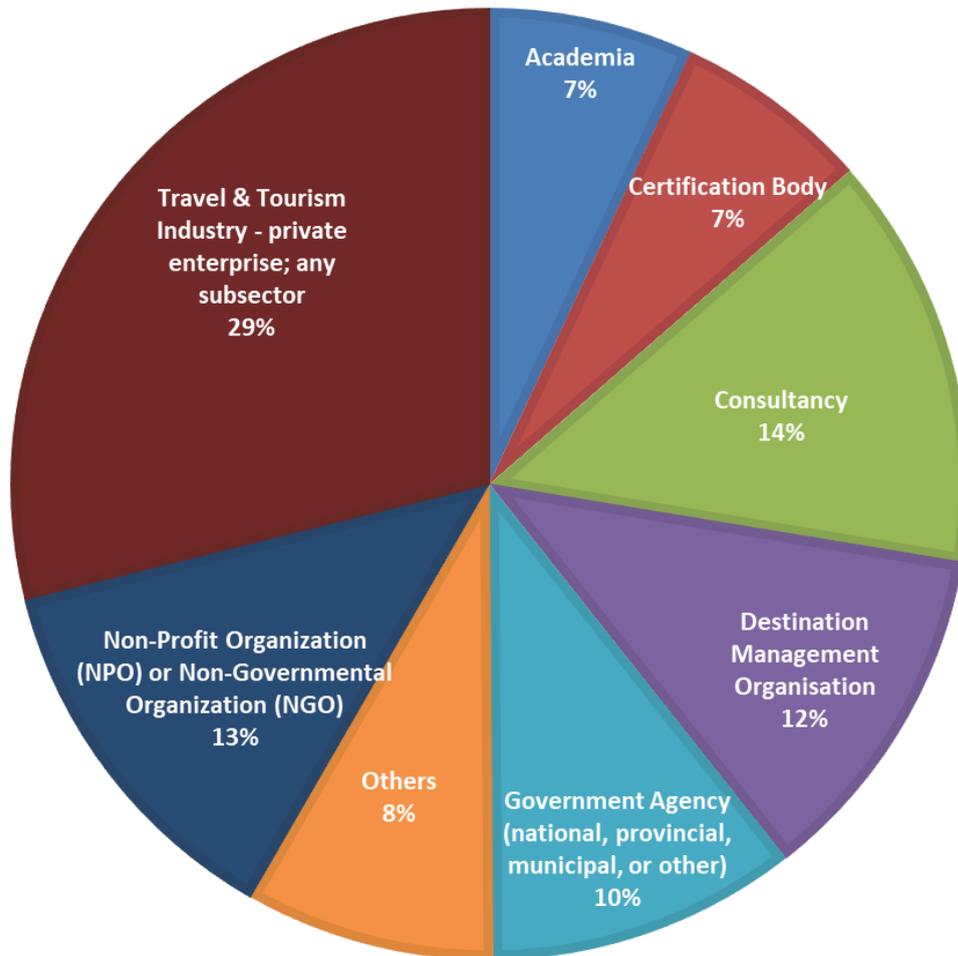


Figure 3. Responses to the MICE Criteria development by affiliation

2.4 Feasibility Assessment

The feasibility assessment was conducted by MICE businesses, including some members of the Advisory Group and Key stakeholder Group.

Table 5. Feasibility Assessment

Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 15th – November 15th, 2023
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check up on the relevancy, measurability, and readability of each criterion and indicator of the GSTC MICE Criteria draft revised after the 1st public consultation

<p>Method</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey questionnaire with questions on the relevancy, measurability, and readability of each criterion and indicator
<p>Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collected answers from 15 organizations globally • Participants: Asia Ecotourism Network (AEN), Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT), Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC), ExpoCité, International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Japan Convention Services, Malta Tourism Authority, Marina Bay Sands, Osaka Convention Tourism Bureau, Resort World Sentosa, Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (SACEOS), Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau (SECB), Sentosa Development Corporation, Suwon Convention Centre, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA)

3 Other Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 GSTC MICE Working Group Engagement

It shall be ensured that the GSTC MICE Criteria, like the GSTC Industry and GSTC Destination Criteria, be managed so that it is widely and appropriately used in line with the GSTC guidelines. Participants from the first Public Consultation have voluntarily signed up to form a Working Group to oversee the Criteria management. They are invited to voluntarily spread the word about the MICE Criteria and gather updated information on the MICE industry to ensure smooth revision processes. The GSTC Secretariat organized the meeting with MICE Working Group members and technical experts to share their knowledge and expertise for the MICE Criteria development process on 13 April 2023.

The Working Group, together with the GSTC Secretariat, will be engaged in the development of the MICE training material development.

3.2 GSTC Destination Working Group Engagement

The GSTC Secretariat gave a presentation on the MICE Criteria Development at the Destination Working Group members' meeting on November 20th, 2023. The presentation aimed to engage the members in better understanding the process and encourage their network to join the process through public consultation.

3.3 Workshops

GSTC Conference workshop

Three workshops were conducted during the GSTC Conferences in Gunsan, Korea, and Seville, Spain, in 2022 and Antalya, Türkiye, in 2023. Approximately 30 people participated in each workshop. The goal of the workshops was for participants to discuss, based on the GSTC-I and GSTC-D, which criteria are relevant to the MICE industry and which are less relevant. Heavy discussions and debates have led to useful information in creating the MICE Criteria draft.



Photo: GSTC MICE Criteria workshop during the Antalya Conference



Photo: GSTC MICE Criteria workshop during the Gunsan and Seville Conference

Workshop with destination members

With destination members support, two public workshops were conducted - at the Bestival¹ in Berlin, Germany, in July 2023 and in Malta in September 2023.

GSTC staff attended the [Berlin festival](#) by making a standing booth with the first GSTC MICE Criteria draft printed. It was a voting system for the participants to vote on the most relevant and least relevant criterion and/or indicator of the MICE industry. Approximately 1,000 people participated in the Bestival, and they freely dropped by the workshop.



Photo: GSTC MICE Criteria booth at Bestival in Berlin, Germany

In September 2023, hosted by the Malta Tourism Authority, GSTC conducted a [one-day workshop](#) with 21 Maltese MICE experts. The goal was to hear their comments and opinions on the relevance of the criteria to their context.

¹ The Business Festival of the MICE and TRAVEL industry



Photo: GSTC MICE Criteria workshop in Malta

3.4 Disadvantaged Group Engagement

The GSTC Secretariat contracted two organizations to consult with the Disadvantaged Groups. Based on the Terms of Reference. The Disadvantaged Group is defined as under-engaged and under-represented groups due to barriers such as linguistic, geographic, technical, and other difficulties/barriers.

Table 6. Disadvantaged Group

Name of organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asia Ecotourism Network and Global Ecotourism Network were engaged to reach out to the Disadvantaged Group and get their feedback on the MICE Criteria draft.
Roles & Responsibilities
<p>The organizations have identified the under-engaged and under-represented groups, who were then contacted through emails, in-person meetings, or a combination of those and were consulted on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General concerns of sustainability; Key requirements that should be included in the GSTC MICE Criteria and Comments on the draft according to their readability, measurability, feasibility, additions/deletion/ changes to the Criteria and indicators)

An extensive report was made using the methods mentioned above, and results were collected from **over 40 organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and South America, and USA.**

The disadvantaged groups identified were those who had (were):

- limited access to resources or were in remote areas
- Elderly or language barriers
- Indigenous and vulnerable groups
- Physical disabilities
- Beyond the "digital divide"

3.5 Experts/Relevant Organizations Engagement for Human Rights and Accessibility

During the first and second public consultations, organizations, including Travel Unity and ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism), provided their comprehensive feedback on the first and second draft. These organizations were once more contacted for their final review after the final draft was finished.

Section B, which focuses on the social and economic benefits, was consulted with Travel Unity, a non-profit organization that works on making travel welcoming to people of all backgrounds and identities. They are the standard owners of the diversity, equity, and inclusion standards.

The criterion of 'Access for all' was consulted with an Accessibility in Travel and Tourism expert, who is an ambassador in the field.

The criterion related to exploitation, human trafficking, and child protection was consulted with an expert in ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism).

3.6 Stakeholder engagement through webinar

The GSTC Secretariat has also engaged in GSTC webinar on November 22nd 2023 and presented the MICE Criteria development to invite stakeholders to comment on the draft. It has been quite effective, since GSTC has received inquiries from a few stakeholders about the Criteria development.

4 Oversight by GSTC International Standards Committee

According to the GSTC Bylaws 2020, the International Standards Committee is responsible for the oversight of the Criteria development process in accordance with ISEAL Alliance Standards Setting Code.

An online meeting was held with the International Standards Committee on March 21st, 2023, to gain their endorsement on the Terms of Reference and inform the Committee members of the Criteria development process.

A second online meeting was held on January 25th, 2024, to gain final consensus on the final MICE Criteria draft.

Table 7. GSTC International Standards Committee

Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Spenceley, Ayfer Adigüzel, Brianda Lopez, Eric Ricaurte, Freeda Maria, Ingunn Sørnes, Jorge Moller, Nicola Koschel, Richard Denman, Julie Klein, Kelly Bricker, Melinda Watt.
Role and Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the criteria development process; • Attend calls with the GSTC Secretariat to get updates on the criteria development process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The First call (March 21st, 2023) was to get endorsement by the ISC on the Terms of Reference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendees: Anna Spenceley, Ayfer Adigüzel, Eric Ricaurte, Freeda Maria, Julie Klein, Kelly Bricker, Melinda Watt, and Richard Denman. o The 2nd call (January 25th, 2024) was to get a final consensus on the GSTC MICE Criteria draft v3.09. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendees: Eric Ricaurte, Ingunn Sørnes, Julie Klein, Kelly Bricker, Melinda Watt, and Richard Denman. • Ensure that the criteria development process is aligned to the Terms of Reference.

5 GSTC MICE Criteria Final Draft

There are three criteria set for each sub-sector (Venues, Event Organizers and Event & Exhibitions).

■ The draft contains the same four sections as the GSTC-I and GSTC-D criteria, namely:

- Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management
- Section B: Maximize social and economic benefits and minimize negative impacts
- Section C: Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts
- Section D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts

#END#