

The background of the cover is a photograph of two people in traditional, colorful clothing standing on a grassy hillside, looking out over a vast, hazy mountain range. The person on the left is wearing a red top and a dark skirt with a colorful striped shawl draped over their shoulders. The person on the right is wearing a red top and a dark skirt with a colorful striped shawl draped over their shoulders. The mountains in the background are layered and hazy, suggesting a high-altitude or mountainous region. The overall tone is serene and natural.

2025

Global Sustainable Tourism Council Annual Report

April 2026

Contents

01 Message from
our Chair & CEO

02 2025 in Numbers

03 Who We Are

About the GSTC

Our Strategy

What We Do

Our Governance

04 Our Performance
in 2025

GSTC Standards

GSTC Membership

GSTC Sustainable
Tourism Training
Program

Destinations Program

Assurance

Working Group Activities

ISEAL Landscape Project

Market Access Program

05 Conferences

06 GSTC-Committed

07 GSTC Sponsors

08 Our Finances

09 Future
Directions



Message from our Chair

As we present the GSTC Annual Report 2025, we do so at a time when tourism's role in society is marked by reflection and responsibility. Sustainability is no longer a future objective; it is a present responsibility that demands consistency between intention and action.

Over the past year, we have seen meaningful progress in integrating sustainability into governance and decision-making. At the same time, climate pressures, social inequality, and growing demands on natural and cultural resources continue to challenge the sector's ability to operate responsibly.

Tourism cannot be considered sustainable if it fails to deliver fair outcomes for local communities. Long-term value depends on inclusive practices that respect traditional cultures, strengthen community resilience, and balance economic activity with environmental and social priorities within the destination.

GSTC's role is to support this transition by providing clear, credible standards that enable alignment across destinations and businesses. Through collaboration with public and private stakeholders, we continue to contribute to a shared framework for sustainable tourism development.

Global cooperation and accountability will be essential to ensure tourism supports well-being today while safeguarding opportunities for future generations.



Luigi Cabrini

Chair,
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

Message from our CEO

As we share the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's 2025 Annual Report, the demand for responsible travel continues to grow, and practical tools to guide this transition are essential. GSTC's mission remains focused on enabling change through a systematic manner based on knowledge, alignment, and action. The GSTC Standards continue to serve as the global reference for sustainability in travel and tourism, helping destinations and businesses translate principles into daily practice.

Throughout 2025, our work has strengthened links between policy, industry, and communities. By expanding our Sustainable Tourism Training Program, reinforcing our assurance team, and deepening partnerships worldwide, we support a shift toward sustainability as an integral part of how tourism operates. We have shifted to more focus on improvement schemes that recognize the goal to comply with all aspects of our holistic standards is often best achieved step by step.

All our good progress has been achieved through the sustained commitment and coordinated action of many stakeholders across the tourism sector: GSTC-Committed Organizations, GSTC Members, GSTC Sponsors and Partners, GSTC-accredited certification bodies, GSTC Trainers and others, all of whom play a central role in advancing a shared vision of tourism that benefits people and places.

This collective effort is further supported by the dedication of the GSTC Board of Directors and the GSTC Team, whose daily work ensures continuity, rigor, and effective coordination across all areas of our mission. We sincerely thank them for their essential contribution to this shared work.

Looking ahead, our priority is to scale adoption of the GSTC Standards while remaining responsive to regional contexts and emerging risks. With common standards and strong global cooperation, tourism can continue to evolve as a force for positive and lasting impact.



Randy Durband

Chief Executive Officer,
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

2025 Year Review

➤ **GSTC Industry Standard concluded on GSTC Hotel Standard and GSTC Tour Operator Standard**

In 2025, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) completed the revision of its Industry Standard, resulting in the creation of two distinct standards: the GSTC Hotel Standard and the GSTC Tour Operator Standard. This update replaces the previous single standard and provides more sector-specific guidance. With this milestone, GSTC now has five published standards covering key areas of the tourism industry. Read more [here](#).

➤ **GSTC2025 Global Conference in Fiji**

The GSTC2025 Global Sustainable Tourism Conference was held in Fiji, gathering 350 delegates from over 40 countries. Organized by the GSTC in collaboration with Tourism Fiji, the event focused on advancing sustainable tourism practices, and included pre-conference training and the 3rd GSTC Academic Symposium. Read more [here](#).

➤ **GSTC Destination Self-Assessment Tool**

In 2025, GSTC launched a new self-assessment tool for destinations to evaluate their performance across the four pillars of the GSTC Destination Standard. The tool supports destinations in measuring progress and identifying areas for improvement in sustainable tourism management. Read more [here](#).

➤ **Transition from 'GSTC Criteria' to 'GSTC Standards'**

In 2025, GSTC formally renamed its "GSTC Criteria" to "GSTC Standards" to enhance clarity and align with international terminology. This transition reflects a change in name only; the content, structure, and requirements of the Standards remain unchanged. Read more [here](#).

➤ **Significant Growth of the GSTC Sustainable Tourism Training Program**

In 2025, participation in the GSTC Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP) increased significantly, reaching 9,744 individuals, compared to 2,365 in 2024. The exam pass rate remained strong at 81.74 percent. This year, STTP also saw an expansion in delivered courses and GSTC Authorized Trainers. Discover more [here](#).

➤ **New GSTC Web Domain: gstc.org**

In 2025, the GSTC transitioned its website domain to gstc.org. The change reflects the organization's global recognition under the acronym GSTC and simplifies digital access for stakeholders worldwide. Read more [here](#).

➤ **Roundtable for Micro and Small Enterprises Certification (R4MSEC) and Roundtable for Animal Welfare in Tourism (R4AWT)**

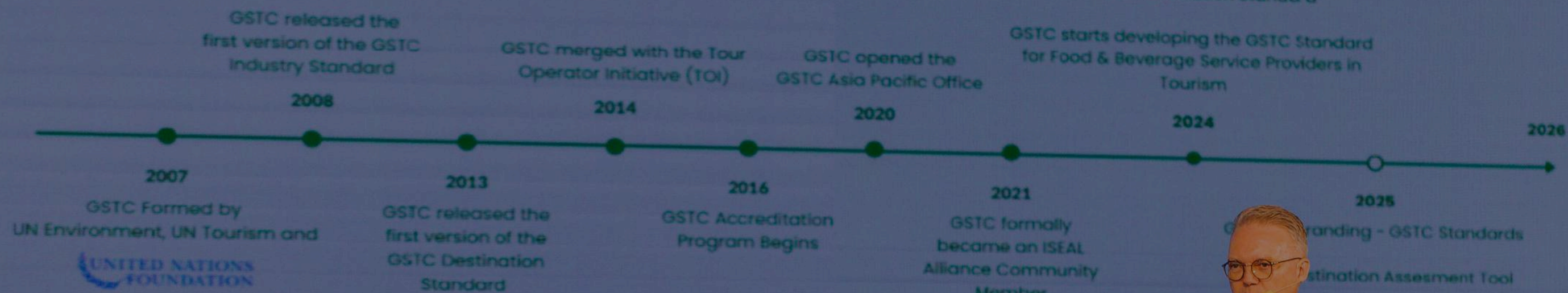
In 2025, the GSTC launched two multi-stakeholder roundtables to address key challenges in sustainable tourism. The R4AWT focused on improving the integration of animal welfare into certification through science-based guidance and collaboration across sectors, while R4MSEC examined barriers faced by micro and small enterprises in accessing certification. Together, these initiatives aim to make GSTC Standards more inclusive, practical, and globally applicable. Read more about R4MSEC [here](#) and about R4AWT [here](#).

➤ **GSTC Presence at Global Events**

Throughout 2025, the GSTC participated in major events across six continents. These engagements reinforced GSTC's role in promoting tourism as a force for good and advancing the global adoption of sustainable tourism standards. Discover more [here](#).

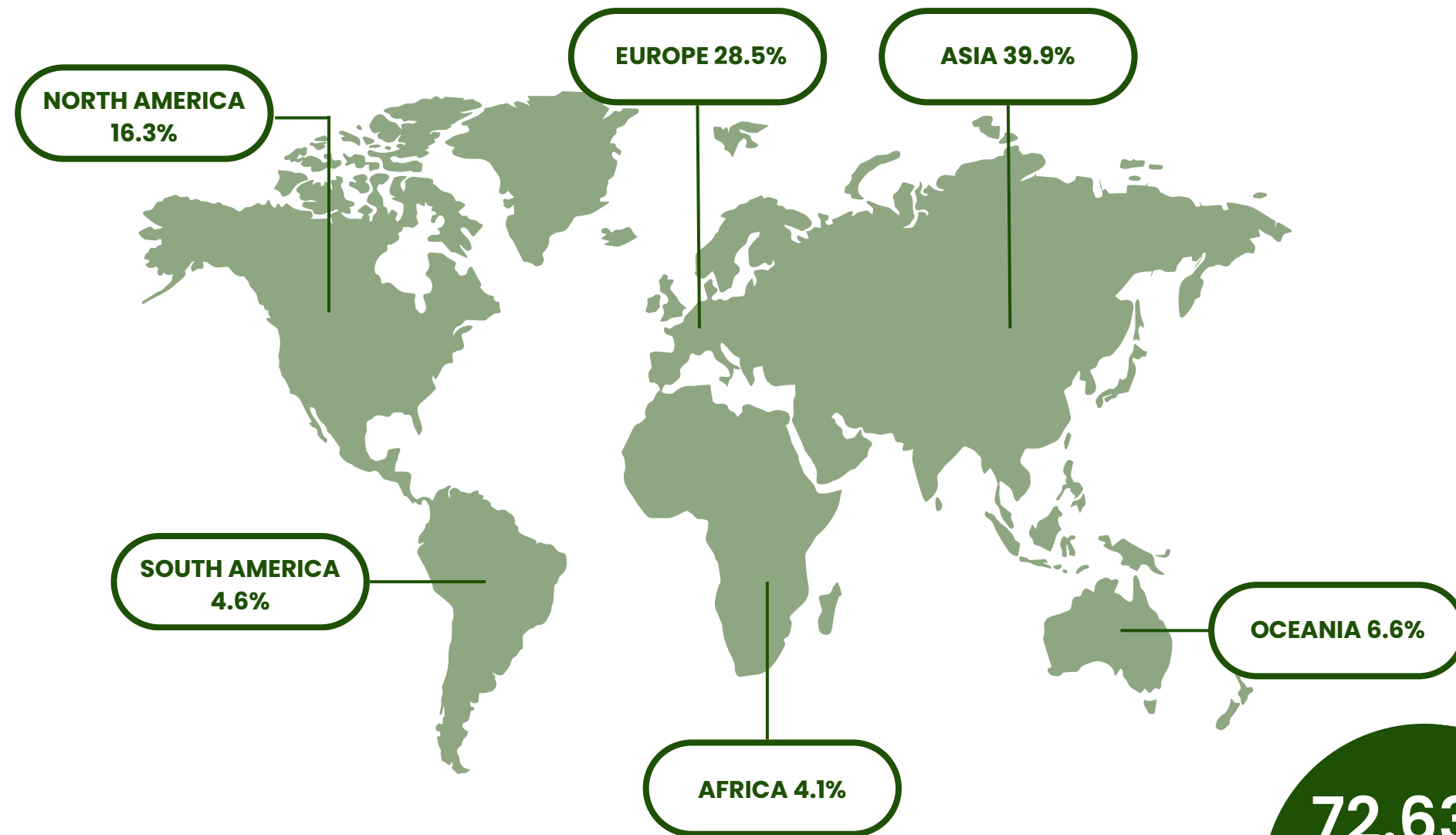
02

2025 in Numbers



2025 In Numbers

Sustainable Tourism Training Program



The geographical scope of public training participants for 2025

9,744
total participants in courses in 2025

73.15% Sustainable Tourism Course total participants	24.69% Sustainable Hospitality Course total participants
1.25% Sustainable MICE Course total participants	0.39% Accesible & Inclusive Travel Course total participants
0.32% Sustainable Tour Operator Course total participants	0.20% Sustainable Destination Course total participants

81
total courses done in 2025

79
GSTC Authorized Trainers in 2025

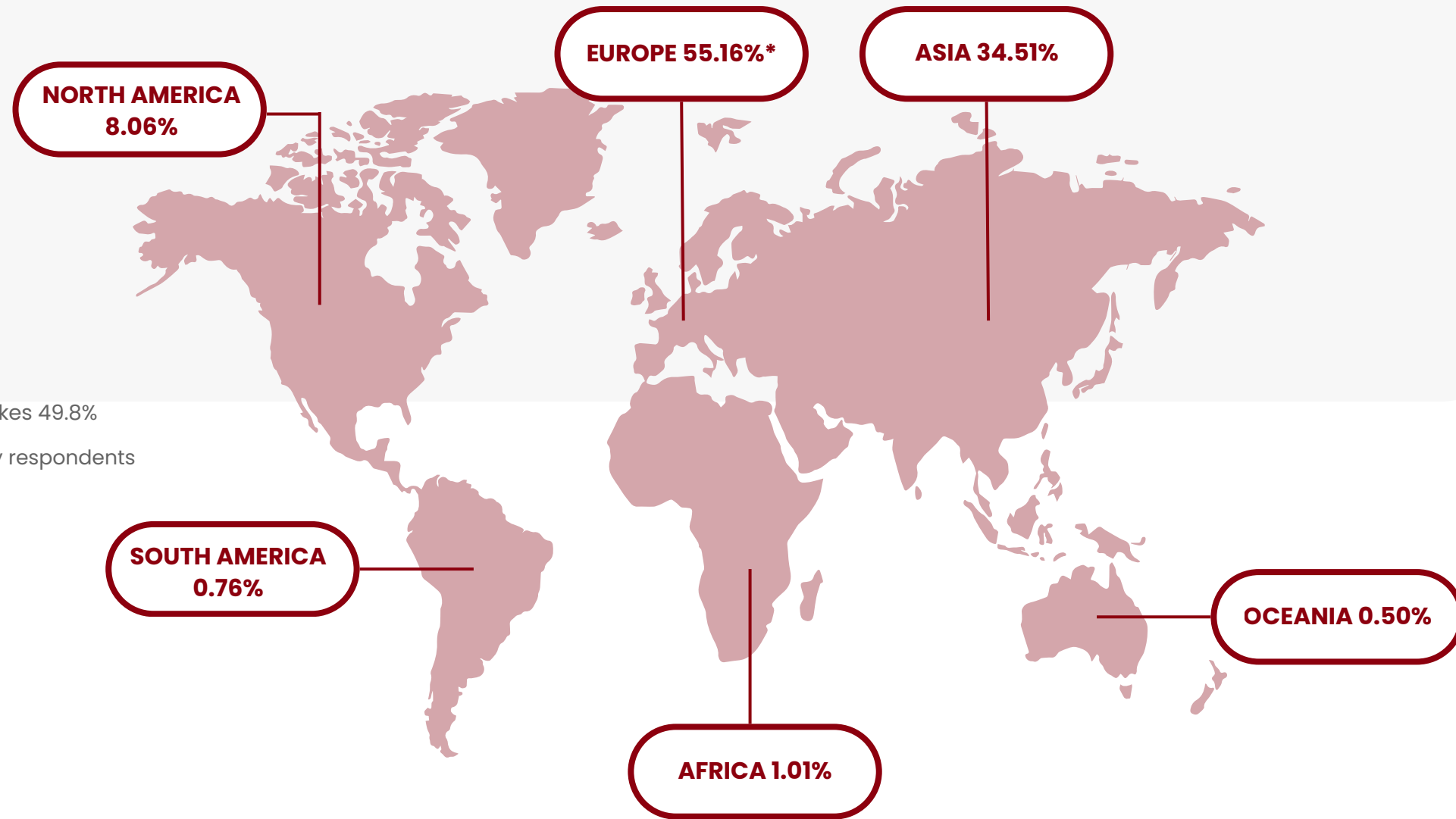
65 Sustainable Tourism total Courses	2 Accesible & Inclusive Travel total Courses
7 Sustainable Hospitality total Courses	2 Sustainable Tour Operator total Courses
1 Sustainable Destination total Courses	4 Sustainable MICE total Courses

72.63%*
participants were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the courses in 2025*

81.74%
attendees passing the exam in 2025

The geographical scope of participants for 2025

Auditor Training



*Türkiye takes 49.8%

**97 survey respondents

GSTC Standards

5

GSTC Standard sets in 2025

GSTC Standards, formerly known as GSTC Criteria.

GSTC-Recognized

13

GSTC-Recognized Standards for Tour Operators

31

GSTC-Recognized Standards for Hotels

1

GSTC-Recognized Standards for MICE

14

GSTC-Recognized Standards for Destinations

398

participants in Auditor Training in 2025

16

courses executed in 2025

348

qualified auditors for Hotel scope in 2025***

89

qualified auditors for Tour Operator scope in 2025***

10

qualified auditors for Destination scope in 2025***

87.8%

attendees passing the exam in 2025

87.51%

participants were "satisfied" with the Auditor Training in 2025**

325

attendees to GSTC Hotel & Tour Operator Standard Auditor Course in 2025

73

attendees to GSTC Destination Standard Auditor Course in 2025

GSTC Members

518

organization members in 2025

87

new member organizations in 2025

73%

membership renewal in 2025

Members' and Open Webinars

32

webinars executed in 2025

1,245

participants in webinars in 2025

GSTC Destination program

5

Destination Assessments in 2025



5 completed
0 in progress

53

Destination Assesments prior to and including 2025



53 completed
0 in progress

Note: Started prior to 2025, and finalized in 2025.

Other Data

298K

web users in 2025

376

articles that mentioned the GSTC in 2025

115,480

total followers in GSTC social media channels in 2025*

+13.28%

of social media followers increase compared to last year (2024/2025)**

GSTC Global Conference

1

GSTC Global Conference in 2025

350

participants at GSTC2025 Fiji

42

countries attended GSTC2025 Fiji

93.48%

participants were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their conference experience

**GSTC2025
FIJI**

*Note: This figure is an estimate based on media mentions captured via Google Alerts in 2025. While Google Alerts provides broad coverage of online publications, it does not guarantee full capture of all media content; therefore, the number should be interpreted as an indicative estimate rather than an exhaustive count.

**Note: Add note: This indicator reflects the cumulative number of followers across all official social media channels as of December 2025. It represents the total audience size at year-end.

GSTC Accreditation and GSTC Certification*

16

GSTC-accredited certification bodies (ACBs) in 2025

7

applicants for GSTC Accreditation in 2025

56

certified Destinations by accredited CBs in 2025

55

certified Tour Operators by accredited CBs in 2025

3,522

certified Hotels by accredited CBs in 2025

4

new countries/regions
Finland, Ireland, Saudi Arabi, Denmark

24

new countries/regions

Albania, Australia, Belize, Cambodia, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Jerusalem, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sint Maarten, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam

19

new countries/regions

Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ireland, Lao PDR, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Korea

Countries with most GSTC Certification growth

 Italy

Countries with most GSTC Certification growth

 Singapore
Japan
Thailand

Countries with most GSTC Certification growth

 Türkiye
Singapore
Italy
Thailand
China

*The term "GSTC Certification" is a shorthand for "Certified by a Certification Body that is GSTC-accredited."

- ITB Berlin 2025
- Canmore Hotel & Lodging Association Event
- ASEAN Tourism Forum 2025
- Destination Europe Summit in Brussels
- IAAPA APAC Sustainability Summit in Singapore
- MICE Intelligence Summit 2025
- CLIA Event Rotterdam 2025
- 13th Annual Meeting HAPCO & DES
- Pre-Summit Executive Workshop for Destination DC Stakeholders
- PATA Annual Summit 2025
- Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum 2025
- GSTC Workshop at Aseer, Saudi Arabia
- VI Ibero-American Forum on Sustainable Tourism #TuriSOS2025
- Europe-Africa Tourism Investment Summit
- Tourism Partnership for Chania Event
- India Travel & Tourism Sustainability Conclave 2025
- Lessons from the Past: Advancing Sustainability in WWII Heritage Tourism in Berlin
- Ascott's Sustainable Tourism Workshop
- Sustainable Tourism Forum in Tarvisio
- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Workshop on Land Use Planning for Sustainable Tourism 2025 in Korea
- Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) in Arizona
- Goyang Destination Week
- Hotelga Summit 2025 in Argentina
- TTF Outlook Tourism Conference 2025
- PHIST 2025
- CLIA's Ports & Destinations Dialogue 2025 in Hamburg

- GSTC Workshop at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
- 9th Sustainable & Social Tourism Summit in Costa Rica
- EuroVelo & Cycling Tourism Conference 2025
- 7th International Conference 'Standards in Tourism 2025'
- 3rd Estates General of European LGBTQ+ Tourism
- Establishing Sustainable Tourism Destinations in the EU | European Parliament, Brussels
- ITB Asia 2025
- Expand Your World Tourism Summit Budapest 2025
- Future Hospitality Summit (FHS) World 2025
- International Accreditation Forum (IAF) General Assembly 2025
- 2025 Annual Meeting of Global Tourism Forum
- World Economic Forum's Urban Transformation Summit 2025
- 2025 General Assembly of the RCEP Member States World Heritage Cooperation Alliance
- Greening the Islands International Conference 2025
- World Travel Market (WTM) London
- TOURISE Inaugural Global Summit
- I-STARS Final Conference 2025
- 2025 Tropical Coastal City Tourism Event
- Forum on Sustainability & Social Responsibility in Tourism' in Mexico
- Regional Workshop on Promoting Green and Sustainable Tourism in Cambodia
- 30th Anniversary of the First Charter for Sustainable Tourism
- 3rd Thailand-Singapore Cruise Development Taskforce Meeting
- CETT Tourism Policy Dialogue
- Guatemala's Sustainable Tourism Bootcamps
- Sustainability Week in Quintana Roo
- Chungcheongnam-do Sustainable Tourism Foru, 2025

Some events GSTC participated in during 2025

Click to read more



03

Who We Are



About the GSTC

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council® (GSTC®) establishes and manages global sustainable standards, the GSTC Standards, also known as the GSTC Criteria. The [GSTC Destination Standard](#) for public policy-makers and destination managers, the [GSTC Hotel Standard](#) for hotels and accommodations, the [GSTC Tour Operator Standard](#), the [GSTC MICE Standard](#) for Venues, Event Organizers, and Events & Exhibitions, and the [GSTC Attraction Standard](#) for tourist attractions such as theme parks, museums, and national parks. These are the guiding principles and minimum requirements that any tourism business or destination should aspire 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.

They result from a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism. The GSTC Destination Standard, GSTC Hotel Standard, GSTC Tour Operator Standard, GSTC MICE Standard, and GSTC Attraction Standard are arranged in four pillars:

- (A) Sustainable Management;
- (B) Socioeconomic Impacts;
- (C) Cultural Impacts; and
- (D) Environmental Impacts.

The GSTC Standards form the foundation for GSTC's assurance role for Certification Bodies (CB) that certify hotels/accommodations, tour operators, and destinations as having sustainable policies and practices in place. GSTC does not directly certify any products or services but provides accreditation to those that do.

GSTC is an independent and neutral USA-registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization that represents a [diverse and global membership](#), including national and provincial governments, leading travel companies, hotels, tour operators, NGOs, individuals and communities – all striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism. The GSTC is an [ISEAL Community Member](#), a global membership organization for ambitious, collaborative, and transparent sustainability systems, as well as an [Association Member of The International Accreditation Forum \(IAF\)](#) and an Associate Member with the [Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation \(IAAC\)](#).



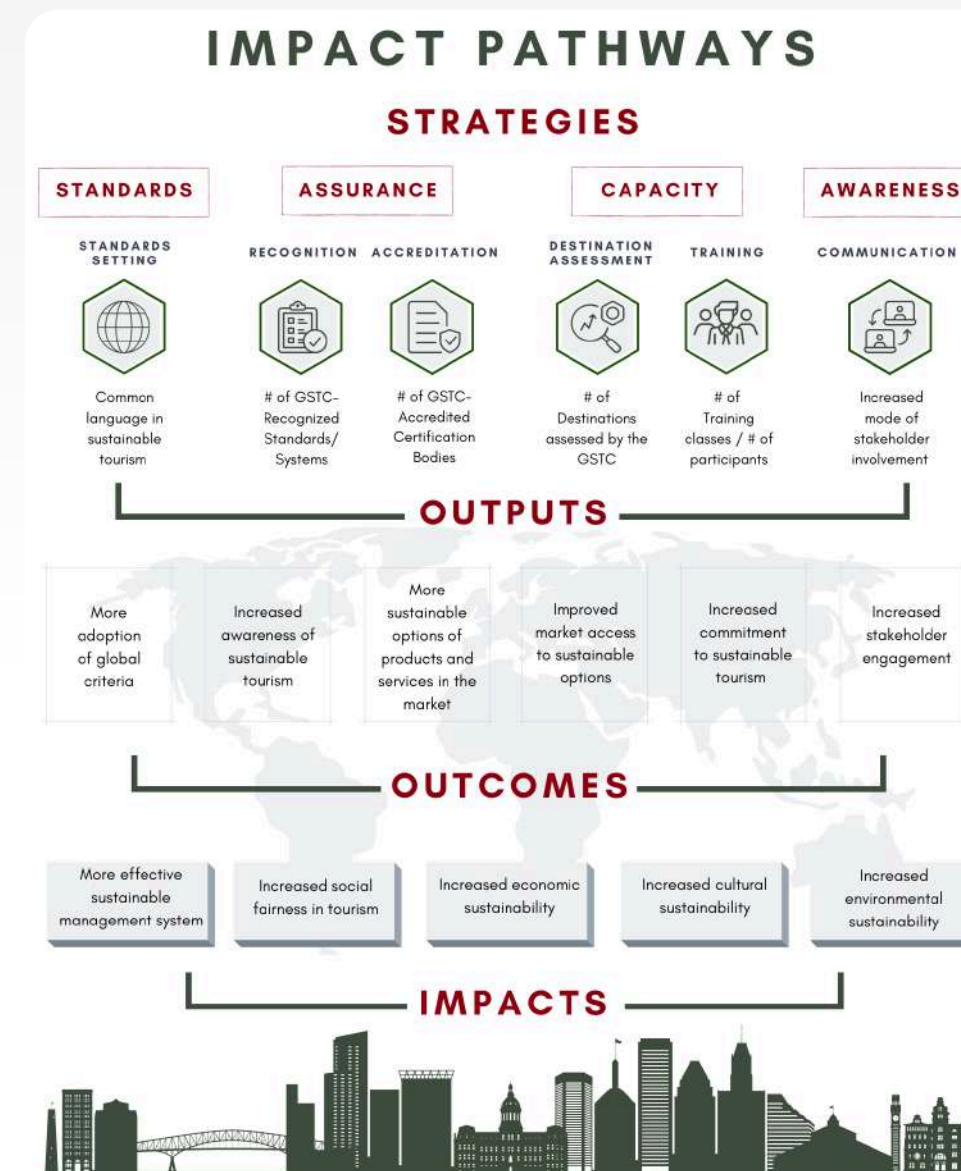
Our Strategy

GSTC Theory of Change

A Theory of Change serves as a comprehensive framework, detailing the desired change an organization or initiative aims to achieve and clarifying the mechanisms by which its efforts facilitate this transformation. This conceptual map traces a causal pathway, linking the strategies employed (the actions taken) to the resulting outcomes (what has been changed), and the underlying assumptions of the process. GSTC's Impact Pathways vividly illustrate these dynamic interconnections.

Intended Impacts & Outcomes

- Provide guidelines for businesses and destinations of all sizes and all over the world to become more sustainable.
- Provide guidance for travelers and travel providers in choosing suppliers and sustainable tourism programs.
- Provide a common denominator for media to recognize sustainable tourism providers.
- Help certification and other voluntary programs ensure that their standards meet a broadly-accepted baseline.
- Governmental, non-governmental and private sector programs have a framework for developing sustainable tourism requirements.
- Provide guidelines for education and training bodies such as hotel schools and universities.



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.

What we do



Developing Global Standards – the GSTC Standards

The GSTC Standards are global standards for sustainability in travel and tourism:

- GSTC Hotel Standard – guiding principles for hotels and accommodations.
- GSTC Tour Operator Standard – guiding principles for tour operators/agencies.
- GSTC Destination Standard – guidance for policy (national, provincial, etc.) and for destination management.
- GSTC MICE Standard – guidance for venues, event organizers, and events & exhibitions.
- GSTC Attraction Standard – guidance for all types of attractions including, but not limited to theme parks, museums, and national parks.

The GSTC Standards provide a comprehensive definition of sustainable travel and tourism, arranged to support four pillars of sustainability:

- (A) Sustainable Management;
- (B) Socioeconomic Impacts;
- (C) Cultural Impacts; and
- (D) Environmental Impacts.



Providing Assurance for Sustainable Tourism

GSTC Accreditation: The GSTC accredits CBs that certify hotels, accommodations, tour operators, and destinations against relevant GSTC Standards or GSTC-Recognized Standards and meet international requirements outlined in the GSTC Accreditation Manuals.

GSTC Recognition: Distinct from accreditation or certification, GSTC provides a formal indication of other standards that align with the GSTC Standards. This designation is made by GSTC’s expert, [Recognition Decision-Making Committee](#).

[Read more](#) about the difference between certification, accreditation of CBs, and recognition of standards.



Making Destinations Sustainable

“Destination Stewardship” is GSTC’s description of the framework whereby the public sector, private sector, and the residents of local communities are engaged jointly to preserve, protect, and benefit from visitors to their tourist destination.

The GSTC Destination Standard and GSTC’s Destination Programs provide support to destinations seeking to manage and operate genuinely sustainable and responsible forms of tourism.



Promoting Market Access

The GSTC promotes the development of broad market adoption and application of the GSTC Standards. With the ultimate goal of increasing demand for sustainable travel and tourism offerings and building trust amongst travelers, the GSTC works to identify opportunities and solutions for alignment of greater market potential, working closely with prominent Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and large travel providers.

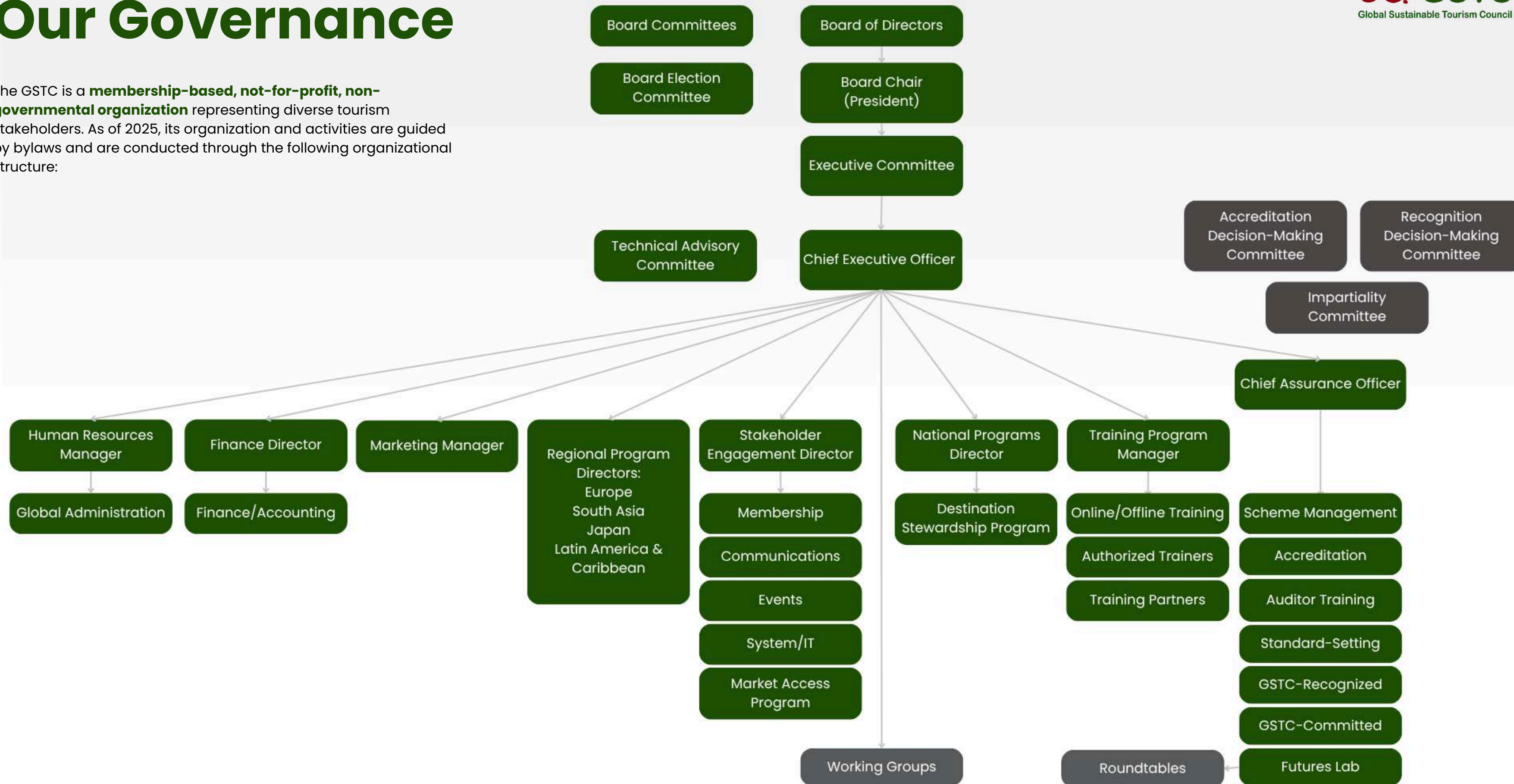


Increasing Knowledge

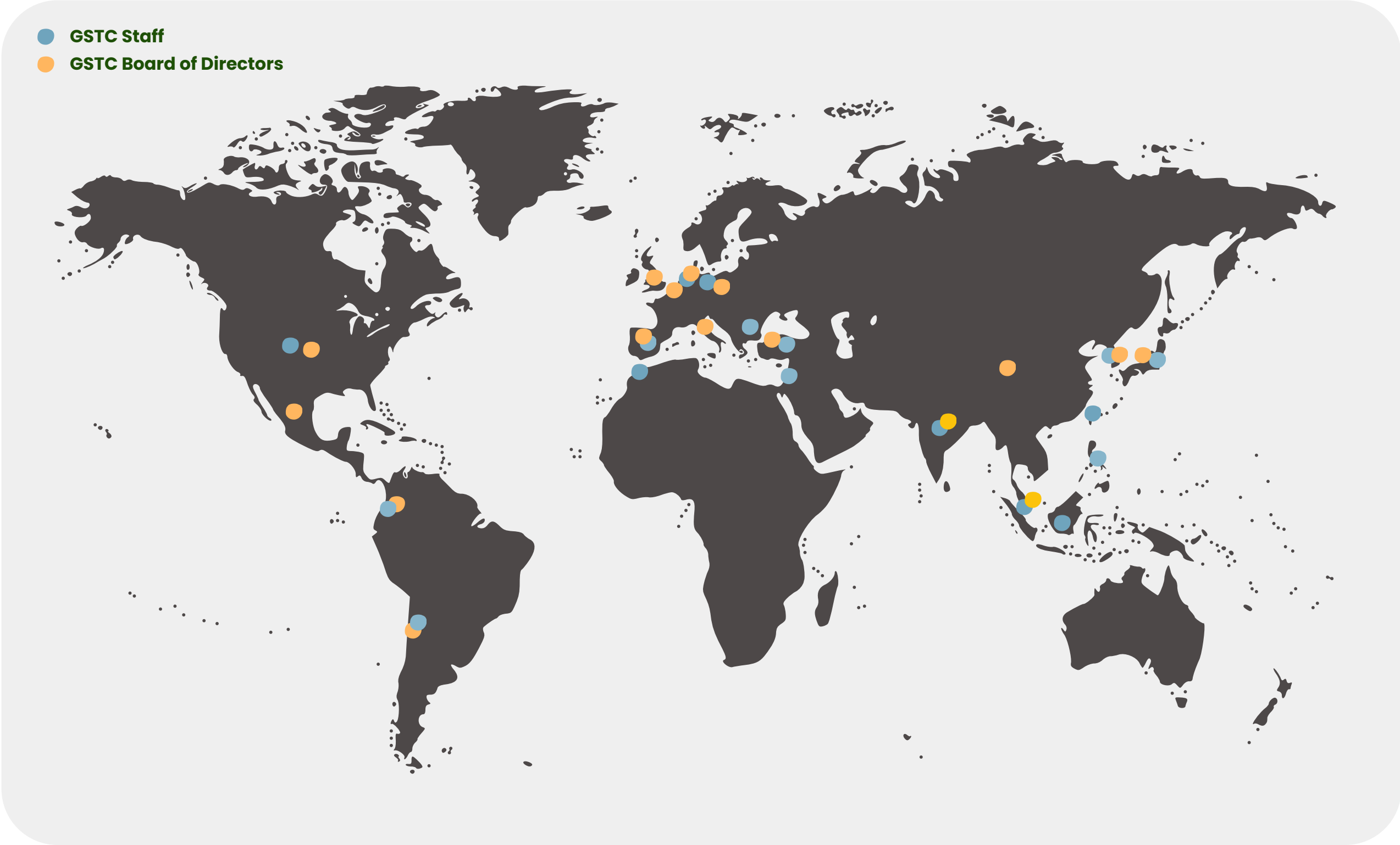
The GSTC is committed to ensuring that sustainable tourism best practices are adopted and implemented by the industry and the traveling public. The GSTC STTP, delivers training to managers and practitioners on use of contemporary tools and resources to facilitate the transition to sustainable practices. Training courses are relevant for a wide range of tourism industry professionals including: hotel managers and staff, tour operator managers and staff, destination managers, government officials, consultants, NGOs, and academic institutions.

Our Governance

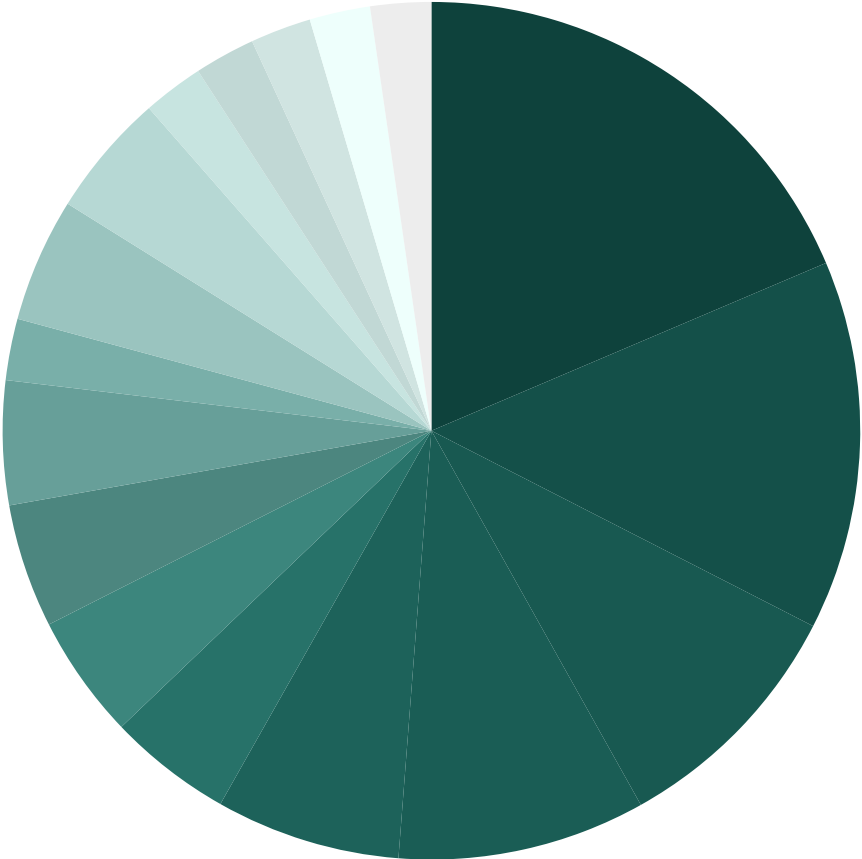
The GSTC is a **membership-based, not-for-profit, non-governmental organization** representing diverse tourism stakeholders. As of 2025, its organization and activities are guided by bylaws and are conducted through the following organizational structure:



Global GSTC Team and Board Support



- South Korea ● Japan ● Türkiye
- Singapore ● Taiwan ● Colombia
- Colombia ● USA ● Greece
- Morocco ● Philippines ● Germany
- Spain ● the Netherlands ● Israel
- India ● Indonesia



GSTC Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for governance and oversight of the organization's mandate, programming, and operations. GSTC Working Groups undertake initiatives that support the strategic plan as it relates to their designated program areas and are advisory in nature.

The organization is managed by a Secretariat led by the Chief Executive Officer, Randy Durband, who leads and coordinates the implementation of the organization's objectives and initiatives. This governance structure is established in detail in the GSTC Bylaws.



LUIGI CABRINI
Chair, Board of Directors, GSTC



DR. KELLY S. BRICKER
Associate Dean of the HNU-ASU Joint International College (HAIC); Vice-Chair, GSTC



CB (RAM) RAMKUMAR
Director, Green Dreams for the Planet; Vice-Chair, GSTC



KOKO TANG
Co-founder & CEO, Vinetree Tourism; Founder, Colorful Earth; Head of Global Impact Measurement, World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance; Treasurer, GSTC



DR. YASEMIN BIRO KIRTMAN
Knowledge and Learning Coordinator at the Policy, Partnerships and Operations Unit, Global Environment Facility (GEF); Secretary, GSTC



BEATRIZ BARREAL DANIEL
Founder & CEO, Sustainable Riviera Maya



DR. ELIF BALCI FISUNOĞLU
Vice General Manager, Tourism Operations and Development, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA)



GLENN MANDZIUK
CEO, World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance



INGE HUIJBRECHTS
Chief Sustainability & Security Office, Radisson Hotel Group (RHG)



EDISON CHEN
Vice President, Global Destination Marketing & Public Relations, Trip.com Group



JORGE MOLLER
Director, Regenera



JULIÁN GUERRERO FLS
Lawyer. Policy and Strategy Expert on Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism



KATE HEINY
Vice President, Sustainability, Booking Holdings



MELVIN MAK
Director, Sustainability & ESG, TUI Group



KUNIKO TAKASAKI
Executive Advisor, JTB Group; Professor, Faculty of Cultural Studies Department of Culture and Tourism, Kyoto Sangyo University



MATT CALLAGHAN
Chief Operating Officer, easyJet holidays



MATTHIAS BEYER
Chief Executive Officer, mascontour GmbH



RANDY DURBAND
CEO, GSTC



STEFANO RAVELLI
Chair of the GSTC Italy, Working Group

GSTC Team Members



RANDY DURBAND

Chief Executive Officer



DR. MIHEE KANG

Chief Assurance Officer



ROI ARIEL

Stakeholder Engagement Director



EMI KAIWA

Finance Director



WENDY LI

National Programs Director



JORGE MOLLER

Program Director Latin America & Caribbean



DR. IOANNIS PAPPAS

Regional Director for Europe



MICHELLE JANKE

Regional Director for Europe



CB RAMKUMAR

Program Director South Asia



TIFFANY CHAN

Destinations Program Manager



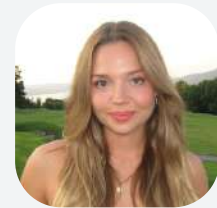
ESTEFANÍA DEL AZAR

Communications Manager



ANE DE MIGUEL

Communications Specialist



MARIANA STEINER

Communications Assistant



VIVIAN YU

Events Manager



ADRIANA PIZZI

Membership Manager



MEI-HAN FENG

Membership Coordinator



RITA KUAN

Market Strategy Manager



DR. SOOHYUN KWON

Futures Lab Specialist & Japan Director



NAOMI OIWA

Japan Market Development Manager



TAEYN KIM

Futures Lab Specialist



DR. JISUN KIM

Training Program Manager



AYAKO EZAKI

Online Training Manager



PATRICIA ARELLANO

Training Program Coordinator



WEIXIN LEE

Training Coordinator



YOKO UEKI

Japan Training Coordinator



JESÚS MENA

IT Manager



EMILY CHO

HR Manager



MUSTAFA SÖĞÜT

Head of Accreditation Compliance Assessment



JOONSIK SON

Head of Accreditation Operations



FACHRI ARTADI

Head of Industry Accreditation



ÖYKÜ ÖZTÜRK

Head of Destination Accreditation



NATALIA SANIN

Associate Accreditation Manager



DR. SO YOUNG LEE

Senior Assurance Manager & Futures Lab Specialist



YEJEE OH

Accreditation Compliance Manager



EREL BEN DOR

Auditor Training Manager



OZLEM OKCU

Senior Accreditation Manager



BAŞAK ILGIN

Assurance Coordinator



CHRISTINE COLYN MARASIGAN

Assurance Operations Coordinator



MARIA LIONTAKI

Lead Assesor



NABILAH BINTE MOHAMAD ALI

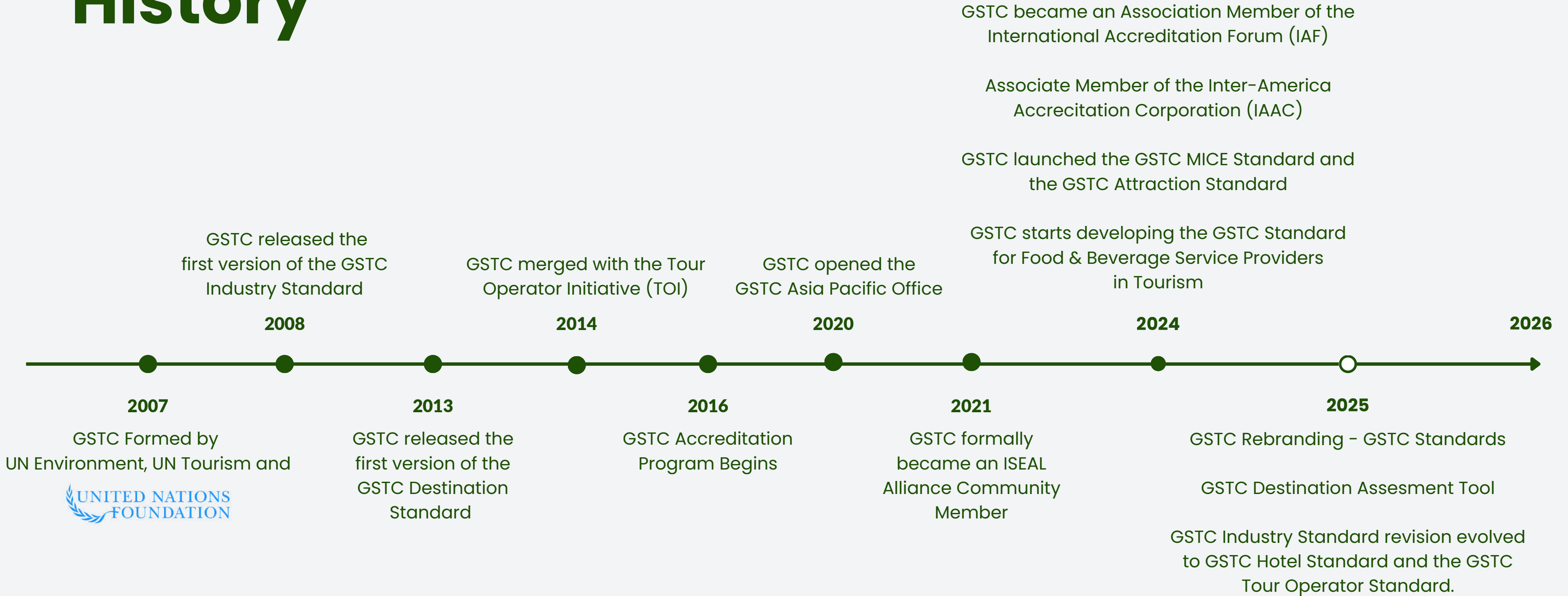
Global Administrative Coordinator



VINITA PENNA

Marketing Manager

Our History



For more detailed information, visit [History of GSTC](#).



THE GLOBAL GOALS


Our Alignment to the SDGs

There is a strong relationship between the GSTC Standards and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By up taking the GSTC Standards, you are helping to meet the United Nations (UN) SDGs. Economic, environmental, and societal dimensions are all addressed by the GSTC Standards. Destinations and organizations looking to contribute to the SDGs will find that the GSTC Standards and other GSTC-Recognized Standards provide effective tools to help them rise to the challenge.

Application of the GSTC Standards will help destinations and businesses contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. Against each of the criteria, one or more of the 17 SDGs is identified, to which it most closely relates.

For more detailed information, visit [here](#).



#GSTC2023
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
CONFERENCE

04

**Our Performance
in 2025**

GSTC Standards

The GSTC Standards were created to provide a common, global understanding of sustainable tourism, and are the minimum that businesses, governments, and destinations should achieve to approach social, environmental, cultural, and economic sustainability.

The GSTC Standards indicate what should be done, not how to do it, or whether the goal has been achieved. Performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation fulfill this role, all of which are an indispensable complement to the GSTC Standards.

GSTC Destination Standard

Guidelines for destinations, relating to the sustainable management of tourism destinations and intended for public policy-makers and destination managers.

GSTC
Destination
Standard

GSTC Hotel Standard

Guidelines for hotels and any type of accommodation, relating to the sustainable management of tourism.

GSTC
Hotels
Standard

GSTC Tour Operator Standard

Guidelines for tour operators or travel agencies relating to the sustainable management of tourism.

GSTC
Tour Operator
Standard

GSTC MICE Standard

Guidelines for players in the MICE industry, especially those who are involved in Venues, Event Organizers, and Events & Exhibitors.

GSTC
MICE
Standard

GSTC Attraction Standard

Guidelines for all types of attractions including, but not limited to, theme parks, museums, and national parks.

GSTC
Attraction
Standard

5 GSTC
Standard
Sets in 2025



2025 highlights

The **GSTC renamed its global standards** from 'GSTC Criteria' to 'GSTC Standards' to enhance clarity and alignment with international terminology on April 7, 2025.

Public consultations on the GSTC Standards during 2025:

- First and second public consultation for the GSTC Food and Beverage Service Provider Standard (F&B Standard in short).
- Third public consultation for the GSTC Hotel Standard and the GSTC Tour Operator Standard.

Workshops on the GSTC Standards:

- Regional workshop on the GSTC Food and Beverage Service Provider Standard held in Taiwan on April 25, 2025.

Publication of the GSTC Hotel Standard version 4.0 and GSTC Tour Operator Standard version 4.0 on December 30, 2025.

The **GSTC Attraction Early Adopter Program** started in June 2025. It is a two-year program designed to facilitate the practical implementation of the GSTC Attraction Standard.



For more detailed information, visit [GSTC Standards](#).

"Tourism can only advance sustainably when there is a clear and shared framework to guide systematic implementation. The GSTC Standards provide that common language and implementation guidance, helping hotels, tour operators, destinations, attractions, and the MICE sector work toward sustainability in a consistent and practical way. After many years of operating standards for hotels, tour operators/land transport, and destinations, now we apply our well-honed skills in inclusively developing standards and providing guidance on how to apply them to the critical sectors of MICE and Attractions," said **Randy Durband, Chief Executive Officer of GSTC.**

Serve as basic guidelines for businesses of all sizes to become more sustainable, and help businesses choose sustainable tourism programs that fulfill these global standards

Help consumers identify sound sustainable tourism programs and businesses

Help certification and other voluntary programs ensure that their standards meet a broadly accepted baseline

Serve as basic guidelines for education and training bodies, such as hotel schools and universities



Serve as the basis for certification for sustainability

Provide greater market access in the growing market for sustainable products, serving as guidance both for travelers and for travel agencies in choosing suppliers and sustainable tourism programs

Serve as a common denominator for information media to recognize sustainable tourism providers

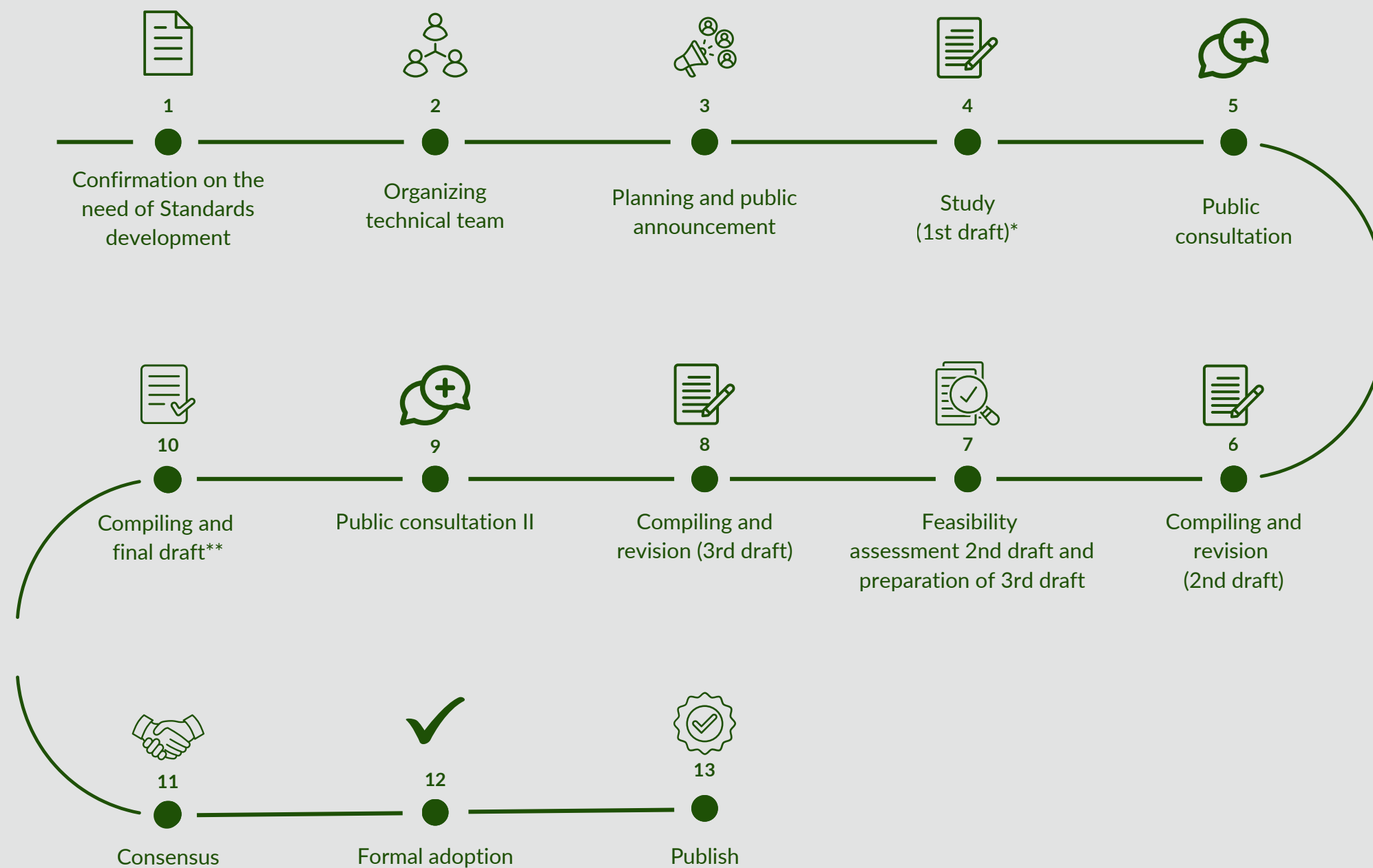
Offer governmental, non-governmental, and private sector programs a starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements

Demonstrate leadership that inspires others to act

Uses of the Standards

With the five standard sets, the GSTC intends to raise awareness and education levels of all travel and tourism players of sustainable tourism concepts, to support sustainable consumption and production. Therefore, the **GSTC Standards are publicly available** on the website and have been translated into many languages. They are available for the public to download from the GSTC website.

Standards Development Process



The **GSTC Standards** are built on decades of prior work and experience around the world. They take into account the numerous guidelines and standards for sustainable tourism from every continent.

During the development process, standards were widely consulted globally, in developed and developing countries and several languages. They reflect our goal of attaining a global consensus on sustainable tourism. Potential indicators were screened for relevance and practicality, as well as their applicability to a broad range of destination types. They were field-tested around the world.

GSTC Standards development and revision follow the GSTC Standard Setting Manual version 3.0, where the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems is used as a reference.

The ISEAL is the global membership organization for ambitious, collaborative and transparent sustainability systems. ISEAL advocates for the development and adoption of credible, effective sustainability systems, and works to promote the conditions for their uptake. ISEAL members are sustainability systems and accreditation bodies dedicated to delivering benefits for people and the planet. ISEAL's goal is to support ambitious sustainability systems and their partners in addressing the world's most pressing challenges, such as the climate emergency, biodiversity crisis, human rights issues, and persistent poverty. By fostering credible practices and driving impactful changes, ISEAL aims to make markets a force for good, helping companies and governments meet their sustainability commitments and achieve the UN SDGs.

*Phase 4 is only relevant to a new standard development.

**For standard revisions, GSTC conducts a third public consultation before the compiling it to the final draft.

Stakeholder Engagement in GSTC Tour Operator Standard and GSTC Hotel Standard During 2025

GSTC Hotel Standard

Feasibility Assessment Participants: ONE15 Marina Sentosa Cove Singapore; Six Senses; Ascott Hotels from Cambodia, Europe, Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

Engagement with internationally recognized organizations: Accessible Travel Solutions; UN Tourism; End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT); National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS); Animondial.

GSTC Tour Operator Standard

Engagement with internationally recognized organizations: Accessible Travel Solutions; UN Tourism; ECPAT; NABERS; Animondial.

Stakeholder Engagement in GSTC Food & Beverage Standard Development During 2025

Advisory Group: Culinary Tourism Alliance (North America); Kilohana Collective, a Division of Council For Native Hawaiian Advancement (Region in the Pacific); Lever Foundation (Global).

GSTC Conference Workshop: Workshops during GSTC Global Sustainable Tourism Conferences were held in Fiji on August 4, 2025.

Participants: Control Union (Taiwan); Faculty of Foreign Studies at the Meijo University; Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association; Florida International University; HotelZero; Nexus Global Fiji; Kyunghee University; Vuda Marina Fiji; ZYT PTE LTD.



GSTC Membership

What is a GSTC Member?

A GSTC Member is an individual or organization that joins the GSTC to actively support and engage in its mission to promote sustainable tourism worldwide. Members are part of a global community committed to advancing the GSTC Standards to pursue sustainable tourism development. They gain access to valuable resources, networking opportunities, and the ability to contribute to shaping the future of sustainable tourism through collaboration, advocacy, and knowledge sharing.



Destination Members:

The GSTC Destination Membership offers destinations and public agencies a pathway to deeper engagement with global sustainable tourism principles. Members commit to enhancing sustainability performance and elevating the visibility of sustainability efforts. They also gain access to tailored resources and expertise for sustainable destination development and management, including training, capacity building, networking, and assessment options.



Organization Members:

The GSTC Organization Membership showcases commitment to sustainable tourism for private-sector and non-profit organizations of all sizes. Members actively promote sustainable tourism policies and practices worldwide, driving demand for responsible travel experiences.



Individual Members:

The GSTC Individual Membership supports sustainable tourism practices globally. Members contribute to spreading awareness and implementing sustainable solutions in the travel and tourism industry.

2025 highlights

Strengthening Sustainable Tourism in Argentina: GSTC's Engagement in Education & Hospitality.

During the last week of August 2025 and the beginning of September 2025, the GSTC carried out an extensive agenda in Buenos Aires and Iguazú, sharing knowledge and experiences through lectures, presentations, and workshops with universities, hotels and MICE professionals, and tourism stakeholders. The program highlighted the relevance of the GSTC Standards as a global framework to support sustainability in education, hospitality, and destination management.

The **GSTC conducted a 2025 Members Survey** to better understand member needs and satisfaction worldwide. The results will help inform future actions to strengthen engagement across the GSTC community.

Renewal of the GSTC Members Bulletin: Building on insights from the 2025 Members Survey, a new version of the bulletin was designed, which includes insights members feedback.



"Our GSTC community is more than a network; it is a shared commitment to care for people, places, and the planet. Each member, from small local initiatives to global organizations, brings unique insight and passion, reminding us that sustainable tourism is about creating opportunities while protecting the communities and environments. For me, GSTC membership is also a space for sharing, collaboration, and support; a place where we can grow together, learn from mistakes, and stand up again. Together, we continue to inspire change, showing that responsible tourism thrives when we work as a community, not in competition," says **Adriana Pizzi, Membership Manager at GSTC.**



The GSTC offers a diverse range of webinars for its members each month, providing valuable insights and knowledge on sustainable tourism practices. These webinars serve as a platform for experts to share their expertise, while fostering engaging discussions on various aspects of sustainability in tourism.

Total number of webinars executed in 2025: 32

Most popular webinars:

- 1 Inclusive, Impactful, Innovative: Ascott's Sustainable Hospitality in Action**
Participants: 149
- 2 The MICE Early Adopters: Insights from the First Organizations Applying the GSTC MICE Standard **Public Webinar**** 
Participants: 83
- 3 Invasive Alien Species and Tourism: From Awareness to Action**
Participants: 72
- 4 From Tourism Measurement to Destination Management: How DMOs Can Leverage Data to Foster Sustainable Tourism**
Participants: 70
- 5 Empowering Change: Unveiling the Sustainable Tourism Academy**
Public Webinar 
Participants: 69

**Watch here
the GSTC Webinar for
Members past Recordings** 

Destination Meetings 2025

GSTC Japan Member Meetings

In February and September, the GSTC Japan Team hosted two in-person Japan Member Meetings in Tokyo and Sapporo. The meetings brought together GSTC Members and tourism professionals in Japan to exchange experiences, discuss sustainability challenges, and explore the application of the GSTC Standards in the local context. Through interactive discussions and knowledge sharing, the meetings strengthened collaboration among Members and supported ongoing dialogue on advancing sustainable tourism practices in the region.



GSTC2025 Fiji Destination Member Meeting

During the GSTC2025 Fiji Conference, GSTC hosted a closed-door Destination Member Meeting, providing a dedicated space for destination members to engage directly with GSTC leadership and exchange insights with peers. The meeting brought together 14 destination members and facilitated in-depth discussions on shared challenges and best practices in sustainable destination management.



Discussions focused on key themes including Coastal and Island Tourism, Community, Culture and Responsible Development, and Climate Resilience, Adaptation, and Sustainable Recovery. The meeting fostered open dialogue and peer learning, supporting collaboration among destination members and reinforcing the GSTC's role in advancing sustainable destination practices, particularly for coastal and island contexts.

Epicientro Lanzarote Sustainable Tourism Workshop

In February 2025, the GSTC collaborated with the Lanzarote Society for External Promotion (SPEL – Turismo Lanzarote) and the UN Global Compact Spain to deliver Epicientro Lanzarote, a two-day workshop aimed at raising regional awareness of sustainable tourism practices. The event brought together tourism stakeholders to exchange insights and discuss practical approaches to responsible destination development, supporting collaboration and knowledge sharing at the local level.



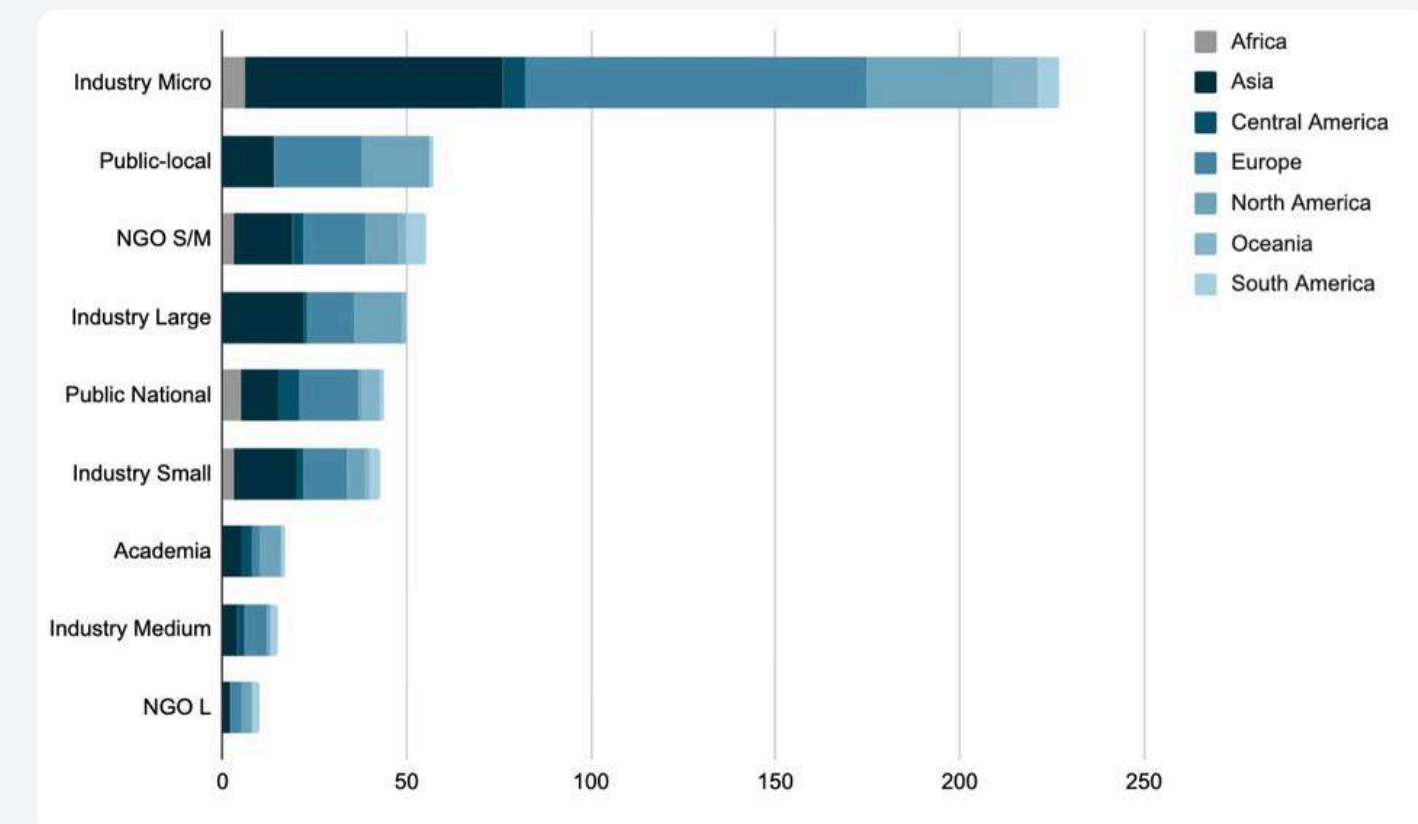
GSTC Organization Members in 2025

In 2025, GSTC membership grew to 518 organizations, including 87 new members, a 5.5% increase from 2024.

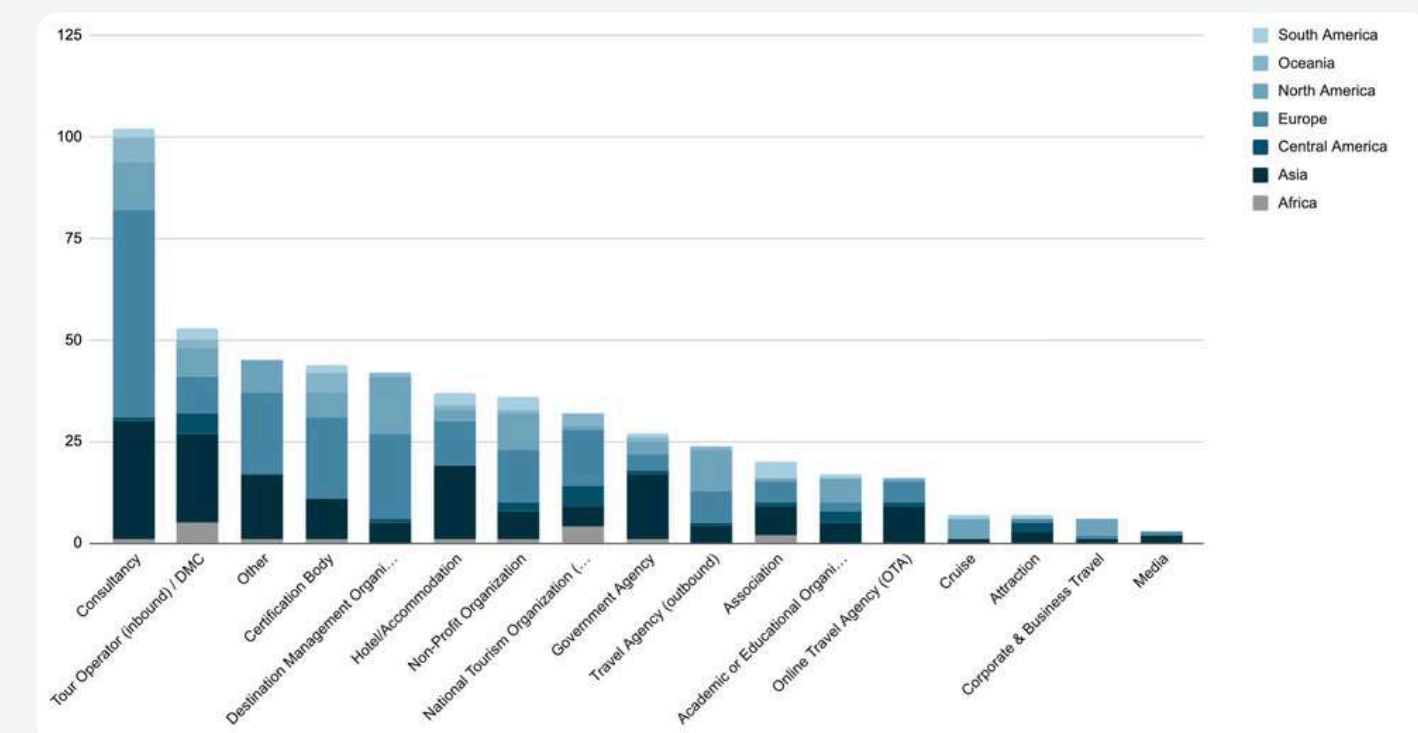
The graphs show the total GSTC Membership until 2025 per category and per sector. Europe, Asia and North America remain being the territories with the largest GSTC Members.

The categories with the highest number of GSTC Members are industry Micro, Public Provincial and Municipal (Public-Local) and NGOs. Concerning the sectors, Consultancy and Tour Operators/DMOs are the ones with the highest number of GSTC Members until 2024.

Total Membership by Category by 2025



Total Membership by Sector by 2025



Number of total Members in 2025: **518**
An increase of **5.5%** compared to 2024

GSTC Sustainable Tourism Training Program

The GSTC Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP) provides the knowledge and tools needed to improve sustainability practices in travel and tourism with GSTC Authorized Trainers worldwide.


The GSTC STTP is based on the GSTC Standards and is available in **19 languages**: English, Spanish, German, French, Italian, Greek, Swedish, Korean, Turkish, Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian, Malay, Russian, Polish, Thai, Vietnamese, Sinhale, and Arabic.

The GSTC STTP includes both **public and branded courses**. The program offers diverse public courses such as GSTC Sustainable Tourism Course, Sustainable Hospitality Course, Sustainable Tour Operator Course, Accessibility and Inclusive Travel Course, Sustainable MICE Course, Sustainable Attraction Course, and Destination Stewardship Course. Additionally, branded courses can also be offered as private and/or customized training to meet specific needs.

"We are proud to work closely with a diverse range of global partners to deliver practical and credible sustainability training for the tourism industry. Grounded in the GSTC Standards and available in 19 languages, our Training Programs are expanding access to a shared global framework, enabling organizations and professionals worldwide to take measurable and transparent action toward sustainable tourism," exposes **Dr. Jisun Kim, Training Program Manager at GSTC**.



2025 highlights

The **GSTC's collaboration with Virgin Voyages** delivers an online Sustainable Tour Operator Course to support their sustainability vision. This partnership offers free training to Virgin Voyages' partner tour operators, providing shore excursion packages. The training aims to strengthen sustainable practices across the company's network and wider community. 

The **GSTC and Agoda Launch the 'Sustainable Tourism Academy'**, a free digital Training Platform to empower hoteliers with sustainability skills (sustainabletourismacademy.org). This initiative allows hoteliers to learn sustainability principles in hospitality, and serves as a stepping stone to advanced GSTC Training. It offers self-paced modules, interactive content, and localized resources in multiple Southeast Asian languages.

The **GSTC and easyJet Holidays partnered to launch sustainable hospitality training** for their hotel partners. The program includes an online, self-paced course centered on the GSTC Hotel Standard. The training is promoted to easyJet Holidays' partner hotels, encouraging participants to strengthen their sustainability performance and align with international best practices.

The **GSTC and JTB partnered to launch the sustainability training for JTB staff**. With continuous partnership, in 2025, the GSTC developed and launched a self-paced, customized Sustainability Training for JTB Corp. The course provides more than 3,000 employees with an introduction to the GSTC Standards.

The **GSTC and RNT partnered to launch the sustainability training for RNT staff**. The product of this partnership is the development of a Pre-Training Course on Sustainable Tourism. This training, delivered in Japanese, is part of a broader, multi-year program aimed at embedding sustainability into RNT HOTELS' operations and enhancing their contribution to responsible tourism in Japan.

The **GSTC and California State University, Monterey Bay, signed a Partnership Agreement to advance sustainable tourism in higher education**. This partnership formalizes a shared commitment to expanding sustainable tourism education by integrating the GSTC Standards into CSUMB's academic programs and professional development initiatives.

The **GSTC and International Hospitality Management Institute (IMHI) – MSc in Hospitality Management, an ESSEC Business School program**, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to have the Sustainable Tourism Course as part of IMHI's class titled "Sustainable Tourism & Destination Management".

The **GSTC and the Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Council (ISTC) signed Training Partnership Agreement** in December 2025. This partnership is to advance sustainability training in Indonesia. ISTC shall operate and promote the STTPs in the country.

Training Courses under STTP

NEW in 2025

Sustainable Tourism Course

As a GSTC flagship course, we have conducted this training since 2026. The course provides a comprehensive understanding of both the GSTC Hotel Standard, GSTC Tour Operator Standard, and the GSTC Destination Standard, along with the best practices for businesses and destinations. This course aims to help companies and destinations make informed decisions about sustainability practices and to develop tourism policies that focus on sustainability.

 [All about it, here!](#)



Sustainable Hospitality Course

The course is aimed at hospitality and accommodation professionals and offers practical insights on implementing sustainable hotel practices. This course provides industry practitioner examples and insights based on real-life experience to help with self-assessment when applying the GSTC Hotel Standard to own situations.

 [All about it, here!](#)



Sustainable Tour Operator Course

This course offers tour operators and DMCs a practical guide to sustainable operations, focusing on minimizing environmental impacts, boosting social and economic benefits, and aligning with global sustainability standards. There are two Tour Operator Course versions available: General version and Coastal version.

 [All about it, here!](#)



Accessible and Inclusive Travel Course

It is designed to help individuals develop a deeper understanding of how to deliver experiences that are accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities and other accessibility needs. This course provides valuable insights into the size and potential of the accessible and inclusive travel market segment. It offers practical guidance on how to better attract, serve, and retain customers with access needs.

 [All about it, here!](#)



Sustainable MICE Course

This course equips MICE industry professionals with essential sustainability practices for venues, event organizers, and exhibitions. It covers the GSTC MICE Standard, real-world examples, and links to the UN's SDGs, helping participants create more eco-friendly and socially responsible events.

 [All about it, here!](#)



Sustainable Attraction Course

This course helps businesses and organizations understand how to integrate sustainability into the development, management, and daily operations of tourist attractions. The course reviews the GSTC Attraction Standard and provides clear guidance on applying its performance indicators across four pillars of sustainable attraction management: sustainable management, socio-economic benefits, cultural heritage protection, and environmental stewardship.

 [All about it, here!](#)



Destination Stewardship Course

This course equips participants with the knowledge and tools to balance tourism growth with environmental, cultural, and community well-being. Designed for tourism professionals, policymakers, and destination managers, this course dives into best practices, case studies, and actionable strategies to create thriving, resilient destinations.

 [All about it, here!](#)



NEW in 2025

NEW in 2025

Upcoming
in 2026

Destination Program

The GSTC Destinations Program expanded in 2025, introducing new resources and initiatives to strengthen collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and the adoption of sustainable practices across its global network. Through the Program, the GSTC continues to connect destination members, partners, and stakeholders, driving positive impacts for the communities and environments they serve.

The GSTC actively engaged with all 97 Destination Members, ensuring at least two interactions per member each year. In 2025, an in-person Destination Member Meeting was held in Fiji with 46 attendees, alongside a Roadmap to Destination Sustainability Workshop designed to support destinations in embarking on their sustainability journey using the GSTC framework. An additional workshop was held in Washington, DC, USA for Destination DC stakeholders, focusing on the critical role of sustainability certifications in the tourism sector.

*“2025 marked a year of continued growth and strengthened collaboration for the Destinations Program, as we expanded our reach and deepened engagement to support destinations worldwide in advancing sustainable tourism. Our focus remains on sharing knowledge, practical resources, and guidance through a framework that fosters holistic destination stewardship,” shares **Tiffany Chan, GSTC Destinations Program Manager.***

Discover more about [GSTC for Destinations here.](#)



Destination Roadmap workshop in Fiji



Destination Assessment

The GSTC Destination Assessment is designed to introduce the destination management team to the core elements required to develop sustainable policies and practices by applying the GSTC Standards to the specific destination.

The assessment process allows a destination to participate directly in applying the GSTC Destination Standard, to understand its sustainability status against the world's leading standards, and to identify areas for improvement based on the criteria.

During the year, the GSTC Destination Program assessors completed five destination assessments (two in Türkiye; Phuket, Thailand; the Cook Islands; and Palm Beach County, USA), bringing the total to **53 destination assessments** to date.

2025 highlights

The GSTC conducted the Destination Assessment of Phuket, Thailand from October 2024 to September 2025. GSTC Chief Assurance Officer, Dr. Mihee Kang, led the assessment with Dr. Panate Manomaivibool, Assistant Professor at Burapha University, serving as co-assessor. Read more [here](#).

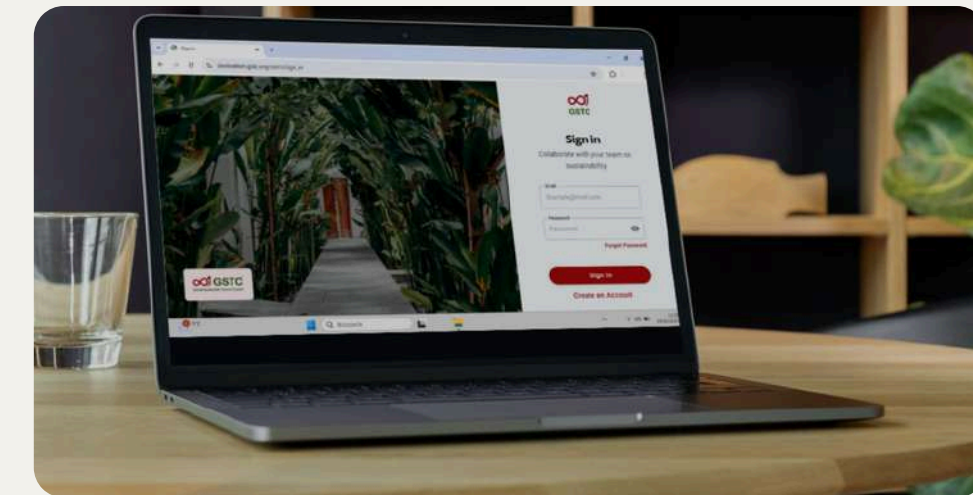
The GSTC concluded the Destination Assessment of Palm Beach County from June 2024 to January 2025. GSTC expert assessors Dr. Kelly Bricker and Dr. Kathleen Andereck led the assessment. The assessment was one component of the development of Palm Beach County's comprehensive Tourism Master Plan, led by CSL International.

The GSTC concluded the Destination Assessment in the Cook Islands in January 2025, led by Dr. Kelly Bricker and Dr. Deborah Kerstetter. These insights will help shape the Cook Islands' first Destination Stewardship Plan to ensure tourism decisions put the islands and communities first. Read more [here](#).

The GSTC concluded the Destination Assessment in the Birgi and Sige (Türkiye) in July 2025, with the participation of Cappadocia University. The assessment process helped the destination management team identify the essential components and areas for improvement necessary for developing sustainable policies and practices. Read more [here](#).

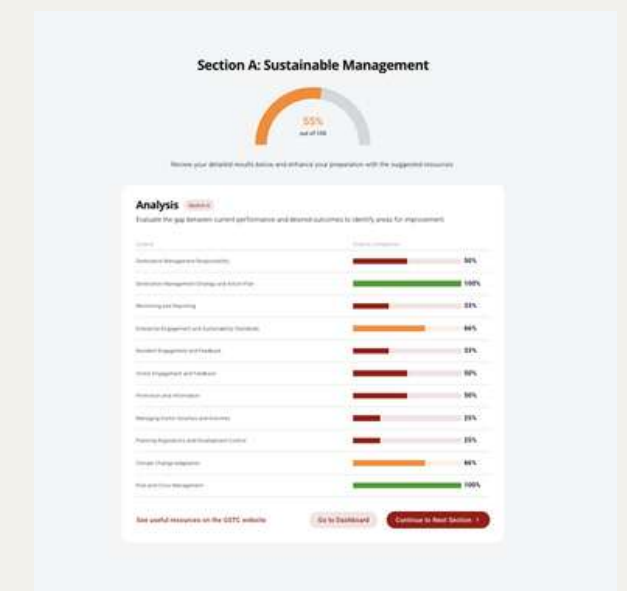
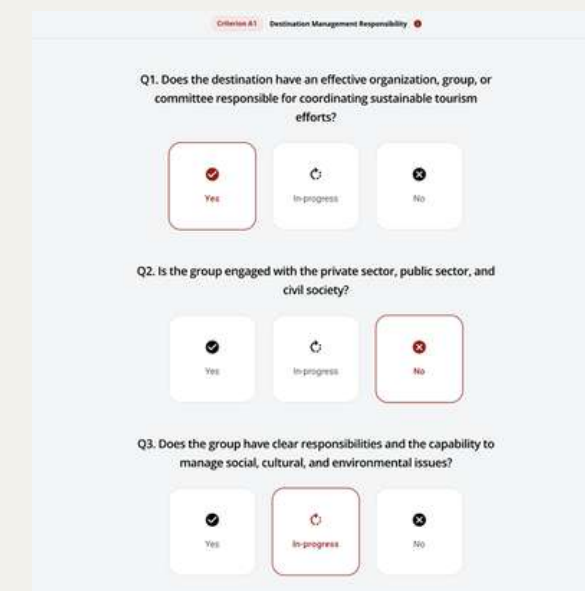
GSTC Destination Self-Assessment Tool

In April, the GSTC launched a Destination Self-Assessment Tool for destination managers, allowing users to evaluate and track their progress against the four pillars of the GSTC Destination Standard. Read more [here](#).



2025 highlights

Practitioners from over 70 countries have started or completed their self-assessments, demonstrating the global applicability of the GSTC Standards.



Destination Stewardship Report & Yearbook

In partnership with the Destination Stewardship Center (DSC) and Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), one Destination Stewardship Yearbook and three Destination Stewardship Reports (DSR) were published, **containing 23 insightful stories**.

The DSR provides practical information and insights that are useful to anyone whose work or interests involve improving destination stewardship in a post-pandemic world. It is published every four months. In each issue, the DSR features destinations that have embraced effective and holistic management, best practices in sustainable tourism, and insights from tourism leaders on better destination stewardship and development.

The Destination Stewardship Yearbook is a comprehensive compilation of articles from the 2024–2025 Destination Stewardship Reports, curated into a single document. It celebrates the efforts and accomplishments of the people behind these destinations. Collectively, their stories showcase how properly managed tourism can be constructive rather than destructive.

The DSR received significant online engagement. The reports were opened 1,877 times on Mailchimp and viewed 1,205 times on the GSTC website.



Engaging Governments

The GSTC offers advisory services and support for workshops, training, and capacity building to assist governments in complying with the GSTC Standards. In 2025, the GSTC conducted two destination workshops designed specifically for key individuals responsible for managing the Türkiye Environmental and Cultural Sustainability Program from **Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA)**, advisory service for the **Bahama’s Ministry of Tourism, Investments, and Aviation (BMOTIA)**, and supported destinations through high-level workshops on specific topics, in **Lanzarote, Spain; Washington, DC; Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia; Asser Province, Saudi Arabia**; and others

reports



[Destination Stewardship Report Jan – Apr 2025 \(Volume 5, Issue 3\)](#)



[Destination Stewardship Report May – Aug 2025 \(Volume 6, Issue 1\)](#)

[Destination Stewardship Report Sept – Dec 2025 \(Volume 6, Issue 2\)](#)



[Destination Stewardship Yearbook \(DSY\) 2024-2025](#)

2025 highlights

In partnership with the **BMOTIA**, the GSTC supported the formation of two new destination stewardship councils on the islands of Inagua and North Andros. With training and guidance provided by the GSTC, the BMOTIA has successfully created eight destination stewardship councils to date to manage their island destinations. Read more [here](#).

Developed under the Petra Tourism Development Master Plan 2023–2033, the **Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA)** issued the “Petra Five Promises” guidelines in early 2025. In the course of preparing the Master Plan, PDTRA and JICA have undertaken the GSTC STTP, in collaboration with the GSTC and EcoHotels, and the Master Plan aligns its tourism strategies with the GSTC Standards. Read more [here](#).

GSTC Assurance

GSTC Accreditation

GSTC accredits CBs for certifying hotels, tour operators, and destinations as sustainable. In Europe, GSTC collaborates with national accreditation bodies like ACCREDIA to streamline the process and ensure alignment with European Union (EU) regulations. In 2025, the number of GSTC-ACBs grew to 17, with the addition of 6 new CBs. This reflects the increasing interest in GSTC's Accreditation Program.

GSTC-accredited CBs during 2025

Accreditation Bodies for Hotels/Accommodations

- Bureau Veritas
- Control Union
- Dream&Charme
- FQC
- RoyalCert
- Vireo Srl
- TÜV Austria Turk
- TÜV Rheinland
- TRB
- GCL International
- TSE Global
- Alberk QA Technic
- Mauritius Standard Bureau
- United Certification Systems Limited

Accreditation Bodies for Tour Operators

- Bureau Veritas
- Control Union
- RoyalCert
- Vireo Srl
- TSE Global
- Mauritius Standard Bureau
- United Certification Systems Limited

Accreditation Bodies for Destinations

- EarthCheck
- Green Destinations
- Vireo Srl

"Accreditation is the cornerstone of trust in sustainable tourism. The significant growth of our Accreditation Program in 2025 reflects a clear industry shift toward true accountability. As we expand our global network of accredited certification bodies, we are establishing a robust worldwide infrastructure for credible verification. By ensuring these bodies operate with the highest levels of competence and impartiality, we provide both the industry and travelers with the confidence that sustainability claims are genuine, transparent, and impactful."
Says Dr. Mihee Kang, GSTC Chief Assurance Officer.

What is GSTC Accreditation?

GSTC Accreditation is the independent verification that a CB operates in line with international standards and best practices. It confirms that the CB can certify tourism businesses or destinations in a competent, impartial, and credible way, ensuring trust in sustainable tourism certifications. Read more [here](#).

Read more about [GSTC Accreditation here](#).

2025 highlights

Roundtable for Micro and Small Enterprises Certification (R4MSEC)

In 2025, the GSTC launched the R4MSEC initiative to understand why micro and small tourism enterprises remain underrepresented in sustainability certification. Through a multi-stakeholder roundtable with businesses, auditors, and experts, the initiative examined challenges these enterprises face when meeting formal certification requirements. The discussions produced recommendations to make GSTC-aligned certification more accessible, including simplified evidence approaches and more inclusive certification pathways. Read more [here](#).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

In July 2025, the GSTC established the TAC, a specialized consultative body composed of distinguished global experts from across the travel and tourism sector. Meeting twice a year, the TAC serves as a strategic bridge between the GSTC's mission and the technical realities of the industry, ensuring that the organization's decision-making process is informed by high-level expertise and diverse sectoral perspectives. Read more [here](#).



Destination Manual Update

The GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies – Destination was revised from version 2.0 to 2.1, introducing minor clarifications to improve consistency and ease of use. Updates included refined terminology, clearer guidance for DMOs, and editorial adjustments to strengthen readability. These revisions did not alter accreditation requirements, ensuring continuity for all stakeholders.

Industry Manual Update

During 2025, the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies – Industry was revised to Version 5.0, expanding accreditation scope to include MICE and Attractions. This update will reflect GSTC's commitment to keeping pace with the evolving tourism landscape and ensuring credibility across diversified industry segments. Version 5.0 will be published in 2026 and will introduce scope-specific provisions, will clarify compliance verification at the indicator level of the GSTC Standards, and will refine auditor qualification requirements to align with the characteristics of these new sectors.

GSTC Accreditation Impartiality Committee

Early in 2025, the Impartiality Committee was created, which is responsible for evaluating the impartiality management activities of the GSTC Accreditation program, advising on issues that may affect GSTC's impartiality and confidence in assurance, and analyzing sources of risks to impartiality along the accreditation process of CBs. Read more [here](#).



The GSTC Industry Standard Revision concluded successfully

In 2025, the GSTC completed the fourth revision of its Industry Standard, separating it into the GSTC Hotel Standard and the GSTC Tour Operator Standard for greater clarity and relevance. This update expands the GSTC framework to five published standards, covering destinations, hotels, tour operators, MICE, and attractions, with a Food and Beverage Service Provider Standard expected in 2026. Developed through expert input and public consultation, the revised standards introduce clearer indicators and guidance to support consistent global implementation aligned with the United Nations SDGs. Read more [here](#).

Roundtable for Animal Welfare in Tourism (R4AWT)

In 2025, GSTC launched the Roundtable for R4AWT to respond to a growing and complex challenge related to animal welfare in the tourism sector. GSTC adopted a multi-stakeholder roundtable approach, bringing together animal welfare experts, CBs, auditors, tourism operators, NGOs, and international organizations. Between May and December 2025, the Roundtable convened six structured meetings, combining scientific frameworks, international best practices, case studies, and progressive review of existing GSTC Standards. Read more [here](#).



GSTC Certification

In 2025, the GSTC monitored market demand and stakeholder feedback closely. As a result, GSTC launched the Official Directory of GSTC-certified Hotels, offering a transparent way to verify certified accommodations worldwide. The platform responds to the growing demand for credible sustainability information in tourism. That same year, GSTC also surveyed certified hotels to assess the value of certification. The results revealed strong market-driven motivations, with increased trust and credibility cited as key benefits.

In parallel, GSTC continued to strengthen the quality and consistency of its Certification Program by enhancing oversight mechanisms and working closely with ACBs. Efforts were also made to increase awareness and understanding of GSTC Certification among industry stakeholders, reinforcing its role as a credible and globally recognized benchmark for sustainable tourism.

Recognizing the expanding boundaries of the tourism sector, GSTC also initiated a public consultation process to gather stakeholder input on the introduction of new certification scope for MICE and Attractions, ensuring procedural robustness, transparency, and due process in the development of its accredited certification scope.

What is GSTC Certification?

GSTC Certification* is an independent third party certification conducted by GSTC-ACBs to certify tourism businesses against the GSTC Standards. The GSTC does not conduct certification; rather, it accredits CBs that certify tourism businesses. Through a rigorous accreditation process, the GSTC ensures that these CBs operate with transparency, impartiality, and competence. In short, the GSTC certifies the certifiers. Read more [here](#).



Find more information about [GSTC Certification here](#).

2025 highlights

GSTC-Certified Hotels Share Insights on the Value and Impact of GSTC Certification

In 2025, the GSTC conducted a survey of GSTC-certified hotels to better understand why leading properties worldwide choose certification through GSTC-ACBs and how GSTC Certification supports their sustainability efforts. The findings demonstrate strong market-driven motivations for certification and highlight the tangible, operational, and strategic benefits hotels gain by aligning with the GSTC Hotel Standard.

Certified hotels highlighted several key benefits they expected from pursuing GSTC Certification, reflecting the growing importance of sustainability in today's hospitality landscape. At the top of the list was increased trust and credibility among customers, cited by the vast majority of respondents, who view certification as a powerful way to demonstrate authenticity in their environmental and social commitments.

View the report [here](#).

GSTC Publishes Official Directory of GSTC-Certified Hotels

In 2025, the GSTC launched its official directory, listing hotels and accommodations certified by GSTC-ACBs. These properties have been independently assessed and verified to meet the GSTC Hotel Standard (or other GSTC-Recognized Standards), ensuring credible and transparent sustainability performance.

Travelers can easily explore verified sustainability information by entering a hotel's unique GSTC Certification Code into the Directory. This feature provides direct access to essential details about the certification status, including the certifying body and date of certification, helping users make informed decisions with confidence and clarity.

The launch of the GSTC-Certified Hotels Directory responds to growing demand for verified information on truly sustainable accommodations. It helps bring clarity and integrity to the tourism marketplace, making it easier for users to find and support businesses that are genuinely committed to responsible, sustainable tourism.

View here the Directory of GSTC-certified hotels [here](#).

*The term "GSTC Certification" is a shorthand for "Certified by a Certification Body that is GSTC-accredited."



GSTC Auditor Training

As the demand for GSTC Certification continues to rise, ensuring a steady supply of qualified auditors remains a priority. The GSTC Auditor Training plays a critical role in maintaining the credibility of the GSTC Certification by equipping auditors and certification decision-makers with the necessary knowledge and competencies in sustainable tourism practices.

To better support the expanding certification ecosystem, GSTC has increased its global training capacity. Auditor Training was conducted all around the world, from Asia, through Türkiye and Europe, to the first ever Auditor Training course in Latin America in Spanish. Two Destination Standard Auditor Trainings were conducted to support the growing demand for auditors in that scope.

The Auditor Training Program is working on expanding to further GSTC Standards in demand; MICE, Attractions, and more to come.

2025 highlights

In 2025, GSTC hosted 16 Auditor Training sessions, with a total of 398 participants from across the globe.

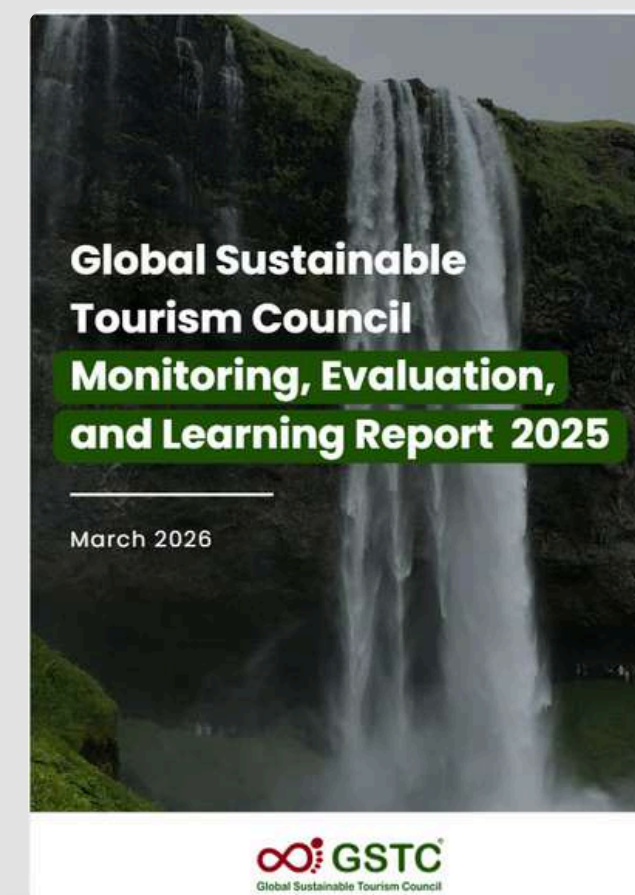
The first ever Auditor Training Course in Spanish was conducted in Latin America! The City of Mexico hosted the first GSTC Hotel Standard and GSTC Tour Operator Standard in November 2025, marking the first of many to come, with at least 2 more planned in 2026. In the training, 15 industry leaders participated from all around the continent, such as USA, Belize, Mexico, Colombia, and Spain.

Some additional suggestions to continue: "Gathering for an on-site training is one of the main pillars of the GSTC Auditor Training, as it allows participants to share ideas and strengthen relations – building strong foundations for regional development."

Discover [GSTC's Auditor Training Program](#) here.

Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Report 2025

The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Report of the GSTC has been published annually for the past three years: [GSTC M&E Report 2023](#), [GSTC M&E Report 2024](#), and [GSTC MEL Report 2025](#). The GSTC MEL Report builds on the GSTC M&E Reports from previous years. In 2025, the change in name highlights that the system goes beyond monitoring and evaluation, placing equal emphasis on learning as a key component. The report documents how the GSTC scheme and its key components are performing, assesses the impacts generated by GSTC's activities, and identifies areas for improvement based on lessons learned. The MEL Report aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme while promoting transparency and supporting continuous improvement.



2025 highlights

With the implementation of the eligibility requirements in 2025, a significant shift was introduced for GSTC-Recognized Standards. These requirements apply to the GSTC Industry, Destination, and MICE Standard and aim to strengthen the credibility, consistency, and assurance level of certifying to GSTC-Recognized Standards.

Under the eligibility, which came into force in 2025, standards must meet the defined eligibility pathways, being used for certification by a GSTC-ACB. This marked a clear move toward reinforced third-party assurance and alignment with internationally recognized accreditation practices.

As a result of these changes, seven Recognized Standard Owners initiated collaboration with GSTC-ACBs or began the process of becoming accredited themselves. This transition was particularly notable among GSTC-Recognized Standard Owners, many of whom viewed the eligibility requirements as a positive step toward increased credibility, market trust, and comparability across certification. Read more [here](#).

GSTC Recognition

The list of GSTC-Recognized Standards is [available publicly](#) and includes sustainability standards applicable to hotels, destinations, tour operators, and the MICE sector. These recognized standards align with the GSTC Standards and support consistent and credible sustainability practices across the tourism industry.

In 2025, a significant step forward was taken with the entry into force of the GSTC Recognition eligibility requirements. From this point onward, GSTC-Recognized Standards used for certification purposes can only be applied within the GSTC Certification framework. This means that certification activities must be carried out by GSTC-ACBs and in full alignment with GSTC Accreditation requirements. This shift represents a substantial enhancement of assurance, ensuring that certifications based on GSTC-Recognized Standards are delivered through robust and independently accredited conformity assessment systems.

Although the overall number of GSTC-Recognized Standards declined in 2025 compared to the previous year, this change reflects a qualitative strengthening rather than a contraction. An increasing proportion of Recognized Standards are now implemented through GSTC-ACBs, indicating closer alignment with GSTC's accreditation, oversight, and assurance expectations. During 2025, three additional standards achieved GSTC Recognition, underscoring the program's emphasis on credibility and robustness rather than scale.

Taken together, developments in 2025 signal a clear evolution of the Recognition Program, from a designation primarily focused on equivalency to one more firmly grounded in accredited certification and credible assurance. Through reinforced eligibility criteria, revised core standards, and deeper integration with GSTC Accreditation processes, the program continues to promote transparency, consistency, and trust in sustainable tourism certification worldwide.

What is GSTC Recognition Status?

GSTC Recognition is a designation granted to sustainable tourism standards that align with the GSTC Standards, ensuring a globally accepted baseline for sustainability practices in tourism. It confirms that a standard is equivalent to the GSTC Standards, and is administered by a standard owner that meets GSTC requirements. However, Recognition applies solely to the standard itself, not to the organization, certification process, or verification methods. Read more [here](#).

**With the eligibility coming into force in 2025 for RSOs, certification or any type of verification against GSTC-Recognized Standards may only be conducted by GSTC-accredited CBs in accordance with GSTC Accreditation requirements. Recognized standards endorsed by public authorities are exempt from this eligibility.*

Working Group Activities

The Working Groups are made up of **GSTC Members working together** with a focus on an area that needs special attention. Their efforts are vital to the organization as they prepare an annual action plan, which is followed by actions by the members of the Working Group.

Destination Stewardship Working Group (DSWG)

The Destination Stewardship Working Group aims to assist destinations in maintaining their cultural, environmental and socio-economic integrity through the implementation of the GSTC Destinations Program. The overall goal is to ensure that destinations retain and enhance their distinctive attributes that make them attractive to beneficial tourism and competitive. See current DSWG members [here](#).

Business Travel Working Group (BTWG)

The Business Travel Working Group (BTWG) seeks to reach new audiences and attract membership among Corporate Travel Managers (CTM), Corporate Travel Program (CTP), and suppliers. While most destinations and hotels accommodate tourists and business clients, it is important to acknowledge the specialized needs and opportunities in the business market. The BTWG enables GSTC to address these better and ensure sustainability standards are relevant in the corporate and business travel sector. See current BTWG members [here](#).

MICE Working Group (MICE WG)

The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Events) Working Group's focus in 2023 was to support the GSTC MICE Standard development process. The expertise of its members is significant to the process. Other goals are to reach new audiences and attract membership from the MICE world. See current MICE WG members [here](#).

Research & Academic Working Group (RAWG)

The Research & Academic Working Group supports the GSTC's activities concerning internal and external communications, content curation, knowledge management, and networking. See current RAWG members [here](#).

Italy Working Group (Italy WG)

With many GSTC Members active in Italy working together to promote the GSTC framework, a dedicated working group focused on activities in Italy. See current Italy WG members [here](#).

India Working Group (India WG)

GSTC has a dedicated Director and a specialized working group focused on India. More information about India WG India [here](#).

Greece Working Group (GWG)

Created in 2024, the Greece Working Group gives the name to a specialized Working Group focused on Greece. Find out more about GSTC's initiatives in Greece [here](#).

ISEAL Landscape Project

The GSTC has been an **ISEAL Community Member since 2021**. Years of dedicated effort have been directed towards aligning with ISEAL's Principles and applying them within the travel and tourism industry. Continuous references in GSTC's Bylaws underscore this commitment. ISEAL works in partnership with associations and organizations to support their sustainability systems and track some of the practices in terms of credibility.

Landscape Verification Project in 2023: Building on a Credible, Valid, and Transparent Data System

In 2023, the Landscape Project served as a critical reflective period for the GSTC. By analyzing previous Destination Assessment activities, the project sought to design a framework that ensures verified, credible information is accessible to all relevant stakeholders. The main goal of the research was to find ways to create a data system that could enhance the credibility, validity, and transparency of the data collected on the field. For more information about the project and the key learning, please read on the GSTC's Annual Report 2024, page 37, [here](#).

The project concluded that effective communication and consistent data collection are vital, along with the use of clear, measurable, and objective indicators. Without precise metrics, sustainability criteria remain open to interpretation, hindering true progress. At the same time, the primary challenge identified was how to maintain transparency and ensure data integrity within an increasingly complex, multi-stakeholder process.

Applying these insights, the GSTC integrated a more rigorous, data-driven approach into its 18 month-long standard development and revision cycles. This included the comprehensive revision of the GSTC Industry Standard, publishing version 4.0 on December 30, 2025, and now divided into GSTC Hotel Standard and GSTC Tour Operator Standard; as well as the creation of a brand-new GSTC Standard: Food and Beverage Service Providers, which will be published during 2026.

During this process, the GSTC technical team undertook months of intensive consultations to strip away vague terminology. The goal was to ensure every requirement is straightforward and verifiable. To support this transition, the standards now include comprehensive guidelines specifically designed to help small-scale entities understand and meet these new, objective indicators.

2025 highlights

Research Project in 2025: Fostering Continuous Compliance with the Global Sustainability Requirements

To build on collaborative efforts across destination entities, the GSTC launched a research project in 2025. The objective was to determine how the GSTC could foster continuous compliance with the global sustainability requirements without imposing prohibitive financial or administrative burdens on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The centerpiece of this initiative was a closer look at the viability of Remote Auditing. Through this work, GSTC aims to find the right balance between making certification more accessible and affordable, while maintaining the high standards and rigor for which GSTC is known.

While the project is still ongoing and a final conclusion has yet to be reached, one major insight has already stood out. Based on feedback from global stakeholders, remote auditing doesn't just depend on having great technology, instead, it depends on the "maturity" of the business's management system. If a business is well-organized and has a clear way of tracking its own policies, remote auditing becomes a much more reliable and effective tool.

*"The Landscape Verification Project demonstrated that sustainability must transition from a subjective concept into a discipline of precision. By replacing vague terminology with objective, measurable indicators, the GSTC has laid a robust groundwork for the industry. We have learned that without precise metrics, sustainability criteria remain abstract, compromising data integrity across complex, multi-stakeholder landscapes. These insights are now embedded in our standard revision process, ensuring that every 18-month cycle integrates a rigorous, data-driven approach where requirements—even for small-scale entities—are straightforward and independently verifiable." exposed **Dr. So Young Lee, GSTC Senior Assurance Manager, and Futures Lab Specialist.***

Market Access Program

The GSTC Market Access Program (MAP) is a key initiative designed to promote certified sustainable businesses by enhancing their visibility to travelers and major travel platforms, such as Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and buyers of hotel space.

This program aims to provide travelers with transparent access to sustainable choices. For GSTC-certified hotels, the program actively promotes certified hotels through leading OTAs, enhancing their visibility in the market. Regular updates on certified properties are provided to OTA partners to facilitate this promotion.

*“The Market Access Program bridges the gap between sustainability certification and real market demand by translating credible GSTC Standards into real visibility. It ensures that certified hotels are not only recognized for their commitment, but also discoverable and accessible to travelers through major travel platforms worldwide.” Says **Rita Kuan, GSTC Market Strategy Manager.***

2025 highlights

Eligibility Change for Recognized Standards to Participate in the MAP

To reduce confusion in the sustainability certification landscape and strengthen trust, GSTC took steps in 2024 to clarify how GSTC-Recognized Standards are used in the market. By the end of the year, standard owners were required to either pursue GSTC Accreditation or formally align with GSTC as a Certification Scheme, outsourcing their audit process to existing GSTC-ACBs. Standards that did not meet these requirements lost their GSTC-Recognized status in January 2025.

As a result, from 2025 onward, the GSTC MAP features only accommodations with accredited certifications or those verified against GSTC-Recognized Standards with valid recognition. This approach helps ensure that sustainability claims presented to travelers are credible, transparent, and increasingly aligned with global best practice, while supporting travel platforms in offering clear and trustworthy sustainable choices. Participating OTAs and distributors are guided to prioritize accredited certifications as a main filter, while any conditional verification to recognized standards is implemented with a defined phase-out plan, including estimated or fixed timelines for removal.

For more information about MAP, find [here](#).



**With the eligibility coming into force in 2025 for RSOs, certification or any type of verification against GSTC-Recognized Standards may only be conducted by GSTC-ACBs in accordance with GSTC Accreditation requirements. Recognized standards endorsed by public authorities are exempt from this eligibility.*



05

conferences

GSTC2025 Global Conference in Fiji

Discover more about [GSTC2026 Fiji here](#).



When: August 5–8, 2025.

Where: Nadi, Fiji.

Participants: 350 delegates from more than 40 countries, with additional participants joining via live broadcast.

Venue: Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort in Denarau, Fiji.

About:

Deputy Chair of Tourism Fiji Board, Ms. Fantasha Lockington, opened the day of the conference, alongside Dr. Kelly Bricker, Associate Dean of the HNU-ASU Joint International College (HAIC) and GSTC Vice-Chair, Randy Durband, GSTC CEO, and Dr. Mihee Kang, GSTC Chief Assurance Officer.

The GSTC 2025 Global Conference and Tourism Fiji aimed to provide a global stage for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which face unique challenges related to climate change and tourism sustainability, and to integrate them into global discussions. The event emphasized the importance of sustainable tourism and the need for a collective commitment to building resilient and responsible travel practices. Key themes included Coastal & Island Tourism; Community, Culture, & Responsible Development; and Climate Resilience, Adaptation, & Sustainable Recovery.

The event began with a two-day intensive pre-conference training on Sustainable Tourism, held on August 3 and 4, where participants engaged in in-depth learning and dialogue. On August 5, the 3rd GSTC Academic Symposium took place, providing a platform for scholars and practitioners to present research and case studies related to sustainability, community engagement, and destination resilience.

Responsible actions for the event:

As with previous GSTC Conferences, sustainable event practices were carried out, such as reducing paper and plastic usage to a minimum: printing to a minimum, badges made of recyclable paper, and no single-use plastic was used during the conference. Meals were made from locally sourced produce and were mostly vegetarian. Embracing the concept of slow travel, GSTC2025 participants were encouraged to extend their stay in Fiji, with some staying as long as 20 days. The average stay among international participants was 7.3 days.

GSTC Global Sustainable Tourism Conferences

Since 2011, GSTC has organized Global Sustainable Tourism Conferences in locations around the world. These events bring together tourism stakeholders to discuss key issues, share solutions, and support the advancement of sustainability in the travel and tourism sector.

As a global organization, GSTC rotates its annual conference across different regions to ensure inclusivity and broad representation. This approach allows stakeholders from various parts of the world to attend in person without always needing to travel long distances. The decision to host the 2025 Conference in Fiji is part of this continued commitment to accessibility and regional balance.

Past conferences:

In 2024, the GSTC hosted two Global Conferences: GSTC2024 Sweden in Stockholm, and GSTC2024 Singapore in Sentosa. Previous conferences have been held in destinations such as Antalya (Türkiye, 2023), Seville (Spain, 2022), Azores (Portugal, 2019), among many others.

Global Sustainable
GSTC2025
Tourism Conference

FIJI
5–8 August, 2025





06

GSTC-Committed

What is GSTC-Committed?

GSTC-Committed refers to an organization's pledge to fully implement the GSTC Standards in its policy and operational guidelines. This process involves engaging with their stakeholders, including staff, partners, suppliers, or members. By committing to the GSTC Standards, an organization can plan and implement internal improvements while also influencing its stakeholders and supply chain.

GSTC-Committed Status

Gaining GSTC-Committed status confirms that an organization has adopted the GSTC Standards with a clearly documented plan and implementation, which the GSTC reviewed. GSTC-Committed does not ensure certification, accreditation, or recognition, but only that the GSTC Standards are implemented in the organization's policy, plan, and operation.

In 2025, organizations, **Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Booking.com, and Ascott Limited**, holding GSTC-Committed status continued to actively advance their sustainability commitments, using the GSTC Standards as a guiding framework for policy development, operational improvements, and ongoing stakeholder engagement. The programme remained a relevant reference point for organizations seeking to strengthen internal alignment with internationally recognized sustainability principles, while maintaining momentum toward long-term sustainability goals.

🔍 For more information, visit [GSTC-Committed](#)

"Through the GSTC-Committed, organizations demonstrate that the GSTC Standards are a practical guide for shaping policies, operations, and long-term sustainability strategies." Shared **Öykü Öztürk, GSTC Head of Destination Accreditation.**





07

GSTC Sponsors

GSTC Platinum Sponsor



GSTC Gold Sponsor



During 2025, GSTC was supported by several sponsors committed to advancing sustainable tourism. Traveloka continued as a **GSTC Platinum Sponsor**, while **GSTC Gold Sponsors** included Türkiye Tourism Promotional and Development Agency (TGA), Visit Sweden and Tourism Fiji. Their generous support and shared commitment to sustainable tourism align with GSTC's mission to drive positive change across the global travel industry.

A person wearing a black long-sleeved shirt is sitting at a desk, writing on a document with a black pen. A laptop is open in front of them, and several papers are scattered on the desk. The background is slightly blurred, showing more papers and a colorful object. The scene is lit with soft, natural light.

08

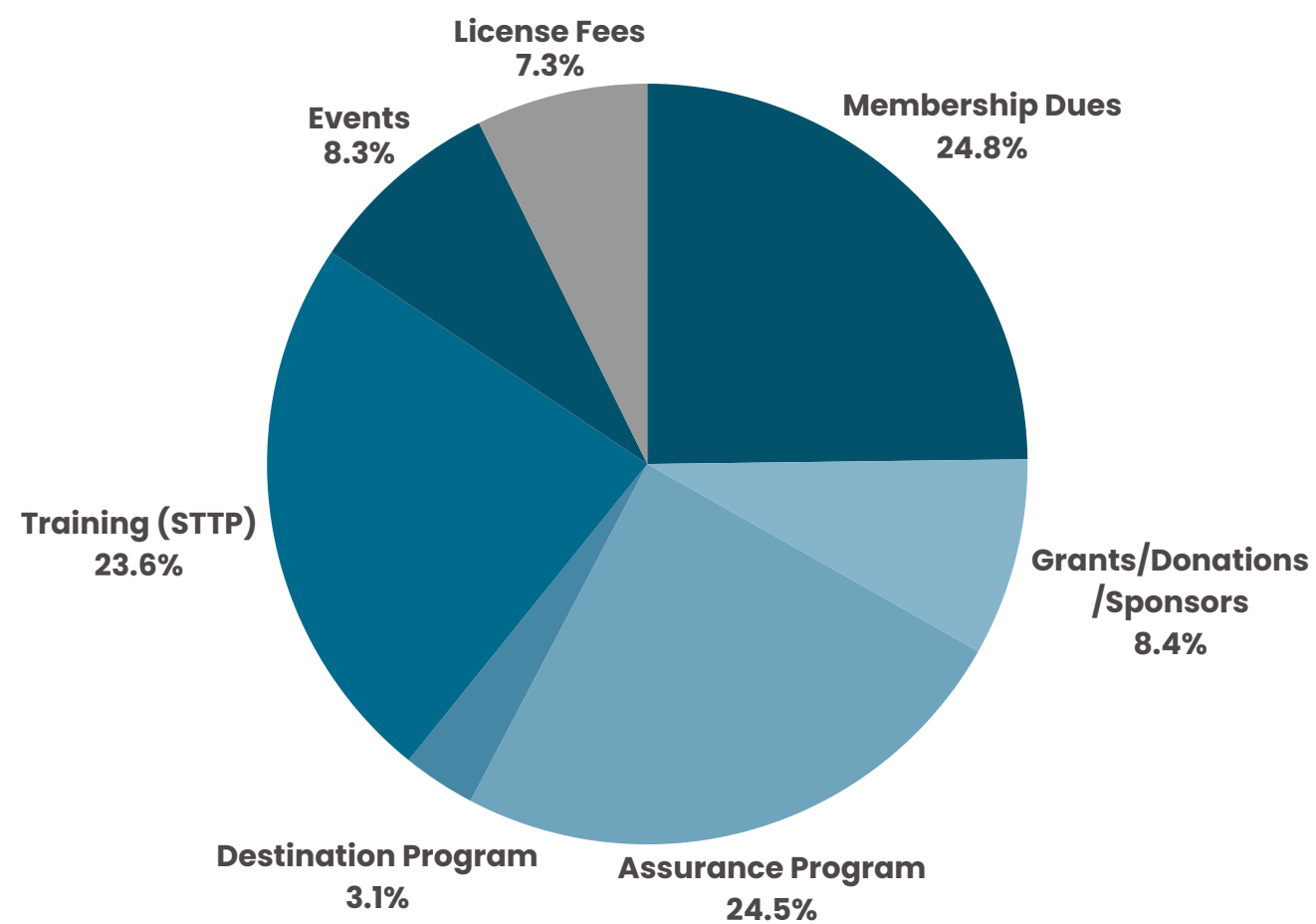
Our Finance

In 2025, revenue decreased by 13.54% due largely to two factors – the loss of engagement with USAID and operating one GSTC Global Conference in 2025 versus two in 2024. Most programs grew modestly. Total revenue and expenses amounted to USD 2.1 million, and the organization closed the year with a modest surplus.

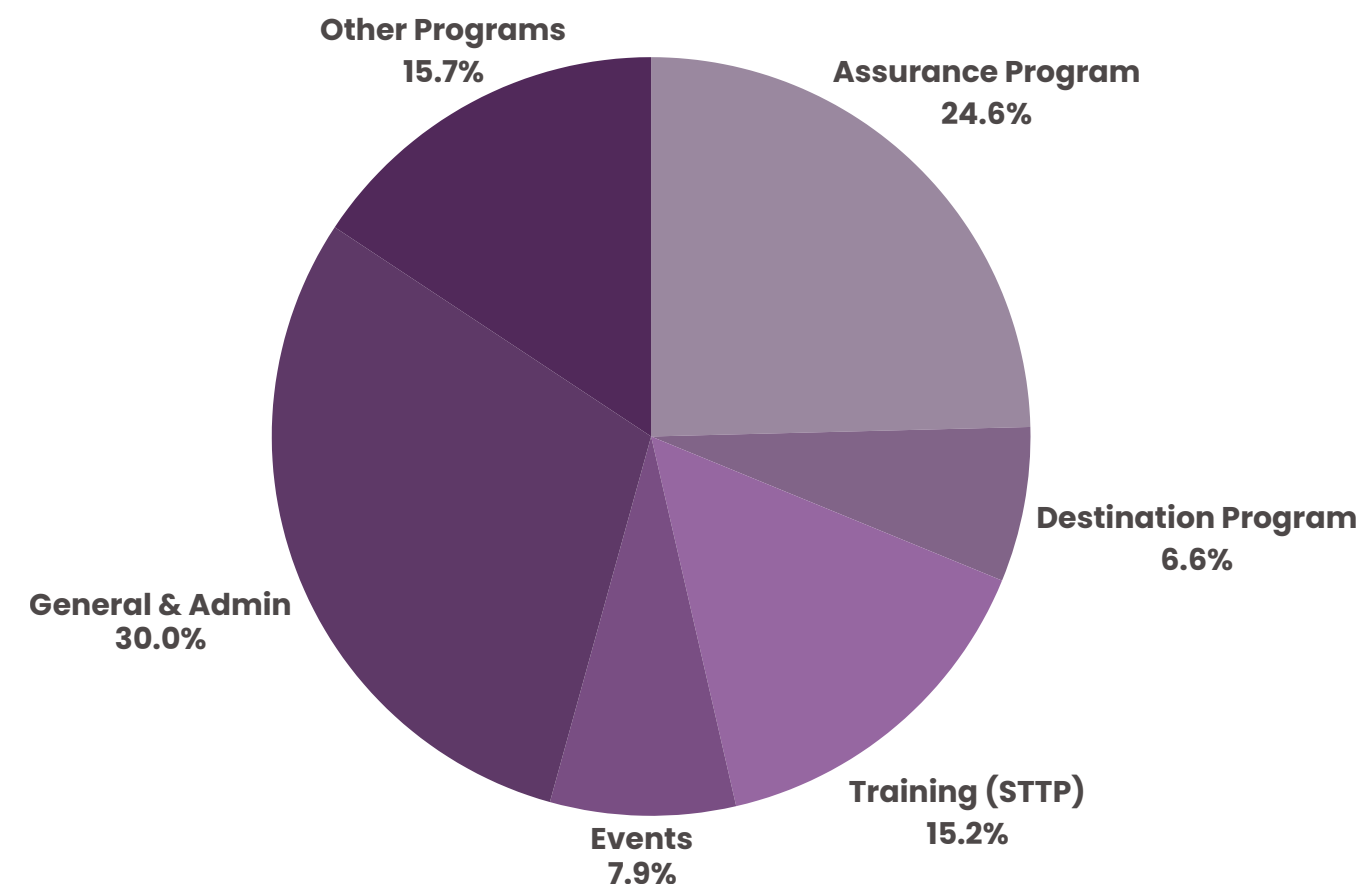
Despite these external pressures, GSTC continued to strengthen the quality and consistency of its programs. The Accreditation Program, now operating at a mature stage, enabled the expansion of GSTC-ACBs worldwide. This growth improved global access for hotels seeking GSTC Certification and contributed to increased license fee revenue, reinforcing GSTC’s foundational business model.

GSTC also continued to invest in human resources to support in-house accreditation operations and to extend our global reach. These investments ensure that GSTC remains well-positioned to deliver high-quality services and maintain robust oversight across all regions.

Revenue 2025 – \$2.1 million



Expenses 2025 – \$2.1 million



A woman in a white lab coat stands at a podium on a stage, addressing a large audience seated in rows of chairs. Behind her, a large screen displays three panels of images, including a person in a blue uniform and a group of people. The scene is dimly lit, focusing on the speaker and the audience.

09

Future Directions

As the GSTC looks beyond 2025, its direction is centered on reinforcing its role as the global standard setter for sustainability in travel and tourism, with the underlying mission to elevate acknowledgement and understanding of the GSTC Standards as the global standards for sustainable travel and tourism. Providing the path for tourism businesses and destinations at any stages of their sustainability journey at their own pace, is part of our mission as an agent of change.

In this regard, education and capacity building will remain fundamental to this future direction as they have been in the past. The GSTC Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP) will continue to evolve to reflect market needs and sector-specific realities, with broader inclusion of diverse tourism segments such as MICE, Attractions, and Food & Beverage services.

Research, innovation, and knowledge exchange will also play an increasingly important role in GSTC's near future. Through new initiatives such as the GSTC Futures Lab, the organization will continue advancing standards management, applied research, and the translation of evidence into action. Expanding access to tools and resources, including the GSTC Knowledge Hub and self-assessment tools, will further enable stakeholders to measure, manage, and improve their sustainability performance in a structured and easy manner.

Maintaining credibility and trust in the marketplace will remain a core commitment. Ongoing refinement of accreditation manuals and auditor capacity will help ensure that certification uphold high levels of rigor, transparency, and consistency across regions and sectors.

At the same time, GSTC will continue to cultivate strong relationships within its global membership network, enhancing dialogue, collaboration, and shared learning as it has since its inception. Geographic presence will also be pursued, building on established engagement in Asia while expanding outreach in Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean through participation in events and other strategic engagements.

Future efforts will prioritize strengthening the role of the GSTC Standards as a global reference for sustainable tourism, while continuing to support their adoption and effective implementation by destinations, tourism businesses, and governments worldwide.

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2025



April 2026