



GSTC Grievance Procedure for Accreditation

version 3.0

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Document History

Version	Date of Approval	Description of Key Amendment	Affected Section/Page
1.0	1 October 2023	New Document	N/A
2.0	6 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated the normative reference and version number of the referenced documents - Edited spacing between sections - Section Procedure for Appeals removed - Section name "Appeals for Investigation Outcome" changed into "Appeal Procedure" - Section numbers of "Procedure for 	Entire Document

		Complaints", "Procedure for Concerns and Feedback", " Appeal Procedure", "Monitoring and Evaluation", "Record Keeping", and " Expenses" changed	
2.1	17 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added clause clarifying handling of complaints and appeals for CBs accredited under NAB (Clause 3.3) - Updated terminology: 'GSTC Criteria' changed to 'GSTC Standard' (Clause 8.3) - Updated 'Appeal' definition to cover relevant stakeholders and decisions (Clause 9.1) - Added clause clarifying non-discriminatory handling of appeals (Clause 9.8) - Updated clause clarifying GSTC's right to change parties for investigation costs. (Clause 13.1) - Added detailed provisions specifying charges for appeals against accreditation decisions, including possible costs. (Clause 13.2 ~ 13.4) - Added a new section "10. Sanction" outlining sanctions arising from grievance cases. - Updated all timeline references throughout the document to consistently use "calendar days" instead of "working days" or unspecified "days" - Added Annex A: Investigation, Appeal, Grievance Fee Schedule - Refined several sentences while maintaining their original meanings throughout the document 	Entire Document

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Document Controls

This is version 3.0 of the GSTC Grievance Procedure for Accreditation, 2026.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Before a formal complaint procedure is submitted, stakeholders must first attempt to settle disputes informally, preferably at the lowest level. Both parties should aim to resolve the dispute in a cordial and professional manner. If it is not possible to resolve complaints at an informal level, a formal complaint may be submitted.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1. This procedure sets out the process for resolving any grievances relating to the GSTC's accreditation activities and to the broader conduct of those activities throughout its operations. At GSTC, we are committed to upholding the highest standards in our accreditation program and ensuring transparency and fairness in all operations.
- 2.2. The GSTC Grievance Procedure for Accreditation is designed to establish a structured approach for handling complaints or concerns regarding the following:
 - 2.2.1. Any issues related to the adherence of the GSTC personnel to the GSTC Accreditation Requirements and relevant procedures.
 - 2.2.2. Matters concerning the actions of a GSTC-accredited Certification Body (CB) when the complaint has not been adequately resolved by the CB.
- 2.3. The primary objective of the GSTC Grievance Procedure Accreditation is to evaluate the performance and decision-making of the GSTC, Accredited CBs, or other relevant stakeholders to ensure compliance with relevant procedures and accreditation requirements.
- 2.4. It is important to note that the Accreditation scope does not encompass the direct issuance, suspension, reinstatement, or termination of certificates issued by Accredited CBs. Complaints against entities (e.g., hotels) certified by an Accredited CB about their compliance with the GSTC Certification

requirements shall be managed and processed by the CB that issued the certificate according to the CB's own grievance mechanism.

- 2.5. This procedure applies to both the CB accredited by GSTC and the CB that has transitioned its accreditation to the GSTC Accreditation Program.
- 2.6. Complaints submitted anonymously or with a request for anonymity will not be processed according to the procedure outlined in this document.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1. GSTC holds the primary responsibility for managing the grievance mechanism. GSTC will regularly review the content of this document.
- 3.2. GSTC is responsible for appointing an impartial investigator or team of investigators, should this role be needed in the case of a Complaint Investigation. The selection of investigators shall be based on their expertise, neutrality, and absence of conflicts of interest with any involved parties.
- 3.3. When a complaint or appeal concerns a certification body accredited by the NAB under the GSTC Accreditation Scheme, GSTC shall promptly forward the case to the respective NAB. Home Accreditation Body will handle and resolve such complaints or appeals in accordance with its own procedures and in line with ISO/IEC 17011 and EA requirements. GSTC shall be informed of the outcome and will maintain all related records.

4. Principles

- 4.1. The grievance must be about compliance with the GSTC's standards, rules, policies, and procedures directly related to GSTC. The GSTC Grievance Procedure for Accreditation is guided by the following principles:
 - **Impartiality:** The process should not be open to any forms of influence that might raise doubts about the objectivity of the decisions taken.
 - **Transparency:** The adopted processes should be transparent and open to scrutiny by stakeholders.

- **Confidentiality:** All information directly or indirectly disclosed during the process by all parties involved shall be treated as confidential. Information will not be shared with any third party without GSTC's prior written consent.

5. Normative References (Associated Documents)

- The latest versions of the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies: Industry
- The latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies: Destination
- The latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Procedure
- The latest version of the GSTC Grievance Mechanism

6. Terms and Definitions

- 6.1. For Recognition and Accreditation-related terms, refer to the latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Glossary.

7. Procedure for Complaints

The grievance procedure consists of several stages, including the submission of a grievance, an initial review, an investigation, communication with the complainant and the complaine, findings and recommendations, the decision and resolution, and, if necessary, an appeal process. Each stage is designed to ensure a comprehensive and fair resolution process.

7.1. Submission of Formal Complaints

- 7.1.1. Individuals or entities with a grievance related to GSTC's Accreditation Program should follow these steps to initiate a grievance:

- 7.1.1.1. Initiate the grievance submission process by documenting the nature of the grievance.

- 7.1.1.2. Provide a clear and succinct description of the matter, including relevant dates, times, and the individuals involved, as indicated in the GSTC Grievance Submission Form for Accreditation.
 - 7.1.1.3. Ensure all accompanying documentation is complete, accurate, and properly attached to the grievance form.
 - 7.1.1.4. Submit grievances through the [GSTC Grievance Submission Form](#) via email.
 - 7.1.1.5. Where applicable, specify submission deadlines and the operating hours for physical submissions.
- 7.1.2. Formal complaints shall be submitted by email using the GSTC Grievance Submission Form. GSTC is responsible for addressing all inquiries related to the submission of complaint forms or grievances sent to complaints@gstc.org.
- 7.1.3. Complaints that fulfill all the specified requirements below will be considered for further assessment:
- 7.1.3.1. Detailed Description of the Grievance:
 - a. *Nature of the complaint (a clear statement of the issue).*
 - b. *A comprehensive explanation of the events and issues leading to the grievance.*
 - c. *Any correspondence relevant to the grievance.*
 - d. *Supporting evidence (e.g., emails, documents, photographs, etc.).*
 - e. *Indication of any prior attempts to address the issues with the organization and their responses, if applicable.*
 - f. *If a remedy is sought, a clear description of the desired outcome.*
 - 7.1.3.2. Contact Information:
 - a. *Identify the organization against which the complaint is filed.*

- 7.1.4. As the working language of the GSTC is English, complainants may be requested to provide translations of any evidence submitted in other languages to facilitate the evaluation process.
- 7.1.5. By submitting a formal complaint, the complainant agrees to abide by the final decision of the grievance procedure. Should the complainant disagree with the outcome, they may submit a formal appeal.
- 7.1.6. Grievances must be lodged within six months of the incident or issue. Submissions beyond this designated timeframe may be subject to further examination. GSTC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by email within fourteen (14) calendar days of submission

7.2. Initial Review of Complaints

- 7.2.1. Upon receipt of a grievance, the designated GSTC staff responsible for grievance handling will conduct an initial review to assess its validity. This stage includes the following key steps:
 - 7.2.1.1. Receipt Confirmation: GSTC will promptly acknowledge receipt of the grievance within fourteen (14) calendar days and, if deemed necessary, issue a reference number for tracking and documentation.
 - 7.2.1.2. Scope Assessment: The grievance will be reviewed to determine whether it falls within the scope of the GSTC Accreditation Program.
 - 7.2.1.3. Validity Check: GSTC will evaluate whether the grievance contains sufficient information and evidence to warrant further consideration and possible investigation.
- 7.2.2. Should the complaint be found inadmissible under the GSTC grievance mechanism scope following the initial review, the complainant will be notified accordingly, indicating the reason(s).

- 7.2.3. In cases involving complaints about GSTC (including personnel and/or performance), GSTC, where appropriate, may recommend direct communication as the preferred resolution method.
- 7.2.4. Should GSTC find it necessary during the initial review or direct communication process, GSTC may adjust its approach to address the complainant's claims or grievances more effectively.
- 7.2.5. When a Complaint concerns a CB, GSTC notifies the CB of its receipt and informs it that an initial review process has been initiated.
- 7.2.6. GSTC may reject a Complaint in various circumstances, including but not limited to the following cases:
- a. When the Complaint is submitted anonymously or when the complainant requests anonymity during the grievance process.
 - b. When the Complaint lacks sufficient, appropriate, or substantial evidence.
 - c. When the Complaint falls outside the scope defined in Section 2.
 - d. When the Complainant has not made genuine attempts to resolve the issue locally. For Complaints related to a CB, the Complaint must have first been directed to the CB and answered by the CB.
 - e. When the Complaint solely pertains to events that occurred either before Certification or Accreditation or after the Withdrawal of Certification or Accreditation.
 - f. When the Complaint about a CB is submitted more than six (6) months after the CB's rejection or closure of the Complaint.
 - g. When the Complaint about GSTC is submitted more than six (6) months after the issue(s) occurred.

h. When compelling evidence suggests that the Complaint is frivolous, malicious, trivial, vexatious, or intended solely to gain a competitive advantage.

7.2.7. When a Complaint is not accepted for Appraisal, GSTC will formally notify the Complainant of the reasons for rejection and close the Complaint.

7.2.8. If a complaint is referred back to the CB, GSTC will also close the complaint. If the complainant remains dissatisfied even after the CB has addressed their concerns, they may submit a new complaint to GSTC.

7.2.9. All parties affected by the complaint will be informed of the outcome of the initial evaluation.

7.3. Appraisal

7.3.1. Within twenty (20) calendar days of completing the initial review, GSTC will begin an evaluation to determine whether to formally accept the Complaint for investigation. GSTC will notify the Complainant of the appraisal outcome as follows:

7.3.1.1. If the Complaint does not meet the requirements for investigation, GSTC will specify the reason(s) for such non-acceptance. In such instances, GSTC will close the Complaint.

7.3.1.2. If the Complaint is accepted for investigation, GSTC will detail the reasons for acceptance, provide information on the scope and process of the investigation, and identify the parties involved in the Complaint. In this scenario, all parties will be requested to sign a non-disclosure (NDA) agreement before GSTC proceeds with the investigation.

7.3.2. Throughout the appraisal process, GSTC may seek additional information from all the parties involved, including the Complainant. If

the parties involved fail to respond within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of GSTC's request for information, GSTC reserves the right to close the Complaint.

7.4. Investigation of Complaints

- 7.4.1. The GSTC-appointed investigator or a team of investigators will evaluate the information submitted by the complainant. A decision on the merits of the complaint and a summary of the investigation will be prepared within thirty (30) calendar days of the initiation of a formal investigation of the complaint. The final response will be communicated to the complainant and all the parties involved in the process. Any delays in the investigation process will be promptly communicated to all parties involved.
- 7.4.2. If GSTC decides to proceed with the assessment during the investigation, the timelines established above will be adjusted to accommodate the planning and finalization of the investigation report. The parties involved in the Complaint will be informed of the finalization date and the expected duration of the delay.
- 7.4.3. Complaint investigations, when applicable, should focus on a specific point in the subject under investigation.
- 7.4.4. In the event that the Complainant is unresponsive for more than thirty (30) calendar days or conducts themselves in a disrespectful or unprofessional manner during the investigation, GSTC reserves the right to close the Complaint. GSTC may still address the concerns raised in the Complaint without requiring the Complainant's active participation.
- 7.4.5. The investigator or the investigation team appointed by GSTC must be free from any conflict of interest (COI) and must have the technical knowledge or expertise relevant to the subject under investigation.

- 7.4.6. The investigation may involve interviews or other methods to gather evidence from the Complainant and relevant parties.
- 7.4.7. Before concluding the investigation, GSTC will distribute the draft complaint investigation report to all parties involved for their input, allowing a fourteen (14)- calendar-day window for comments.
- 7.4.8. GSTC strongly encourages each party to provide its comments transparently to the other parties.
- 7.4.9. GSTC shall respond to all comments.
- 7.4.10. GSTC has sole discretion to edit or adjust the report and its recommendations in response to the feedback received.
- 7.4.11. Upon request, GSTC may extend the comment deadline by up to thirty (30) calendar days. Such an extension will consequently postpone the original investigation timelines.
- 7.4.12. GSTC ordinarily circulates draft reports for comments only once. In exceptional cases, such as when substantial changes are made to conclusions, new evidence emerges, or comments from one party have not been shared with all parties, GSTC reserves the option to circulate the draft report a second time. This decision will delay the original investigation timelines.
- 7.4.13. Throughout the investigation process, GSTC will keep all parties informed by providing progress updates, notifying them of any delays, and explaining the reasons for those delays.
- 7.4.14. While considering the results of the independent objection, Complaint, or Appeal systems operated by relevant parties, GSTC will not be bound by their outcomes.
- 7.4.15. Investigations of complaints may lead to various resolutions, including but not limited to:
 - a. Improvement of the GSTC procedures

- b. Clarification on public information
- c. Provide further information/ technical assistance
- d. Request the CB to provide further information on compliance with the requirements
- e. Request a witness audit of the CB
- f. Schedule an anticipated renewal of Accreditation
- g. Withdraw the GSTC Accreditation of the CB
- h. Sanction in line with the Accreditation Procedure, latest version
- i. Ask the CB to investigate an allegation against a Certified Organization
- j. Ask the CB to revoke the certification of a Certified Organization

7.4.16. If the complaint investigation recommends issuing non-conformities (NCs) against the CB, they will be issued in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the GSTC Accreditation Manual. This action will take place after the complaint investigation is closed.

7.4.17. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the GSTC complaint investigation, they may escalate the complaint to the relevant governing body.

7.4.18. GSTC is responsible for conducting the investigation carefully to avoid any discriminatory actions against the Complainant.

7.5. General Requirements for Complaints

7.5.1. Complainants must disclose their identity to GSTC. In exceptional circumstances, GSTC will consider the Complainant's request to remain anonymous to the Parties to the Complaint and protect their privacy and identity.

7.5.2. GSTC will make every effort to address any complaint that is brought to its attention promptly.

7.5.3. In extraordinary cases, GSTC may revise any timelines set forth in this procedure for a cumulative maximum of thirty (30) calendar days. All Parties shall be informed accordingly.

7.5.4. All Parties involved in the process shall refrain from making public comments on the complaint until a decision has been reached and all parties have been duly informed.

7.5.5. GSTC will consider the Complainants' request for non-disclosure of the Complaint.

8. Procedure for Concerns and Feedback

8.1. Formal concerns or feedback shall be submitted using the Grievance Form to accreditation@gstc.org. GSTC will address any questions regarding completing the form or grievances that have been submitted.

8.2. GSTC will acknowledge receipt of the concern/feedback by email within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving it.

8.3. Feedback regarding the GSTC Industry Standard and the GSTC Destination Standard shall be analyzed and grouped per theme for future consideration in the revision process of the GSTC Standards.

9. Procedure for Appeals

9.1. An appeal is a formal request by a certification body or a standard owner to GSTC for reconsideration of a decision related to GSTC-accredited or GSTC-Recognized status made by the GSTC Accreditation Decision-Making Committee (ADMC), the Recognition Decision-Making Committee (RDMC), or the Chief Assurance Officer (CAO). GSTC will handle appeals in accordance with the procedure described herein.

9.2. Appellants shall submit a formal appeal within thirty (30) calendar days from the notification of the Accreditation Decision.

9.2.1. Appellants shall fill out the [Grievance Submission Form](#) in its latest version.

9.2.2. Appellants shall include all documented evidence listed below to support the appeal:

9.2.2.1. Nature of the appeal (a clear statement of the issue).

9.2.2.2. A comprehensive explanation of the events and issues leading to the appeal.

9.2.2.3. Any correspondence relevant to the appeal.

9.2.2.4. Supporting evidence (e.g., emails, documents, photographs, etc.).

9.2.2.5. Indication of any prior attempts to address the issues, if applicable.

9.2.2.6. If a remedy is sought, a clear description of the desired outcome.

9.2.3. All documents shall be prepared in English.

9.2.4. Appellants shall send the formal appeal via email to accreditation@gstc.org.

9.3. Appeal Procedure

9.3.1. GSTC will acknowledge the receipt of the appeal within fourteen (14) calendar days.

9.3.2. GSTC will appoint an Appeal Committee responsible for reviewing and deciding on the appeal by considering the impartiality principle.

- 9.3.3. GSTC will notify the Committee and forward the appeal and all supporting information within ten (10) calendar days of acknowledging receipt of the appeal.
- 9.3.4. The Committee will assess the submitted information within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving it, determine whether to accept or reject the appeal, and inform GSTC.
 - 9.3.4.1. The investigation may also involve interviews or other methods to gather evidence from the Appellant and relevant parties, and the GSTC Secretariat may arrange a virtual meeting upon request by the Committee or the Appellant during the investigation for further discussion.
- 9.3.5. GSTC will inform appellants of the Appeals Committee's decision within ten (10) calendar days of the decision being made.
 - 9.3.5.1. The committee's decision shall be considered final.
 - 9.3.5.2. If the Committee rejects the appeal, GSTC will provide the appellant with a justification for the decision.
 - 9.3.5.3. If the appeal is accepted, GSTC shall give a one-to-one explanation to discuss the appeal and gain more understanding from the Appellant.
- 9.3.6. GSTC will record all appeals and their outcomes for future reference and monitoring.
- 9.4. Throughout the appeal process, the NC or accreditation decision under appeal will retain its validity unless adjustments are required as a consequence of the process.
- 9.5. If the outcome of an appeal results in modifications to the NC or the accreditation decision, GSTC will provide justification and communicate this information to the Appellant. The Appellant remains responsible for ensuring that the appeals do not delay the resolution of any remaining open NCs, and must ensure that there is sufficient time to address and close them.

- 9.6. Appellants may withdraw an appeal by sending an official email to accreditation@gstc.org.
- 9.7. The decisions regarding appeals will become the property of GSTC and will not be publicly accessible.
- 9.7.1. If the Appellant wishes to share a redacted version of the GSTC report with other stakeholders, they must first obtain approval from the GSTC.
- 9.8. GSTC is responsible for handling the appeal carefully to avoid any discriminatory actions against the Complainant.

10. Sanction

- 10.1. Sanctions may arise as a result of grievance situations, including complaints, concerns, or appeals, if the investigation or evaluation identifies violations of accreditation requirements or procedures.
- 10.2. Detailed conditions and procedures for applying these sanctions are provided in *PART 7: Suspension, Withdrawal, and Sanctions of the GSTC Accreditation Procedure*.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 11.1. All complaints, concerns, feedback, and appeals shall be analyzed for patterns and similar causes. GSTC will conduct this analysis on an annual basis.
- 11.2. Where patterns are identified, corrections to the corresponding GSTC Assurance Program shall be proposed and handled according to the level of risk to the system.

12. Record Keeping

- 12.1. All records generated from appeals, complaints, concerns, and feedback will be kept by GSTC for a maximum of 5 years, including:
- a. Appeals, complaints, concerns, and feedback
 - b. Acknowledgements and notifications to the Complainant and the Complainee

- c. Confidentiality agreements signed by the Complainant and the Complainee
- d. Reports prepared during the evaluation, including proposed determination and corrective action or improvement plans.
- e. Final decisions and outcomes of investigations
- f. Annual summaries from the GSTC and certification bodies regarding complaints.

13. Expenses

- 13.1. GSTC maintains the right to charge the parties submitting complaints and appeals for any costs and expenses incurred during the investigation, at a set fee, as deemed necessary.
- 13.2. In the event that costs are to be charged, GSTC shall inform the complainant or appellant of the applicable fee prior to initiating the process.
- 13.3. Specifically, in cases of appeals against accreditation decisions (including initial accreditation and renewal accreditation, sanctions, withdrawal, termination, application rejection, and non-conformity findings arising from an accreditation assessment):
 - 13.3.1. If the appeal results in the original decision being upheld, GSTC may charge the appellant for part or all of the costs incurred during the appeal process.
 - 13.3.2. Chargeable items may include, in particular, the costs associated with constituting the Appeal Committee and compensating its members, the decision-making fee for the Assurance Committees, as well as other directly attributable expenses.
- 13.4. Applicable fees for complaints and appeals against accreditation decisions or auditor examination results are specified in Annex A.

Annex A - Investigation, Grievance, and Appeal Fee Schedule

This fee schedule outlines the charges applicable to investigations of formally filed complaints and appeals related to GSTC accreditation decisions. These include initial accreditation, renewal, sanctions, withdrawal, termination, application rejection, and non-conformity findings arising from an accreditation assessment. It also applies to appeals concerning written or mock examination results from auditor training.

The purpose of this document is to provide transparency on the calculation of fees, based on the scope and complexity of each case, and to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of charges for both GSTC and the involved parties.

This fee schedule has been developed with reference to the principles set out in ISO/IEC 17011 and the latest version of the GSTC Grievance Procedure for Accreditation, ensuring fairness, transparency, and consistency in the handling of complaints and appeals.

A1. Scope of the Activities

Investigation activities for complaints and appeals include, but are not limited to, document review, stakeholder interviews, analysis and evaluation, report preparation, coordination, and administration. On-site verification activities may be required as determined by the Investigator in consultation with the CAO. Where onsite verification is conducted, the associated investigation daily rate and actual travel expenses may be charged to the relevant party, in accordance with this fee schedule.

A2. Fee Application Principles

- **For appeals**, investigation fees are charged only when the original decision is upheld, while no fees apply if the decision is modified or reversed.
- **For complaints**, no fees are charged for complainants in order to ensure accessibility and avoid creating barriers. This principle applies regardless of whether the matter requires an investigation. Where an investigation is undertaken, GSTC will cover the associated costs. However, in exceptional

circumstances, GSTC may recover investigation costs from the complainant, including situations where:

- The complaint is malicious, frivolous, or repeatedly unfounded; or
- The complainant requests additional investigative activities beyond those deemed necessary by GSTC.
- If a complaint is reclassified as an appeal, any applicable fees will be applied in accordance with the GSTC appeal fee principles.

Any cost recovery shall be limited to the scope and complexity of the case, consistent with the labor-day (LD) structure set out in A4.

A3. Daily Rate and Labor-day

- All complaint and appeal investigations related to GSTC processes are charged at the standard daily rate of US \$850 per LD, as further detailed in the following section.
- The number of LDs charged is based on the actual time spent on the investigation, taking into account case complexity (High/Medium/Low) and the scope of the jurisdiction.
- GSTC will maintain a detailed time log or activity record to support the LDs invoiced and ensure transparency and accountability in the fee calculation process.

A4. Risk-Based Approach to Investigation Costs

A4.1. Investigation fees are determined based on the scope and complexity of each case. GSTC applies a risk-based approach to assess the expected level of effort, taking into account the following factors:

- **Jurisdiction and stakeholder scope** - Number of countries or parties involved in the matter
- **Evidence volume and type** - Quantity and nature of documents, interviews, and policy reviews required
- **External expertise complexity** - Extent of technical or legal expertise needed, including potential involvement of external experts
- **Issue pattern** - Whether the matter involves isolated instances or indicates systemic or repeated concerns

- **Effort to verify facts** - Degree of difficulty in accessing, validating, and confirming evidence

The cases are classified into three risk levels, with corresponding LD ranges:

Risk Level	Typical Labor-day (LD)	Daily Rate
Low	1.5 - 3	US \$850
Medium	3.5 - 7.5	US \$850
High	8+	US \$850

LD allocation reflects a comprehensive consideration of all relevant factors. Upon request, GSTC may provide a summary rationale for the assigned risk level. Exceptional circumstances not fully captured within the above parameters may be addressed through internal jurisdiction and documentation.

A4.2. GSTC Accreditation Decision-Making Committee (ADMC) and Recognition Decision-Making Committee Participation

- ADMC and RDMC participation fees apply only when additional deliberation is required due to the complexity of a case or the reversal of a prior decision.
- Such fees are limited to appeals where a new accreditation or recognition decision must be made.
- All applicable fees will be transparently communicated to the concerned party prior to invoicing.

A4.3. Additional Cost Items

In addition to LD costs, the following actual costs may be charged when applicable:

- Travel expenses (transportation, accommodation, meals, and local expenses) and committee participation fees (e.g., external experts, legal counsel, or other specialized advisors) may be charged at actual cost.

- Any single expense item exceeding US \$1,000 requires prior written approval from the complainant or appellant.
- Other directly attributable expenses - charged at actual cost, with prior notification

A5. Billing and Payment

GSTC will issue a preliminary cost estimate before initiating the investigation. The final invoice will reflect the actual LDs, fixed fees, and approved expenses incurred. Payment is due within 30 calendar days of invoice issuance.

If the complainant or appellant does not approve the cost estimate, the case will be put on hold until written confirmation is received. If approval is not provided within the timeframe set by GSTC, the case may be closed unless GSTC determines that continued action is required.

A6. Review and Updates

This Annex is maintained under the same governance and update process as the GSTC Grievance Procedure for Accreditation. Updates will be made as necessary to ensure continued relevance, transparency, and alignment with GSTC accreditation requirements.