



# GSTC's Mission and Current Activities

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GSTC CEO

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Terceira Island, The Azores, Portugal



# Who is the GSTC?



One planet  
travel with care

Sustainable Tourism is:

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

*Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers,*  
**UNEP & UNWTO, 2005**

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**GSTC was then formed in 2007**  
by these Founding Organizations:



UNEP   UNWTO   Sabre   Rainforest Alliance



# GSTC Criteria

**1. GSTC Industry Criteria - 2008, 2012, 2016**

**2. GSTC Destination Criteria – 2013**

1<sup>st</sup> revision to be released December 2019



**Standards-Setting Code**

### **A(c) Managing pressure and change**

#### **A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities**

The destination has a system for visitor management which is regularly reviewed. Action is taken to monitor and manage the volume and activities of visitors, and to reduce or increase them as necessary at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultural heritage and environment.

- a. The destination management strategy and action plan addresses seasonality and spread of visitation.
- b. Variation in visitor volumes throughout the year is monitored, including in the most visited locations.
- c. Impacts of visitor volumes and activities are identified through observation and community and stakeholder feedback.
- d. Actions taken to manage visitor flows and impacts.
- e. Marketing strategy and selection of target markets takes account of visit patterns, the impact of activities and destination needs.



#### **A9 Planning regulations and development control**

- a. Specific policies/regulations/ guidelines which control development – documented and identified





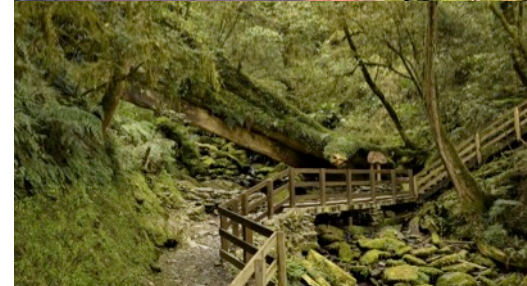
# Four Pillars of GSTC Criteria

**A - Sustainable Management**

**B – Social** Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts

**C – Culture** Maximize benefits to communities and culture; minimize negative impacts

**D – Environment** Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts





“Sustainable Tourism is about a journey...a process of becoming more and more sustainable” – GSTC

“Sustainable tourism should not be taken to refer to a specific type of tourism. Instead, it is an aspiration for the impacts of all forms of tourism.”

- *UNWTO Tourism for Development Discussion Paper on the occasion of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017*



# The Role of Standards

- Training – education - awareness
- Standardization
- Guidelines for regulatory codes
- Measurement & Evaluation
- Basis for certification





# GSTC Programs & Activities

- **Standards** – keepers of the GSTC Criteria
- **Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP)**
  - ✓ capacity-building for all stakeholders
- **Destination Stewardship**
- **Assurance**
  - ✓ accreditation of certification bodies
  - ✓ recognition of standards
- **Market Access**
  - ✓ supply-chain development





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# Sustainable Tourism Training Program





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# GSTC Destination Stewardship

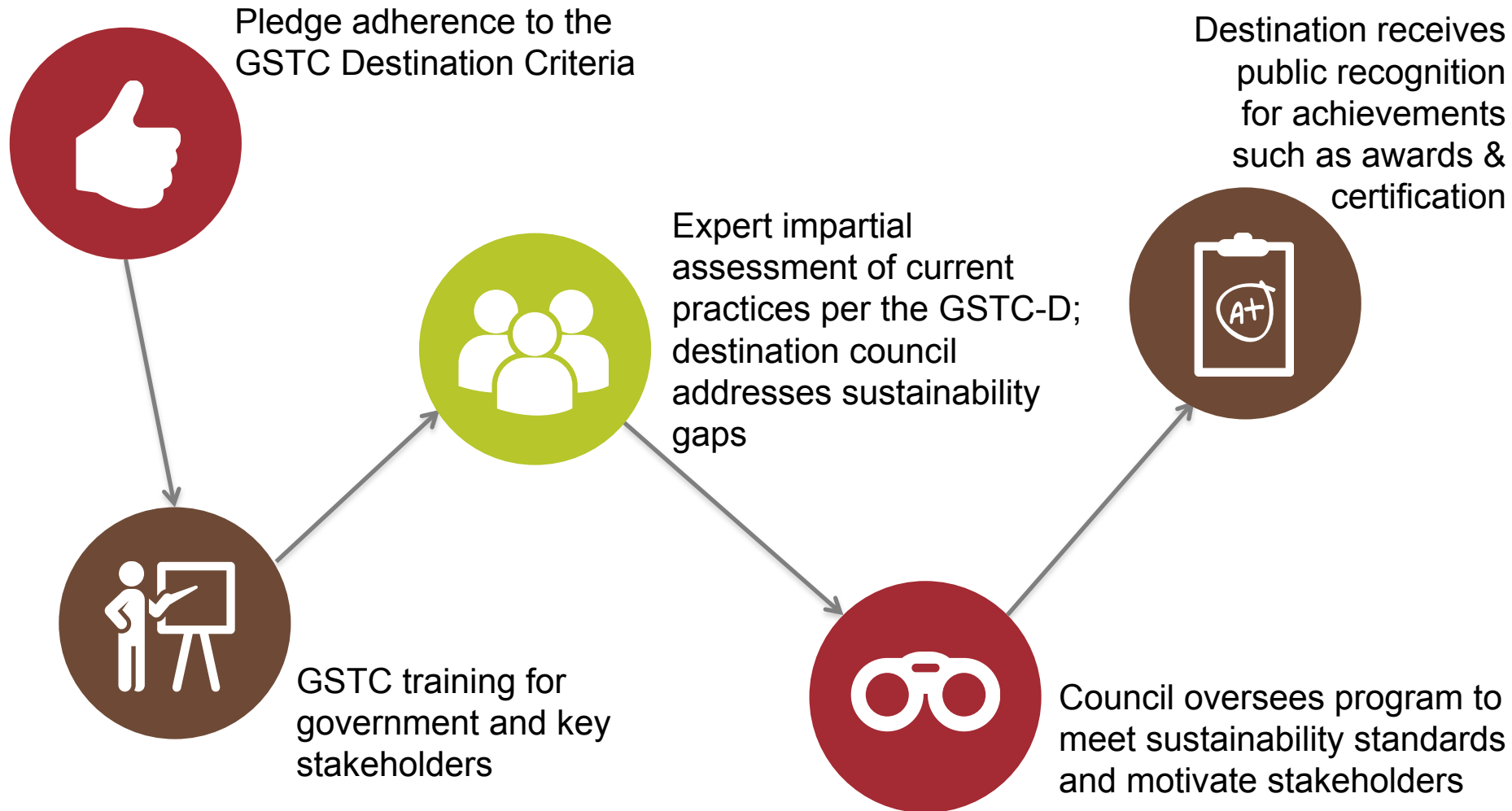


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# Roadmap to Sustainable Destinations





# WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Award Winner 2019

## St. Kitts Sustainable Destination Council (SDC), St. Kitts and Nevis

- SDC was established in 2013, as a result of St. Kitts' participation in the GSTC Early Adopters Program.
- SDC adheres to the principles of the GSTC Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D A2).
- SDC serves as an advisory council for the Ministry of Tourism, with the aim to increase opportunities for locals and tourists, and to act as destination stewards.







# WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Award Winner 2018

## Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), British Columbia, Canada

- TOTA implements a 10-year regional tourism strategy (2012-2022), endorsed by all its communities, which puts sustainability at its heart.
- Examples of sustainability initiatives: Protecting biodiversity in its waterways, supporting an urban wildlife corridor, installing electric car charging stations, and sustainability training for stakeholders.
- Certified by Biosphere Responsible Tourism (2017).





# WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Award Winner 2017

## Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO)

- BTO is an Early Adopter of the GSTC Destination Criteria, and a long-term GSTC Member and training partner.
- BTO offers the Botswana Ecotourism Certification System, which is designed to support responsible environmental, social and cultural behavior by tourism businesses.
- Certified businesses must contribute at least 2% of their gross profits to support community-based projects, and sell locally produced handicrafts on site.







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# GSTC Recognized Standards

[ABOUT](#)[GSTC CRITERIA](#)[CERTIFICATION](#)[TRAINING](#)[MEMBERSHIP](#)[EVENTS](#)[NEWS](#)

## Actively Green

The Actively Green standard is the core component used in the Actively Green Sustainable Business Training and Certification Program. It was launched as an innovative legacy initiative of the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Vail and Beaver Creek, Colorado, USA through a partnership with Sustainable Travel International and Town of Vail. Another component of the Program is the Mountain IDEAL destination standard for mountain resort communities.



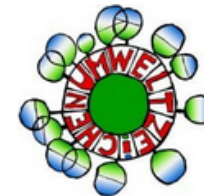
## Adventure Green Alaska Standards

Adventure Green Alaska began in 2007 as a statewide effort to grow sustainable tourism in Alaska and promote model businesses practicing economic, environmental and social sustainability. It is Alaska's only sustainable tourism certification program and was created entirely by volunteers. The program came under the Alaska Travel Industry Association in 2015, whose goal was to grow the program in Alaska and increase the programs credibility through the development of a new level of standards, AGA Summit, that meet the GSTC Criteria for tour operators and accommodations.



## Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism

The **Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism and Leisure-time Industry** was the first national eco-label for tourism worldwide. It was implemented in 1996 by the Austrian Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism. Almost all types of tourism businesses can be awarded for their commitment in the fields of environmentally friendly management and social responsibility through independent third-party audits on site. The Ecolabel for tourist accommodation covers businesses of any size fulfilling an advanced set of criteria developed and regularly updated in a comprehensive stakeholder process involving tourism as well as environmental experts.



## Biosphere Responsible Tourism (ITR)

Biosphere Tourism is a standard by the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), an international organization that promotes, for more than 20 years, responsible tourism at an international level. For this, it has a Memorandum of Understanding with UNESCO, is a member of the UNWTO and promotes sustainable tourism on all fronts. Through the Biosphere brand, the RTI promotes Sustainable Development by measuring the contribution of tourism to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations and the indications of the Paris Agreement against Climate Change.





# Certification as a form of Assurance

- Verifies the validity of claims
- Risk management
- Provides discipline for improvement
- Market access function

# Levels of assurance

3rd-Party Certification  
by an Accredited  
Certification Body

3rd-Party Certification  
(impartial)

2nd-Party verification  
(impartiality is not certain)

1st-Party Assessment  
(NOT impartial)

Zero verification





**Assurance Code**

ISO-17065 and ISO-17021  
for Certification

ISO-17011 for Accreditation  
...plus other ISO standards

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**Standard Owner (GSTC Criteria)**

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**Accreditation Body for GSTC**

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Certifying Hotels and/or  
Tour Operators



Certifying Destinations



**Certification Bodies  
Accredited to the  
GSTC Criteria**



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# Where do we go next?

- Grow certification through:
  - ✓ enhanced marketing and branding
  - ✓ integration into programs & systems
  
- Online data to support:
  - ✓ certification auditing
  - ✓ supply chains
  
- Impacts from certification are better communicated



# GSTC 2019 GLOBAL CONFERENCE

Navigating the way forward  
in sustainable tourism

4th – 7th DEC 2019  
Terceira Island - Azores



GOVERNO  
DOS AÇORES



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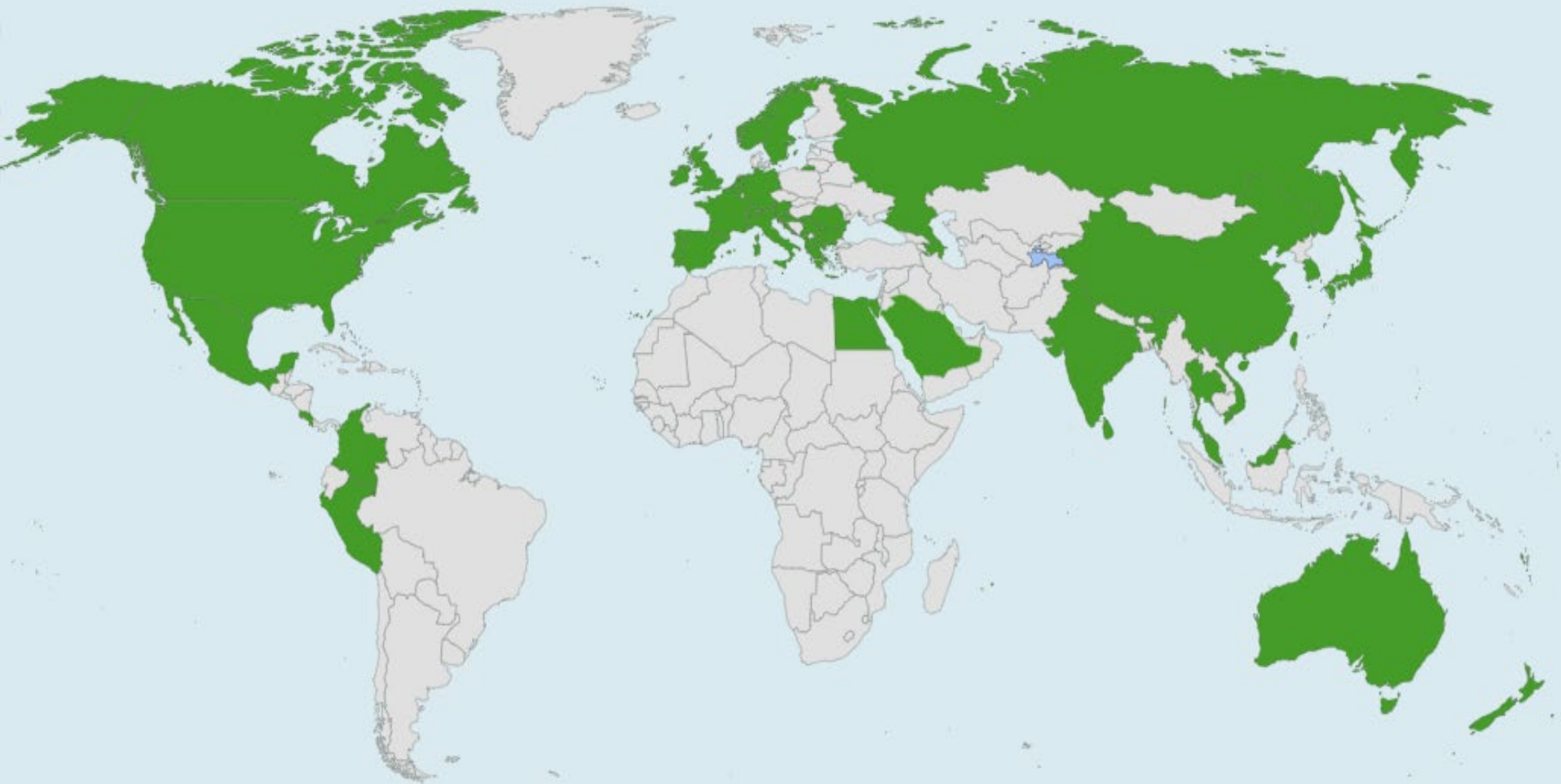
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# GSTC Sponsors



## 250 participants from 42 countries



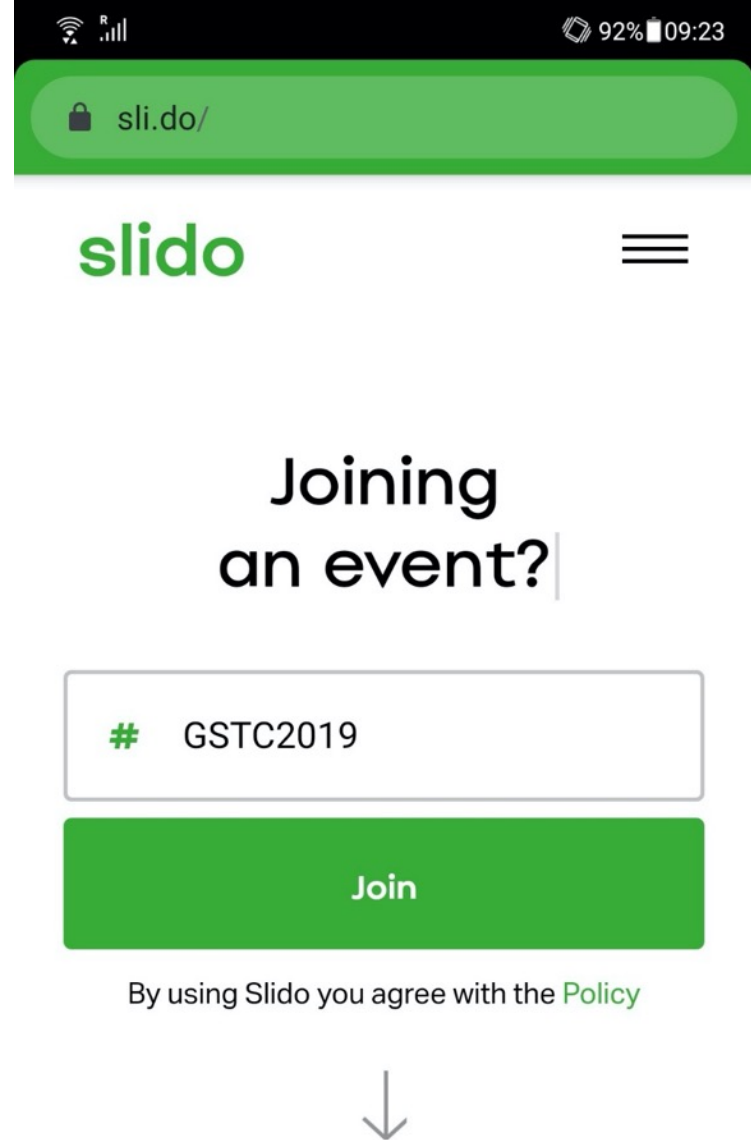
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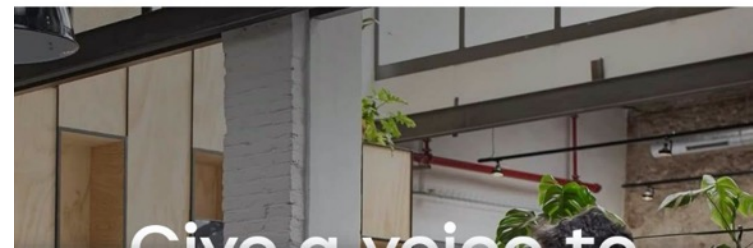
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Join and participate



The screenshot shows the Slido mobile app interface. At the top, the status bar displays signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery level (92%) at 09:23. Below the status bar is a green header with the Slido logo and a hamburger menu icon. The main content area has the text "Joining an event?" followed by a search bar containing the hashtag "# GSTC2019". Below the search bar is a large green button labeled "Join". At the bottom, there is a line of text: "By using Slido you agree with the [Policy](#)". A large downward arrow is positioned below the "Join" button, pointing towards the next screen.



# Slido: let's give it a try

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**What is your preferred term:**  
**(1) sustainable**  
**(2) responsible**



# GSTC 2019 GLOBAL CONFERENCE

Navigating the way forward  
in sustainable tourism

## **Conference Themes**

- (A) Smart & Sustainable Destination Management
- (B) Market Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Products
- (C) Is Tourism Responding to Climate Change?



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# **GSTC 2019 Global Conference**

**Dec 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019**



Governo dos Açores

**GSTC**  
Global Sustainable Tourism Council



**#GSTC2019**



# Conference Goals

Learn  
Share  
Partner

