

Guidance on Transition Requirements for the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies - Destination Version 2.0.

March 26, 2025

GSTC Accreditation

Introduction

This document outlines the transition plan for implementing a new version of *the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies - Destination* (hereafter, the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0).

The new manual will be gradually integrated into the GSTC accreditation assessment process over a one-year transition period. The specific application of the new requirements outlined in the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 is as follows.

Effective Date

The Accreditation Manual v.2.0 will take effect on **April 1, 2025**.

From this date, new GSTC Accreditation applications must be submitted per the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0.

Transition Period

The transition period for implementing the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 is **one year**. Therefore, the transition period runs from **April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026**.

Methodology

During the transition period, the following approaches shall be applied:

1. Dual Application of Manuals

- Initial Phase: For a period of 12 months, both versions of *the GSTC-Accredited Manual Version 1.2* and the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 will be applicable.
- Documentation related to the accreditation assessment shall indicate which version was used.

2. Implementation of New Requirements according to the accreditation status

1) New application for accreditation (for Applicant CBs)

- The Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 shall be fully applied to initial accreditation application assessments initiated as of the effective date of application of the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0.
 - CBs currently in the application review stage but not yet assessed are strongly advised to use the Application Checklist reflecting the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0. This will help applicant CBs align their accreditation efforts with the latest requirements and minimize the need for revisions during the transition period.
 - CBs already in the initial accreditation assessment may use either version or both versions, but they are still advised to update their documents and systems according to the new version.

2) Application for accreditation renewal (for Accredited CBs)

- The Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 shall be fully applied to re-accreditation assessments initiated as of the effective date of application of the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0. GSTC may allow up to three months more for the accredited CBs to complete their revision of the documents and systems.
- However, if the renewal due date is less than six months away, GSTC may consider giving the CB longer preparation time based on its solid execution plan.
 - If the CB opts to be assessed against version 1.2 by continuing its renewal assessments through GSTC, the accreditation will be granted for two years following the successful award of the accreditation under version 1.2. However, surveillance assessments shall be conducted based on version 2.0, and non-conformities shall be issued in accordance with this latest version. The CB shall address these non-conformities as part of its next renewal process.

3) Surveillance assessment (for Accredited CBs)

- During the GSTC's surveillance assessments of the accredited CBs, The Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 will be applied. Nonconformities will be issued, but they must be resolved before renewal can occur.
- CBs may request GSTC to conduct additional assessment(s) (office assessment and/or witnessing) to support their transition to the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0.
- CBs shall update their documents, reference materials, processes, procedures, and certificates in accordance with the requirements of the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0.

3. Training and Capacity Building

- CBs are responsible for training all auditors, reviewers, and decision-makers on the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0. requirements.
- Training shall be documented and available for sharing with GSTC upon request.

4. Communication Plan

- CBs are responsible for informing all certified organizations about the Destination Accreditation Manual Version 2.0 and any changes that may affect their certification.

5. Implementation of GSTC License Fee for Certified Destinations and Transition Period

- 1) The previously deferred GSTC License fee for GSTC-certified destinations will now be implemented. However, its implementation will vary depending on the following categories (refer to *GSTC Accreditation Fee Schedule Version 3.0* for details):
 - For destinations certified before April 1, 2025, the license fee will take effect on **April 1, 2027**.
 - For destinations certified on or after April 1, 2025, the license fee will take effect on **April 1, 2026**.

6. GSTC Accreditation Fee and Transition Period

- 1) The fee structure for the accreditation of certification bodies (for Destination) has been incorporated into the *GSTC Accreditation Fee Schedule*. It will take effect on **April 1, 2026**, including the previously deferred Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF).
- 2) For certification bodies applying for initial accreditation after the Fee Schedule announcement, the new fee structure will take immediate effect.
- 3) Please refer to *GSTC Accreditation Fee Schedule Version 3.0* for details.

For any questions, please contact the GSTC Accreditation Team at: accreditation@gstc.org