

How to Reference GSTC Certification

This document provides guidance on how to correctly reference GSTC Certification in all forms of communication. It ensures that GSTC Certification is represented consistently, accurately, and in line with GSTC accreditation requirements.

Who Should Use This Document

- **Certification Bodies:** To guide certified clients on proper wording and review their materials for compliance.
- **Certified Entities:** To use correct references in websites, marketing materials, press releases, and certificates.
- **Other Stakeholders (e.g., tourism authorities, media, partners):** To accurately reference GSTC Certification in external communications, avoiding misinterpretation of GSTC's roles.
- **National Accreditation Bodies in collaboration with GSTC:** To verify that certification bodies under their oversight communicate GSTC Certification correctly.

How to Reference "GSTC Certification"

GSTC Certification refers to the certification scheme through tourism businesses or destinations are audited by GSTC-accredited certification bodies to verify compliance with the GSTC Standards. The reference standards may be either a GSTC Standard or a GSTC-recognized standard – the only valid reference standards under the GSTC Scheme.

It is therefore essential to emphasize that:

- GSTC Certification is conducted by a GSTC-accredited certification body.
- A tourism enterprise or destination is audited against a GSTC Standard or a GSTC-Recognized Standard.
- The certification follows the GSTC Scheme requirements and shall always be referred to as **GSTC Certification**.

GSTC Certification demonstrates that a tourism enterprise [hotel, tour operator, MICE (venues, event organizers, events/exhibitions), attraction, or destination] has been independently audited by a GSTC-accredited certification body and found in compliance with the Reference Standard under the GSTC Scheme.

How NOT to Reference GSTC Certification

GSTC Certification is always carried out by a GSTC-accredited certification body, **NOT** by GSTC itself. No other scheme or standard name shall be used. Therefore, certification bodies and their certified clients must avoid, in their communications, certificates, claims, or any other materials and communications, the following practices:

- Saying or implying that GSTC directly certified the business.
- Creating the impression that certification is issued under a different scheme rather than a GSTC Standard or a GSTC-Recognized standard.
- The following examples illustrate how certification bodies and certified entities (e.g., hotels, tour operators, destinations, MICE, or attractions) should reference GSTC Certification across various communication contexts.

Examples of Usage

NOT Acceptable	Why	Acceptable References
<i>"[name] Hotel is GSTC certified by the GSTC"</i>	GSTC does not certify the tourism entities or destinations; this is the role of GSTC-accredited certification bodies.	<i>"[name] Hotel is GSTC-certified" "[name] Hotel is a GSTC-certified hotel" "[name] Hotel is certified by [name of ACB], which is GSTC-accredited"</i>
<i>"GSTC has certified [name] Hotel"</i>	GSTC does not certify the tourism entities or destinations; this is the role of GSTC-accredited certification bodies.	<i>"[name] Hotel holds GSTC Certification through [ACB name]"</i>
<i>"GSTC-certified by GSTC"</i>	GSTC does not certify the tourism entities or destinations; this is the role of GSTC-accredited certification bodies.	<i>"Certified by a GSTC-accredited Certification Body." "Certified by a GSTC-accredited certification body (or [ACB name]) to/against the GSTC [name of the scope] Standard"</i>
<i>"[RSO name]-certified / GSTC-[ACB name]-certified / [RS name]-certified by the GSTC-accredited Certification Body (or [ACB name])"</i>	As the scheme owner, the GSTC requires that certification be referred to as GSTC Certification, and certified entities or destinations as GSTC-certified.	<i>"GSTC-certified by a GSTC-accredited Certification Body (or [ACB name]) to/against [RS name] (including version)"</i>
<i>"We are now GSTC Approved"</i>	GSTC does not approve the tourism entities and destinations.	<i>We are now GSTC-certified (through GSTC-accredited Certification Body)</i>
<i>"We are certified by GSTC"</i>	GSTC does not certify the tourism entities and destinations.	<i>We have achieved GSTC Certification (through [ACB name])</i>
<i>"GSTC has granted certification to [name] Tour Operator"</i>	GSTC does not grant certification to tourism entities and destinations.	<i>"[name] Tour Operator holds GSTC Certification"</i>
<i>"Sustainable Destination certified by GSTC"</i>	GSTC does not certify the tourism entities and destinations.	<i>"GSTC-certified destination (by a GSTC-accredited certification body or by [ACB name])"</i>

Note: 'ACB' refers to 'Accredited certification body', 'RS' refers to 'Recognized Standard' and 'RSO' refers to 'Recognized Standard Owners']

Clarity on Scope in External Communication

In all external communications, it is essential to clearly specify the exact scope of the certification. This means indicating which type of tourism activity (e.g., hotel, tour operator, or destination) has been certified, and under which standard (GSTC Industry Standard, GSTC Destination Standard, or a GSTC-Recognized Standard – by specifying the name of the standard, and the version).

Certification Bodies are only authorized to issue certifications within the scope for which they are accredited. Any communication shall accurately reflect the scope, avoiding any impression that a broader or different scope is covered than what has been formally granted. This is an accreditation requirement, and misleading communication may result in sanctions. If you are uncertain about the terminology, please contact us at accreditation@gstc.org or recognition@gstc.org for clarification.

For further details on what information a certificate must include, please refer to the latest version of the GSTC Certification Guideline. Regarding the proper use of the GSTC logo, please refer to the [GSTC Logo Usage Guidelines](#).

For definitions of terms, please refer to the latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Glossary.