

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (known as the GSTC or the Council) was formally constituted in 2010 as a body for establishing and managing standards for sustainable tourism. It is an independent, neutral and non profit organization serving the important role of managing its global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism and ensuring that they are available globally.

The GSTC represents a diverse and global membership, including UN agencies, leading travel companies, hotels, country tourism boards, tour operators, individuals and communities – all striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism.

At the heart of its work are the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria organized around the four pillars of sustainable tourism: effective sustainability planning; maximizing social and economic benefits to the local community; reduction of negative impacts to cultural heritage; and reduction of negative impacts to the environment.

The criteria are the requirements that tourism businesses or public destination management authorities should reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation. To date, two sets of GSTC Criteria have been published: for Hotels and Tour Operators, and for Destinations. Criteria for countries and other segments of the tourism industry will be developed in 2016.

GSTC provides services to its members through: the **Destinations Programme**, the **Education and Training Programme**, the **Market Access Programme** and the **Integrity Programme**, that verifies if certification programs comply with the GSTC Criteria for sustainable tourism.

Detailed information can be found at: www.gstcouncil.org