Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations

GP RED Think Tank
Estes Park, CO
July 9-11, 2014
Whole Measures for Community Health

“We envision a world in which people, land and community interact in a way that creates health and vitality for all.”

measuresofhealth.net
One Theory of Change

Where are you choosing to participate?

- giving hospice to the old
- supporting emergence of the new
- illuminating the choice
Whole Measures for Community Health

• *Justice and Fairness*
  • Providing equal access to land
  • Acknowledging injustice
  • Engaging the whole community
  • Sharing power

• *Relationships Between People and Land*
  • Increasing direct access to land
  • Providing learning and inspiration
  • Respecting long-term relationships to land
  • Protecting the emotional and spiritual value of land
Whole Measures for Community Health

Healthy Habitat for People
- Promoting local, healthy food
- Offering safe opportunities for recreation
- Preventing or remediating pollution
- Protecting safe drinking water

Stewardship
- Providing for long-term commitment
- Reflecting community values
- Helping community care about larger landscape systems
- Depending upon local community
- Responding to climate change
Whole Measures for Community Health

**Community-Building**
- Creating public space for community engagement
- Uniting the community
- Empowering the community
- Building new grassroots networks

**Healthy Ecosystems**
- Conserving or restoring healthy wildlife habitats and corridors
- Conserving or restoring water quality
- Promoting a land ethic
- Protecting or enhancing biodiversity on the land.
Whole Measures for Community Health

**Power of Story**
- Taking time to listen and learn
- Providing the forum for community members to tell their stories
- Respecting the stories and lessons of the past
- Reconciling social and cultural ties between people and the land

**Being in Service**
- Engaging with existing community-based organizations
- Sharing decision-making authority with the community
- Building cultural competency
- Building trust and authentic relationships
- Addressing climate change
Whole Measures for Community Health

**Economic Vitality**
- Ensuring long-term economic vitality
- Supporting active relationships between conservation and working lands
- Promoting local, land-based products
- Promoting sustainable land-based livelihoods

**Community Resilience**
- Balancing conservation with housing
- Balancing conservation with transportation needs
- Maintaining infrastructure necessary for accomplishing social goals.
- Supporting “smart growth” principles and practices
- Promoting resilience to hurricane, flood, drought and wildfire damage.
“The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.”

— John F. Kennedy
Sustainability?

So we build them this

People want this
Two Faces of Tourism

When it was good, it was very, very, good

- Profitability, local wealth, foreign exchange, infrastructure development, cultural exchange, ...
- Poverty reduction, quality employment
- Natural and cultural attractions enhanced.
- Sustainable return on investment.

When it was bad it was horrid!

- Local poverty, pollution, declining destination, ...
- Crime, drugs, prostitution
- Natural and cultural attractions damaged.
- ROI declines in the long-term.

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Sustainable tourism is complex and at times confusing.

It became more complex as the discussion has moved from consumer, to hotel, to destination.

Our role is to make it accessible—to find the simplicity on the other side of complexity.
Finding our way...

- Sustainability is a journey, not a destination.
- The GSTC destination criteria and indicators provide a map to figure out where you are.
- The GSTC Universal Criteria is the GPS to guide you on your way.
Response to the challenges...

GSTC Universal Standards...
Global Sustainable Tourism Council

- The international body that promotes greater awareness, understanding and adoption of sustainable tourism practices.
- Diverse and global membership – including UN agencies, major travel companies, hotels, tour operators, SMEs, academics and social and environmental NGOs.
- GSTC promotes universal sustainable tourism principles, tools and training to increase the demand for sustainable tourism services.
## Problems and solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of common understanding of sustainable tourism</td>
<td>Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria provide a common operational definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition of standards</td>
<td>GSTC recognition of standards aligned with the GSTC Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of credibility of certification</td>
<td>GSTC approval or third-party accreditation of certification bodies with objectively credible procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of critical mass for consumer recognition</td>
<td>GSTC market access program: Travelocity-Sabre, TUI, Amadeus, many other wholesalers</td>
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GSTC’s goals

Promoting awareness of sustainable tourism practices
- Outreach
- Develop communication tools, education and dissemination
- Advising businesses in identifying their own achievements, verification and certification services

Creating demand for sustainable travelling
- Encourage relationships that facilitate business access to markets
- Communicate and promote within the industry and consumers

Facilitating the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles
- Development of a baseline of criteria and indicators for all relevant sectors of the tourism industry
- Accredit certification programs that meet or exceed both based criteria and indicators as procedural criteria

Education and Training

Market Access

International Standards

Accreditation

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

• Created with the input of experts, groups and companies from around the planet.
• Define sustainable tourism in a way that is actionable, measurable and credible.
• The minimum standard of sustainability for tourism businesses and destinations across the globe.
GSTC Criteria for tourism sectors

- Transportation 2015
- Destinations 2013
- Hotels & Tour operators 2008
- GSTC CORE Criteria

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The GSTC accreditation program

Certification standard

GSTC evaluates and recognizes standard, if aligned with GSTC criteria

GSTC approves certification procedures for impartiality, transparency, and technical competence

Certifier and certified businesses and destinations can use GSTC approved or accredited seal and name along with their own.

Certified businesses and destinations can use GSTC approved seal alone or alongside the certification body’s

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What has the GSTC achieved?

- Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators (version 1 - 2008; version 2 - 2012)
- Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (version 1 - November 2013)
- Recognition of standards
- Approval of certification processes
- Accreditation of certifiers
- Market commitment -- Sabre-Travelocity, TUI, Royal Caribbean

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About destinations and sustainability

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What is a local tourism destination?

- A **local tourism destination** is a **physical space attractive to tourists** who spend at least **one overnight** or can transit it in one **day** by land or water.

- It includes **tourism products** such as support services and attractions and **tourist resources** within one day’s return travel time.

After, UNWTO, modified by GSTC
What is a local tourism destination?

- It has **physical and administrative boundaries** defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness.

- Local destinations incorporate **various stakeholders** often including a host community, and can nest and network to form larger destinations.

After, UNWTO, modified by GSTC
Sustainability covers all types of tourism and all destinations...

- “Sustainable tourism applies to any trip that may include even "mass tourism", which makes an effort to reduce its environmental and adverse sociocultural impacts.” – UNWTO

- It includes therefore city hotels, beach resorts, rural tourism, ecotourism, cruises, golf and marine, among others.

- A sustainable destination can hold its visitation, attractions and its social, cultural and environmental surroundings indefinitely.

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International standards for destinations

The origin of the GSTC-D
Initial Process

- Task force established independently to devise destination criteria, but in coordination with GSTC Partnership.
- With the establishment of the GSTC, task force becomes GSTC Destination Working Group.
- Consultants use similar process to hotel and tour operator criteria to compare and combine existing criteria from all over the world.
A multitude of destinations guidelines and criteria

| UNWTO Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations | Biosphere Responsible Tourism (Instituto de Turismo Responsable) |
| National Geographic Geotourism Principles | Zagreb Declaration for Healthy Cities |
| Audubon Sustainable Communities | UN Habitat The Sustainable Cities Program-Asia |
| EarthCheck Community Standard | ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities |
| European Commission Tourism Sustainability Group’s Indicator System for ‘Sustainable Tourism Destinations’ | Sustainable Regional Tourism Destinations: Best practice for management, development and marketing |
| IDB Scorecard | National Geographic Ficha de Destino |
| Sustainable Travel International’s Greening Municipalities Standard | SustainLane City Rankings |
| ICOMOS Charters | Global City Indicators |
| Destination Competitiveness: Determinants and Indicators | Ethical Traveler’s The World’s Best Ethical Destinations |
| Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean Destination Evaluation Form | WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Award |
| Enterprise Green Communities | Costa Rica’s Bandera Azul Ecológica (BAE) |
| Pan Parks | NRDC Smarter Cities |
| Aalborg Commitments | Blue Communities standard |
| Italian Touring Club’s Orange Flag Program (Bandiere arancioni) | EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism Destinations Magic Number Assessment |
| CED System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations | IRT Standard for Destinations |
| TransFair Canada | IFC’s Tourism Diagnostic Tool |
| Blue Flag | Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Management Toolkit |
| Fairtrade Foundation | The Utah Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) |
The challenge: universal criteria for destinations

- Operationally define what is a sustainable destination.
- Applicable to north and south, city and country, rainforests, tundra, beaches
- Based on what already exists, consolidating the common elements
- Usable for multiple purposes:
  - Evaluating performance of destinations
  - Gap analysis
  - Certification
  - Marketing
Process to develop the GSTC Criteria - D

**Conception 2009-11**
- Conceptualization and assessment of need for a standard - November 2009 - February 2010
- Terms of reference and methodology - March 2010 to September 2011

**Draft 1 2011-12**
- Consolidation of all external criteria
- Expert evaluation (consultants, GSTC Secretariat and Working Groups)
- Public consultation in 6 languages
- Field tests on 6 destinations
- Consolidation and evaluation of public consultation comments and field testing expert evaluation

**Draft 2 2012-13**
- Public consultation in Spanish and English
- Five new pilot destinations
- Consolidation and evaluation of public consultation comments and field testing
- Expert evaluation

**Version 1.0 Nov-13**
- Approval by the GSTC’s board – October 31, 2013
- Publication - November 4, 2013
- Global launch
  - P3 Costa Rica: November 5, 2013
  - WTM London: November 6, 2013

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### Differences between GSTC Criteria for enterprises and for destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSTC Criteria - Hotels and Tour Operators</th>
<th>GSTC Criteria - Destinations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impacts under the company’s control</td>
<td>Cumulative impacts of all activities in the destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific impact mitigation actions</td>
<td>General impact mitigation actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits the immediate community</td>
<td>Involves the whole community as actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive advantage for the company</td>
<td>Competitive advantage for the destination and all of its businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach to a tour company and its customers, employees and neighbors</td>
<td>Outreach to the community, tourism businesses, other businesses and local governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires an involved management and trained employees</td>
<td>Requires one or more organizations as manager(s) of the destination</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Refining the criteria

• GSTC Destination working group and international standards working group review and refine the criteria.
• Revised criteria and indicators are used for early adopter program to determine which criteria are most applicable and which are not.
  • Mount Huangshou, China -- National Park
  • Teton County, USA -- County, USA
  • Saint Kitts & Nevis, Caribbean --- Small Islands
  • Lanzarote, Spain --- Small island.
  • Okavango Delta, Botswana -- Region
  • Fjord Norway -- Region
Refining the criteria

• In parallel, draft criteria are published for 60-day public consultation in 6 languages.

• Over 600 substantive comments were received to date.

• Results from consultation and early adopters collated and evaluated by consultants.
Early Adopters...

- Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA
- Mt. Huangshan Scenic Area, China
- Okavango Delta, Botswana
- Fjords, Norway
- St. Kitts & Nevis, Caribbean
- Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain
- Cuzco and the Sacred Valley, Peru
- Lago Llanquihue, Chile (Lake District)
- Southern Sardinia, Italy
- Mara Naboisho Conservancy, Kenya
- St. Croix, US Virgin Islands
- Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, Mexico
- Samoa, South Pacific
- Riviera Maya, Mexico
The criteria...

- View a destination as a unified entity of communities, tourism-related activities, and the cultural and ecological surroundings.
- Consider cumulative impacts of all tourism activities.
- Emphasize the role of destination management organizations in planning, voluntary initiatives, and regulation.
**GSTC-D’s goals**

- Highlight sustainable destinations for consumers
- Guidelines for destinations: what to do?
- Common denominator for communication
- Guidelines for regulations: starting point
- Harmonize certification standards
Criteria organization

- 4 objectives for destinations
- 41 criteria
- Aprox. 100 indicators
Demonstrate sustainable destination management.

Maximize social and economic benefits for the host community.

Maximize benefits to communities, visitors and cultural heritage and minimize impacts.

Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts.
Relationship between objectives and criteria

- Sustainable management: 14 criteria
- Socio-economic benefits: 9 criteria
- Benefits to communities, visitors and cultural heritage: 6 criteria
- Benefits to the environment: 12 criteria

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A. Demonstrate sustainable destination management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1 Sustainable destination strategy</th>
<th>A2 Destination management organization</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, that considers environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health, and safety, and aesthetic issues, and was developed with public participation.</td>
<td>The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector and public sector. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group’s activities are appropriately funded.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A3 Monitoring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A4 Tourism seasonality management</td>
</tr>
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| A5 Climate change adaptation |
| A6 Inventory of tourism assets and attractions |

| A7 Planning regulations |
| A8 Access for all |

| A9 Property acquisitions |
| A10 Visitor satisfaction |

| A11 Sustainability standards |
| A12 Safety and Security |

| A13 Crisis and emergency management |
| A14 Promotion |
B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1 Economic monitoring</th>
<th>B2 Local career opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination’s economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. To the extent feasible, this should include visitor expenditure, revenue pero available room, employment and investment data.</td>
<td>The destination’s enterprises provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety, and fair wages for all.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B3 Public participation</th>
<th>B4 Local community opinion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B5 Local access</td>
<td>B6 Tourism awareness and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7 Preventing exploitation</td>
<td>B8 Support for community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9 Supporting local entrepeneurs and fair trade</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1 Attraction Protection</th>
<th>C2 Visitor management</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve natural and cultural sites, including built heritage (historic and archaeological) and rural and urban scenic views.</td>
<td>The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Visitor behavior</td>
<td>C4 Cultural Heritage protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5 Site interpretation</td>
<td>C6 Intellectual property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D1 Environmental Risks</th>
<th>D2 Protection of sensitive environments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The destination has identified environmental risks and has a system in place to address them.</td>
<td>The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impact of tourism; conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems; and prevent the introduction of invasive species.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>D3 Wildlife protection</th>
<th>D4 Greenhouse gas emissions</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>D5 Energy conservation</th>
<th>D6 Water management</th>
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<th>D7 Water security</th>
<th>D8 Water quality</th>
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<tr>
<th>D9 Wastewater</th>
<th>D10 Solid waste reduction</th>
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<tr>
<th>D11 Light and noise pollution</th>
<th>D12 Low-impact transportation</th>
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[www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-destinations.html](www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-destinations.html)
A long road...

Thank you!
One standard. One vision we can all embrace.