



This document constitutes an integral part of the quote signed by the client organization.

The document constitutes the contractual terms and conditions and is composed of four parts. By signing the quote, the Client declares to have downloaded this contractual document, to have carefully read it and to fully accept its contents. The Client is aware that the applicable version of this contractual document is the most recent version uploaded on Vireo website. The document is composed of:

Part 1 - Certification agreement GSTC: it sets the contractual agreement between parties;

Part 2 - Certification process: it describes the GSTC certification process including explanation of type of audits and certificate issue;

Part 3 - Non-conformities management: it explains to the client the type of findings that can be raised during an audit and how to manage with non-conformities;

Part 4 - Normative references: there are listed all the normative references related to GSTC certification services of Vireo. GSTC Standards can be downloaded from GSTC website: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria>.

By signing the quote, the organization declares:

- the absence of any association with entities that have been successfully prosecuted for forced labour and/or environmental violation;
- that it has not been successfully prosecuted for violations of laws on forced labour and/or environment in the last 2 years;
- that it has not had his certificate withdrawn in the last 2 years without taking any remedial actions;
- that it has not had his certificate suspended in the last 6 months without taking any remedial actions.

Vireo Srl can operate directly or under an outsourcing agreement for the provision of GSTC certification services, with the following approved entities (hereinafter referred to as “outsourcer”):

- Vireo Sustainable Certification Sdn. Bh., also known as Vireo Asia Pacific, Vireo AP, based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Registration number: 1430526-H;
- Planethica LTD, also known as Vireo UK, based in 86-90, Paul Street, EC2A 4NE London, UK. Company Number: 15743842;
- Shanghai Leading Certification Co., Ltd., also known as Vireo China, based in Room 603, Building 43, No.51, Kangpu Road, 201218 Shanghai, China. Registration number: 91310115MA1HBGQA5Q.
- Sustainable Certification Center Inc., also known as Vireo Japan, based in 705 Château Le Rêve, 1-319 Minami 1 Nishi 15, Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Registration number: 4300-01-095469.
- AVRV AE-Inspection Assessment Certification, also known as Vireo Hellas, based in 24 Irakleiou str, 19004, Spata Attikis, Greece. Registration number: EL998101225

It is hereby Agreed that the outsourcer, in their role as regional outsourcer, by authorized agreement with Vireo Srl (the accredited Certification Body), wishes to supply the Client with services of initial assessment and subsequent annual surveillance against the GSTC Standards.

Certification will be provided by the accredited body Vireo Srl. All costs for the certification will be invoiced to the client by Vireo directly or by the outsourcer. This is defined accordingly to the entity that sent the quote.

This Vireo GSTC Certification Agreement apply to all assessment and certification services offered and rendered to clients of the international Vireo Group, and its outsourcers.

Part 1 - Certification agreement GSTC

Between

VIREO SRL, Piazza de Gasperi 41, 35131 Padova (PD), Italy, VAT 04435670288

And

The Client

1. General

Vireo Srl offers third party certification services ("Services") in order for prospective and existing Clients to be able to demonstrate conformity of applicable GSTC Standard to customers and end-users.

2. Scope of Contract

2.1. This document, together with the application for quote (when accepted and signed by the Client), shall form the terms and conditions between the parties for the scheme/schemes identified in the quote document.

2.2. No terms and conditions of the Client shall apply to the Contract.

2.3. This document describes the rights, responsibilities and duties of Vireo Srl, and the business or organization, as identified in the Contract (the "Client"), whose System(s) ("System" – shall mean the organizational structure, responsibilities, activities, resources and events that together provide organized procedures and methods of implementation to ensure the capability of the Client to meet the standard(s) (the "Standard")) has been or is to be Certified ("Certified" – shall mean a System is in operation and subject to a valid certificate of conformance ("Certificate") by Vireo Srl to the "Standard").

2.4. The Certificate issued by Vireo Srl covers only those services within the scope of the Client's System as Certified by Vireo Srl.

2.5. The Client remains solely liable for any defects in its services or system and shall defend, protect and indemnify Vireo Srl from any claim, liability and all defect, loss, cost, expense arising out of or in connection with the said services or System.

3. Obligations of Vireo Srl

3.1. Vireo Srl will appoint competent qualified auditors to conduct audits and assessments of the Client's System in accordance with the Accreditation Body/Accredia's rules and procedures and Vireo Srl's management system requirements.

3.2. Vireo Srl will ensure that audit and assessment services are delivered at a frequency determined by normative documents in order for Vireo Srl to maintain confidence in the ongoing efficiency of the System.

3.3. Vireo Srl will issue audit and non-conformance reports after each audit activity.

3.4. Vireo Srl will issue a Certificate on successful completion of the initial certification assessment to the satisfaction of Vireo Srl.

The Tour Operator, Hotel, MICE, Attraction and Destination certificate cannot be issued in case of non conformities detected during the initial certification assessment. Non conformities must be resolved before the issue of the certificate. The non conformities detected during the initial certification assessment shall be closed within the identified timeframes, otherwise a full evaluation audit is required.

- 3.5. Vireo will carry out effective and impartial certification.
- 3.6. Vireo will communicate any changes in the standard and requirements to clients.
- 3.7. Vireo will provide information to clients on its certification procedures.

4. Obligations of the Client

- 4.1. The Client agrees to comply with any conditions set by Vireo Srl for the issue of a Certificate and recognizes that Vireo Srl has clear and explicit rights to revise the requirements of certification within the period of validity of the certificate.
- 4.2. The Client consents to Vireo Srl using outsourced resources ("the outsourcer") in the delivery of its obligations appertaining to this Contract.
- 4.3. The Client shall declare to Vireo Srl any activity which may create a conflict of interest in relation to its Certified System.
- 4.4. The Client shall provide of all necessary information and arrangements for the certification audit process and allow the access to the client's premises, personnel and records for the purpose of audit. The Client shall also allow the accreditation body/Accredia independent access to certificate holder premises including access to confidential information. All information collected will always be handled with the utmost confidentiality in accordance with Vireo's confidentiality and privacy procedures.
- 4.5. The Client consents to Vireo Srl to access to its suppliers and outsourcers premises for the purpose of audit.

Moreover, the client shall:

- 4.6. Conform with all applicable certification requirements. In case of group/multisite certification, the group manager/central office shall commit also to certification requirements for group/multisite certification.
- 4.7. Conform with any conditions set by the certification body for granting or maintaining certification, including implementing appropriate changes when they are communicated by the certification body.
- 4.8. Agree to the conduct of evaluations at the required intervals (the first surveillance audit following initial certification shall be conducted no later than 12 months from the certification decision date), including the certification body's right to carry out unannounced/short notice audits or additional on-site audit for verifying that major nonconformities have been corrected; unannounced or short notice audits may be carried out according to the following criteria and conditions:
 - The certification body receives continuous complaints related to a certificate holder that can't find a satisfactory solution by using the appeal and complaints procedure.
 - The certification body has evidence of infringements of standards by a certificate holder.
 - The certification body receives a request for short notice or unannounced audits.

4.9. Agree to witness audits of the Accreditation body.

4.10. Agree, that GSTC and Accredia have the right to conduct an extra assessment in addition to the GSTC Surveillance Assessment Program to investigate incidents and/or complaints or the outcomes of consecutive assessments or under other circumstances as deemed necessary by GSTC.

4.11. Agree, that GSTC and Accredia have the right to conduct unannounced assessments outside of its Surveillance Assessment program in order to address heightened risk or allegations of serious violations or negligence of GSTC Accreditation Requirements.

The Client also accepts the possibility of receiving unannounced audits both from Vireo and from the accreditation body or scheme owner (Accredia, GSTC), under penalty of failure to grant certification or suspension or revocation of certification in the event of persistent failure to comply with the obligation, unless there are justified reasons.

The Client undertakes to agree that the Accredia inspectors might carry out evaluation visits of the activities, and other evaluation techniques envisaged by the Accredia regulations (for example: unannounced visits, mystery audit activities, Market Surveillance Visit etc...) at its premises.

4.12. Agree, that specified information is published, as indicated in the applicable GSTC normative documents.

4.13. Consider the participation of observers.

4.14. Agree, that a complaint is first handled according to the certification body's dispute resolution procedure and if not resolved referred to the accreditation body/Accredia and ultimately to GSTC.

4.15. Make claims regarding certification consistent with the scope of certification and not make any claims of conformity (or near conformity) with GSTC certification requirements until and unless certification is granted.

4.16. Not imply that the certification applies to activities and sites that are outside the scope of certification.

4.17. Not use its certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body, GSTC or the accreditation body (Accredia) into disrepute and lose public trust and not make or permit any statement regarding its certification that may be considered misleading or unauthorized.

4.18. Not use or permit the use of its certification document or any part thereof in a misleading manner.

4.19. Keep a record of all complaints relating to conformity with certification requirements and make these records available to the certification body when requested. The Client must also:

- a) take appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in the system that affect conformity with GSTC certification requirements;
- b) document the actions taken;
- c) make all necessary arrangements for investigation of complaints.

4.20. Inform the certification body within ten (10) days of changes in the ownership, structure of the organization (e.g. changes in key managerial staff), certified management systems or circumstances which relate to the implementation of GSTC certification requirements. For multi-site organization inform any changes in the sites, including the closure of any site. For group organization, the group manager shall report

annually to the CB, including on relevant changes in the group's production and management practices, and provide comments and actions regarding any shortcomings in the system.

4.21. Agree, that in case of reduction, suspension or withdrawal of the scope of the certification body's GSTC accreditation, the certification of the affected clients will be suspended within six (6) months after the date of reduction, suspension or withdrawal of the respective scope of GSTC accreditation.

4.22. Agree, that the certification body has the right to delay or postpone its decision on certification, in order to take account of new or additional information which has not already been considered in its audit report and which, in the opinion of the certification body, could affect the outcome of its evaluation.

4.23. Agree, that the certification body shall not be obliged to grant, maintain or agree certification, in a situation where, in the sole opinion of the certification body, reflects badly on the good name of the certification body.

4.24. Agree, that the certification body and GSTC have the right to revise the requirements of certification within the period of validity of the certification, including the revision of costs and fees.

4.25. Agree, that the certification body, GSTC and the accreditation body/Accredia have the right to access confidential information, examine documentation deemed necessary, and access to the relevant equipment, location(s), area(s), personnel, and bodies providing outsourced services to clients.

4.26. Agree, that the certification body has the right to use information, which is brought to its attention, to follow up on misuses of the GSTC and Accredia trademarks and of the intellectual property rights held by GSTC.

4.27. Agree to use the GSTC Logo in accordance with the GSTC Logo terms and conditions. The Client is not entitled to use the ACCREDIA logo.

4.28. Acknowledge the title of GSTC's intellectual property rights and that GSTC retains full ownership of the intellectual property rights and that nothing shall be deemed to constitute a right for the client to use or cause to be used any of the intellectual property rights.

4.29. Agree, that the certification body has the right to suspend and/or withdraw its certification with immediate effect if, in the sole opinion of the certification body, the client is not in conformity with the conditions specified for the maintenance of certification.

4.30. Agree to provide copies of the certification documents to others, reproduced in their entirety or as specified in the certification scheme, if applicable.

4.31. Meet the following obligations on suspension or withdrawal of certification:

- a) immediately cease to make any use of any GSTC trademarks, or to make any claims that imply that they conform with the requirements for certification;
- b) identify all existing stakeholders, inform those stakeholders of the suspension or withdrawal in writing within three (3) days of the suspension or withdrawal, and maintain records;
- c) cooperate with the certification body and with GSTC in order to allow the certification body or GSTC to confirm that these obligations have been met.

4.32. Meet the following additional obligations on withdrawal of certification:

- a) return the certificate to the certification body or destroy the original, and commit to destroy any electronic copies and printed copies in their possession;

b) at its own expense remove all uses of GSTC's name, initials, logo, certification mark or trademarks from its documents, advertising or marketing materials.

4.33. Correctly communicate the meaning of the certification, avoiding misleading claims and withdrawing reference to certification following any termination.

5. Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification

5.1. Vireo Srl shall be entitled to suspend or withdraw the Client's certification on 7 days' written notice (or with immediate effect in the case of urgent need) and reserves the right to make public the fact that such an action has been taken when, in the reasonable opinion of Vireo Srl:

- a) the Client's acts, omissions or conduct, bring, or may bring, Vireo Srl, the Accreditation Body/Accredia, or its Standards into disrepute;
- b) the Client represents, promotes or advertises any Systems which are outside the scope of its Certificate as Certified by Vireo Srl;
- c) the Client makes fraudulent misrepresentation or provides Vireo Srl with any inaccurate or misleading information, which is not corrected within three working days or immediately on being notified by Vireo Srl;
- d) the Client is in material breach of any term of this Contract;
- e) the Client fails to maintain or demonstrate an effective system such that the confidence in the Certificate is adversely affected;
- f) For Multi sites certification: Vireo shall suspend or withdraw the certificate in its entirety if the central office or any of the site(s) does not/do not fulfil the necessary criteria for maintaining the certificate;
- g) For Group certification: Vireo shall suspend or withdraw the certificate in its entirety if the group manager or any of the group members does not/do not fulfil the necessary criteria for maintaining the certificate.

5.2. Suspension management:

- a) Vireo Srl shall immediately (after the report check) suspend the certificate if during the surveillance more than 10 major non-conformities are detected. The certificate shall be suspended also if major non-conformities are not closed within the required timeframe. If there is a single non-conformity referred to a critical violation, the suspension of the certificate is immediate, after the report check.
- b) for Group Certification: Vireo Srl shall suspend the certificate in its entirety if the group manager or any of the group members does not/do not fulfil the necessary criteria for maintaining active the certificate.

When the sustainability management system (SMS) is not functioning or when there is a direct risk that services are not meeting the standards or that non-certified services are sold as certified, Vireo shall suspend the entire group's certification.

- c) For Multi sites certification: Vireo shall suspend the certificate in its entirety if the central office or any of the site(s) does not/do not fulfil the necessary criteria for maintaining active the certificate.

If any site has a major non-conformity, Vireo shall not: (i) Issue a certificate to any of the network until satisfactory corrective action is completed (for initial and re-certification only); (ii) exclude a particular site because of a Major non-conformity at that site (in the case of surveillance).

5.3. The maximum duration of suspension is three (3) months. After this period, the certification shall be withdrawn.

5.4. Where it considers it appropriate, Vireo Srl may, at its sole discretion, inform the Client of its intention to suspend or withdraw certification and to allow the Client a reasonable opportunity to take corrective action, within such timescales as Vireo Srl may reasonably specify, before the suspension or withdrawal takes effect.

5.5. On suspension or withdrawal of certification the Client shall immediately cease to use any trademarks associated with Vireo Srl and GSTC and cease to make any claims that imply that they comply with the requirements for certification.

6. Appeals and Complaints

The company may file a complaint relating to the service offered or in reference to the decisions taken by Vireo. Clients wishing to complain or appeal about the decisions of Vireo Srl shall do so in accordance with the Vireo Srl Complaints and Appeals Processes. The procedure is available in the download section of its website. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint directly, it is possible to file a formal complaint with Accredia and / or GSTC. Making a complaint does not affect the validity of the certificate.

7. Materiality (Basis of opinion)

Vireo Srl conducts its audit activity through a sampling process to determine if the System meets the Standard(s). Any statement of conformity issued by Vireo Srl in the form of reports, Certificates, or other communications is based on these sampling processes. Vireo Srl does not warrant, represent, or undertake that these statements mean that all activities are in conformance with the relevant Standard(s) at the time of the audit or that subsequent to the audit activity those activities audited will continue to be in conformity with the relevant Standard. The Client undertakes to make all stakeholders aware of the foregoing provisions of this Clause. Vireo Srl accepts no liability to the Client in the event that any loss or claim is suffered by the Client as a result of any finding that the System does not comply with the Standards.

8. Certification fees

Services Fees are quoted for services agreed on the assumption that the information supplied by the Client was accurate and complete.

Detailed fees are included in the quote.

Any payment shall be effected to and collected by Vireo or the outsourcer.

In case of non-fulfilment of payment obligations, Vireo will be entitled to suspension or withdrawal of the certification according to article 5 of the present document.

9. Termination

9.1. Either party may terminate the Contract:

By notice

Either party may give three months' written notice to the other and the Contract shall terminate upon expiry of said three-month period.

Or By default in the following cases:

- Immediately upon either party being notified in writing by the other of any material breach of this Contract and the material breach, not being remedied within 14 days from the date of receipt of said notification.
- If either party goes into liquidation, receivership or an administrator is appointed for all or part of the undertaking thereof. If either party ceases to trade, whether in whole or in part.

9.2. In the event of the Contract being terminated (except in the case of material breach by Vireo Srl) the Vireo Srl Certificate issued pursuant hereto shall immediately become invalid and the Client shall cease to be entitled to use the same or any logo or mark of Vireo Srl and its Accreditation Body/Accredia and shall destroy all electronic and hardcopy Certificates relating to the certification and at its own expense remove all claims, service mark(s) trademark(s), other names or logos and copyright works from documents, advertising and marketing materials with immediate effect. The Client shall confirm in writing that these obligations have been met and shall provide full co-operation to enable Vireo Srl and its Accreditation Body to carry out any verification activities necessary.

10. Indemnity

10.1. The Client shall fully and effectively indemnify Vireo Srl and keep Vireo Srl indemnified against all loss of or damage to any property or costs, expenses, claims, claims, actions, demands and liabilities arising from or caused by:

- a. The use or misuse by the Client of any Certificate, license, logo, service mark or trademark provided by Vireo Srl in accordance with the Contract;
- b. Any breach of the Contract by the Client;
- c. Illness, injury or death to any personnel of Vireo Srl, the Client, its subcontractors, suppliers or customers, together with any of their employees, agents or directors other than where due to the negligence of Vireo Srl; and
- d. Damage to or loss of property or equipment owned, leased or used by Vireo Srl (except to the extent that Vireo Srl has liability under the immediately preceding Clause (Liability)).

10.2. The Client hereby acknowledges that a breach, default, non-compliance or non-observance by it of its duties and obligations owed under the Contract or otherwise may result in Vireo Srl being in breach, default, non-compliance or non-observance of its duties, liabilities and obligations owed to third parties such that Vireo Srl will be liable in damages or otherwise will sustain loss, costs or expense. Any such damage, loss, cost and expense are hereby agreed to be within the contemplation of the parties as being the probable results of any such breach, default, noncompliance or non-observance by the Client of its duties and obligations owed.

11. Confidentiality

Except as may be required by law or required by the Accreditation Body/Accredia, Vireo Srl and the Client will treat as strictly confidential and will not disclose to any third party without prior written consent of the other, any information which comes into their possession, the possession of their employees, agents or others by virtue of the Contract, provided that this Clause shall not extend to information which was rightfully in the possession of such party prior to the commencement of the negotiations leading to the Contract or which was already public knowledge or becomes so at a future date (otherwise than as a result of a breach of this Clause) or which is required to be disclosed by law. The foregoing obligations as to confidentiality shall survive any termination of the Contract.

12. Law

For **Vireo Srl**: All matters arising out of or in connection with this Contract shall be governed in accordance with Italian and European Law and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Padova Court of Justice.

For **Vireo UK**: All matters arising out of or in connection with this Contract shall be governed in accordance with the Laws of England and Wales and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the High Court of Justice in London.

For **Vireo AP**: All matters arising out of or in connection with this Contract shall be governed in accordance with the Laws of Malaysia and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Court in Malaysia.

For **Vireo China**: All matters arising out of or in connection with this Contract shall be governed in accordance with China Law and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Shanghai Court of Justice.

For **Vireo Japan**: All matters arising out of or in connection with this Contract shall be governed in accordance with the Laws of Japan and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Sapporo District Court of Justice.

For **Vireo Hellas**: All matters arising out of or in connection with this Contract shall be governed in accordance with the Laws of Greece and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Athens Court of Justice.

13. Term of Validity

These Terms and Conditions shall be considered valid and effective for the entire duration of the certificate's validity, including any renewals, extensions, or reissuances thereof.

Part 2 - Certification process

Rights and duties of the certified organization

An organization that decides to obtain GSTC certification, or that holds a valid certificate in place, is always required to identify a contact person for the certification who can be the intermediary for every organizational and standard compliance need. During the audits, the presence of interested personnel and the GSTC contact person is requested, willingness to coordinate the organization of audits and to collect the necessary evidence. The organization will always be warned of the audits that Vireo intends to carry out and the organization of the same will always be managed in order to minimize the impact on the company's activity by trying to reconcile the audit needs with the activity carried out and the eventual seasonality of the structure. During the audit, the GSTC contact person will always be informed of the progress of the audit and any non-conformities will be explained and discussed according to the standard requirement.

Certification costs: quote and contract

The first step to formalize the start of the GSTC certification process is to receive a technical-economic quote from Vireo or its outsourcer. The certification costs are defined following an interview with a Vireo or outsourcer technician. During this interview, the organization will be asked for a description of the same and a preliminary definition of its certification purpose (sites covered, activities carried out, services offered, etc.). Vireo or its outsourcer will determine the certification costs based on its price policy and the characteristics of the applicant (size, activities, facilities...) and send a quote. In addition to the certification costs, Vireo collects during the annual surveillances the GSTC logo fee, this is a fixed fee that does not depend on the Certification Body, that is collected by Vireo and paid to GSTC. Once the customer returns the completed and signed quote, the client declares to have downloaded this contractual document, to have carefully read it and to accept its contents.

Pre-assessment audit (optional)

This phase, optional for organizations, allows you to develop a gap-analysis in order to identify the main gaps and weaknesses in your system before the Main Assessment Audit. The auditor will have a detailed discussion with you about the implementation of the GSTC criteria and will be able to explain and clarify all aspects of the criteria that are not completely clear. You will then be sent a report from which you will be able to understand what your current strengths and shortcomings are regarding the correct application of the GSTC Criteria.

In no case may the results of the pre-assessment be considered and it may be carried out only once for a duration not exceeding that of a certification audit one.

Main Assessment audit

When the organization believes that it has properly prepared its sustainability management system to meet all applicable GSTC criteria, Vireo or the outsourcer will designate an auditor to carry out the certification audit. The date and time of the visit will be agreed directly between the organization and the evaluator. The auditor will send an audit plan to the client before the audit.

The client has the right to request a replacement of the auditors in case of conflicts of interest: in case the client wishes to make reservations on the names of the assigned auditors, they must motivate them in writing to Vireo within three working days from the receipt of the audit plan. The motivations will be evaluated by Vireo according to its Procedure "OP applicant CH concerns" and the replacement may be accepted or not accepted if there are no valid reasons and justified.

The audit always begins with an opening meeting and ends with a closing meeting. The auditor will conduct an inspection at the accommodation facility to verify its compliance with the applicable GSTC Criteria, both from a documentary and a practical point of view. All business processes involved in certification will be verified and interviews will be conducted with the people involved in these processes. Any GSTC criteria that are partially or totally not satisfied will be identified as observations or non-conformities and discussed with the certification manager of the facility. These non-conformities must be managed and closed by the organization within specific deadlines.

Certification

Following the recommendations of the auditor, the certification report is checked by an independent qualified auditor who has not been involved in the audit process to confirm the outcome of the verification carried out.

Once the GSTC report check has been completed, one of the following scenarios applies:

Option 1 – If the report identifies one or more Minor Non-Conformities, or Major Non-Conformities, it is returned to the client so that appropriate corrective actions can be implemented (see Part 3 – Non-Conformities Management). Only after all identified issues have been satisfactorily addressed is the report submitted for the Review and Certification Decision.

Option 2 – If no Minor Non-Conformities, or Major Non-Conformities, are identified, the GSTC report is submitted directly for the Review and Certification Decision.

The following step is the certification decision by a Member of the Decision-Making Committee. Once the report has been finalized the certificate is issued with a validity of 3 years.

Annual Surveillances

Two surveillance visits, on an annual basis, are planned to keep the certification active and to verify the continuous compliance of the organization with the requirements of the applicable GSTC Criteria. The first surveillance audit following initial certification shall be conducted no later than 12 months from the certification decision date. The two surveillance visits are planned respectively after about 10 and 22 months from obtaining the certification. During these checks, the auditor can issue non-conformities that must be managed and closed as for the Main Assessment.

Re-Assessment audit

A Re-Assessment visit is required at the end of each certification cycle (3 years) to allow the re-issuance of the certificate and the start of a new certification period.

Part 3 - Non-conformities management

Definitions:

Minor condition: Non-conformity that does not affect the client's ability to continue to meet the GSTC certification criteria and achieve the intended results.

Major condition: Non-conformity that affects the client's ability to continue to meet the GSTC certification criteria and achieve the expected results. Non-conformities could be classified as major in the following circumstances:

- if there is evidence that effective process control is not in place, or that products or services do not meet specified requirements;
- a number of minor non-conformities associated with the same requirement or issue could demonstrate a systemic failure and thus constitute a major non-conformity.

The Tour Operator, Hotel, MICE, Attractions and Destination certificate cannot be issued in case of non conformities detected during the initial certification assessment. Non conformities must be resolved before the issue of the certificate. The non conformities detected during the initial certification assessment shall be closed within the identified timeframes, otherwise a full evaluation audit is required.

Closing timeframes:

- **Major conditions** shall be closed within 90 days from the date of notification of nonconformities to the client. If the CH has NOT taken any action OR the actions taken and the evidence provided is NOT satisfactory within the established timeframe, the certification shall be suspended at the deadline date.
- **Minor conditions** shall be closed within 90 days from the date of notification of nonconformities to the client. If the CH has NOT taken any action OR the actions taken and the evidence provided is NOT satisfactory, the non conformities will be upgraded to major conditions and treated accordingly.

Part 4 - Normative references

GSTC Standards for the certification

The GSTC certification promotes sustainability in the tourism sector through the implementation of principles and requirements defined by the GSTC Criteria in different standards. The standards apply to:

- HOTEL or tourist reception business. Any tourist reception activity can access this standard (hotels, B&Bs, agritourisms, campsites, etc.). The standard applies to all facilities and services offered by the organization. In the case of hotel chains or hotel groups coordinated by a central office, it is possible to access a multisite or group GSTC certification. Further details on the procedures used for group and multi-site certifications are available upon request.
- TOUR OPERATOR. In this case, an organization operating as a tour operator in all the activities and services offered is certified.
- MICE. The GSTC MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conferences/Conventions, and Events/Exhibitions) Criteria have been developed for the following sectors: Venues, Event Organizers, Events/Exhibitions.
- ATTRACTION. The GSTC Attraction Standard aims to establish global sustainability standards for attractions, guiding businesses such as theme parks, museums, and national parks toward sustainable practices. An Attraction is a place of interest that is owned and/or managed by an identifiable entity for the purposes of attracting visitors, operating and delivering services and/or experiences including but not limited to recreation, leisure, natural, historical, cultural, educational, spiritual and/or religious experiences.
- DESTINATIONS. This standard applies to any destination that wants to certify the sustainability of its tourist accommodation organization. There are no size or feature limits. Municipalities, districts, tourism promotion companies, other entities that meet the criteria of the standard can access the certification. A destination has been defined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as: “A physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight. It is the cluster (co-location) of products and services, and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism. A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations”.

The GSTC Standards or Criteria are organized around four fundamental sections:

- SECTION A: Criteria for sustainable planning and management of activities.
- SECTION B: Criteria for maximizing social and economic benefits for local communities.
- SECTION C: Criteria for the enhancement of the local cultural heritage.
- SECTION D: Criteria for reducing environmental impacts.

Each section presents a set of criteria to be met.

The GSTC applicable standards are:

- GSTC Tour Operator Criteria
- GSTC Hotel Criteria
- GSTC MICE Standard for Venues, Event Organizers, and Events & Exhibitions
- GSTC Attraction Standard
- GSTC Destination Criteria
- South Tyrol's Sustainable Tourism Standard for destinations

GSTC Standards can be downloaded from GSTC website: <https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-criteria>.

Other normative references

- GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies – Industry_ Hotel/Accommodation & Tour Operator

- GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies – Industry: Hotel/Accommodation, Tour Operator, MICE, and Attraction
- GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies – Destination
- Guidance on Sampling of Tours for the GSTC Tour Operator
- Guidelines for the GSTC Certification Certificate
- GSTC requirements for hotel's performance against eight GSTC criteria
- GSTC Logo Usage Guidelines for Certified Entities
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 “Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services”
- RG-01: regolamento Accredia per l’accreditamento degli organismi di certificazione, ispezione, validazione e verifica - parte generale
- RG-01-03: regolamento Accredia per l’accreditamento degli organismi di certificazione del prodotto/servizio/processo
- RG-09 - Regolamento per l’utilizzo del logo e del marchio ACCREDIA

All regulatory documents must be used in their latest available version.