



# GSTC Surveillance and Sampling Procedure

## version 1.0

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### Document History

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## Document Controls

This is version 1.0 of the GSTC Surveillance and Sampling Procedure, 2024.

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## **1. Purpose and Scope**

1.1. This procedure outlines the details of the annual surveillance program and the sampling process used by GSTC for the Accredited Certification Bodies (ACB) across both the Industry and the Destination.

## **2. Normative Reference and Associated Documents**

- IAF MD 4:2022: IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes
- IAF MD 17:2019 Witnessing Activities for the Accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies
- ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for auditing management system
- The latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies-Industry: Hotel/Accommodation & Tour Operator
- The latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies-Destination.
- The latest version of the GSTC Accreditation Procedure.

## **3. Terms and Definition**

- 3.1. Unless specified otherwise, all GSTC terms and definitions are provided in the [GSTC Glossary of Sustainable Tourism Terms](#).
- 3.2. For terms related to Recognition and Accreditation, please refer to the GSTC Accreditation Glossary.

## **4. Surveillance Procedure**

- 4.1. The surveillance period begins after the initial Accreditation Decision date or following recertification. The surveillance period shall not exceed five years.
- 4.1.1. Prior to the cycle expiration, the re-accreditation shall be conducted in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the GSTC Accreditation Procedure.

- 4.1.2. GSTC shall conduct an annual surveillance for each ACB in accordance with this procedure. Should the surveillance activity exceeds one year, it shall be justified
- 4.2. Surveillance includes:
  - 4.2.1. Office assessment (file review and evaluation of records and documents normally done at the ACB premises), and/or
  - 4.2.2. Witnessing (witnessing an audit within the scope of accreditation).
  - 4.2.3. As necessary, GSTC may conduct desk assessments, oversight activities, and nonconformity (NC) verifications to confirm ACB's compliance with the Accreditation Procedure and the GSTC Accreditation Manual.
- 4.3. GSTC may modify the assessment type, accompanied by a valid justification.
- 4.4. Assessment dates shall be confirmed by both GSTC and the ACB at least two weeks before the assessment.
- 4.5. If GSTC determines that an onsite assessment is not applicable, remote audit techniques may be employed for surveillance in accordance with the requirements outlined in IAF MD 4.

#### **4. Sampling Procedure**

- 4.1. GSTC shall manage the sampling process for the witnessing of the ACB, ensuring a minimum frequency of once annually. GSTC shall adhere to the following considerations for the sampling procedure:
- 4.2. Evaluating an ACB's performance involves analyzing data from multiple assessments and relevant sources.
  - 4.2.1. The ACB shall provide GSTC with information about planned audits so that GSTC can schedule the surveillance program
  - 4.2.2. GSTC shall conduct a comprehensive review of planned audit activities, assessment results, and other relevant information encompassing but not limited to incidents, complaints, inputs, and business profiles to ensure a thorough performance evaluation.

- 4.2.3. Summary of Findings shall be available for each ACB.
- 4.2.4. GSTC shall conduct a risk assessment for the ACB following Section 5. GSTC shall provide justification for the risk assessment result and share it with the ACB.
  - 4.2.4.1. GSTC shall give the level of risk following Section 5.
  - 4.2.4.2. Based on the assessed level of risk following Section 5, GSTC shall determine the sampling for witnessing.
  - 4.2.4.3. For the Oversight activities exclusively, GSTC shall sample 1 or 2 of the oversight activities annually, and the results shall be shared with the national accreditation body(NAB) for their consideration.
- 4.3. GSTC shall prepare and communicate the audit program to the ACB. This communication may include details about the methods used for sampling clients in the witness assessment process.
  - 4.3.1. Based on the performance review, GSTC shall prepare the audit program for at least one year along with the service agreement, which shall be signed by the ACB prior to the surveillance assessment
  - 4.3.2. Affiliate Office Assessment shall be conducted by GSTC at least once every 2 years.
  - 4.3.3. Head Office Assessment may be conducted remotely, following the GSTC assessor's assessment recommendation.
    - 4.3.3.1. The ACB shall update the management system, and should there be any changes, the ACB shall inform GSTC about every surveillance assessment.

## **5. Risk Assessment for Surveillance**

- 5.1. There are some factors that need to be considered for the risk assessment for CB surveillance planning, including:
  - 5.1.1. Management System Performance

- 5.1.1.1. Review of the ACB's overall performance (including results from previous assessment activities);
- 5.1.1.2. Factors such as process complexity, legislation, etc., influence the ability of the CB to demonstrate the ability to meet the intended outcomes of the Sustainability Management;
- 5.1.1.3. Internal audit result;
- 5.1.1.4. Changes in CB work patterns in geographical/technical areas;
- 5.1.2. Resources and Operational Issues
  - 5.1.2.1. Number of certificates issued within the scope of accreditation;
  - 5.1.2.2. Complexity of certificates issued within the scope of accreditation (e.g., multi-site, group certification);
  - 5.1.2.3. The geographical scope of operating;
  - 5.1.2.4. The number of CB's internal and external auditors and the confidence of CB's auditor evaluation and approval process;
- 5.1.3. Stakeholders and Communication
  - 5.1.3.1. Interested parties/regulators' requests or other national agreements;
  - 5.1.3.2. Feedback from interested parties, including complaints about the certified organization(or Certificate Holder) and customer surveys.
- 5.1.4. Other assessment results.
- 5.2. Risk evaluation will employ a scale ranging from 1 to 3, and the cumulative risk will be determined by aggregating risk factors within specific categories, as outlined below:
  - 5.2.1. Management System Performance (1-5 score): The ACB will receive a score from 1 (indicating low performance) to 5 (indicating good performance). For instance, a score of 5 may be assigned when there

were no Major Nonconformities in prior assessments, with no changes identified since the last assessment.

5.2.2. Resource Availability (1-5 score): The ACB will be assigned a score of 1 if there is an insufficient allocation of resources (e.g., limited auditors, extended geographical scope, and/or a high number of issued certificates) and a score of 5 in cases where resources are adequate.

5.2.3. Stakeholders and Communication (1-5 score): The ACB will be scored on a scale from 1 (indicating issues such as complaints or requests from interested parties) to 5 (indicating an absence of such issues).

5.3. Taking into account the above factors, the resulting level of risk shall be:

- a. Level 1 - Low risk, when the sum of the above risk factors is 10-15
- b. Level 2 - Medium risk, when the sum of the above risk factors is 5-9
- c. Level 3 - High risk, when the sum of the above risk factors is 1-4

5.4. The level of risk affects the number of witnessing activities to be conducted by GSTC as follows:

5.4.1. For low-risk ACB, GSTC shall conduct one witnessing per scope.

5.4.2. For medium-risk ACB, GSTC shall conduct two witnessing activities per scope.

5.4.3. For high-risk ACB, GSTC shall conduct three witnessing activities per scope.

5.5. The risk assessment level shall be justified by the assessment team, and results shall be shared by GSTC to the ACB according to the consolidated table below:

**Table 1. Risk Evaluation**

Sum of scores (6.2)	Level of Risk	Number of Witnessing
10-15	Low	1
9-5	Medium	2
1-4	High	3

- 5.6. GSTC Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF) only covers one assessment per year. Thus, if an ACB is categorized as medium-risk, high-risk, or GSTC inquiry to add more assessments/activities and requires more than one activity, the CB shall cover the travel costs and assessor fees according to the GSTC Accreditation Fee Schedule.