GSTC

Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Development of the
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

Attraction Criteria

Report on key findings from the 1st public consultation

March 29, 2024
GSTC Attraction Criteria Development
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GSTC Attraction Criteria Development
Report on the key findings from the first public consultation

The report sets out the process of the first public consultation for the Attraction Criteria draft v1.06. The objective of the report is to report on the period, stakeholders involved, efforts made to promote the public consultation and the key extracts summarized from the survey responses. It serves for the purpose of transparency, accountability, and reliability of the process that is clearly outlined in the GSTC Attraction Criteria development Terms of Reference.

The Attraction Criteria draft was developed by experts in the relevant field. The draft was the basis for the public consultation in which the Advisory Group, Key Stakeholders group and members of GSTC have commented on.

The summary on the key findings only refer to some extracts from the survey responses. All responses are collected by GSTC Secretariat and are communicated to the experts for the second revision of the GSTC Attraction Criteria draft.

A. Consultation period: January 15th – March 15th, 2024

B. Outreach

1. Members of the Advisory Group and key stakeholders of the GSTC Attraction criteria development:
    a. Members of the Advisory Group[1]: 6
        - Association of Singapore Attractions (Singapore)
        - International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (U.S.A)
        - Singapore Tourism Board Singapore
        - South African Tourism Services Association (South Africa)
        - The Royal Djurgården Society (Sweden)
        - U.S National Park Service (U.S.A)

    b. Key stakeholders[2]: 6
        - City of Dubrovnik (Croatia)
        - Ecotourism Australia (Australia)

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[1] The Advisory Group provided high-level inputs to the Criteria draft. The Group not only participated in the official public consultation but also worked and provided continuous comments to the Criteria draft, gave recommendations on relevant publications and reports, was responsible for promoting the GSTC Attraction Criteria' first public consultation, and gave recommendations on which organizations could be suitable for the feasibility assessment. GSTC has online meetings every 3 months, to discuss and update important timelines and go through any questions or concerns.

[2] The Key Stakeholders group are experts with strong background on attraction and are key industry players who currently operate an attraction. They are also responsible for giving feedback on the Attraction Criteria draft.

- Fair Trade Tourism (South Africa)
- Mandai Wildlife Group (Singapore)
- Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (Sri Lanka)
- The Blue Lagoon Island (Bahamas)

2. Networks of Advisory Group and key stakeholders: Unable to attribute the exact number of survey respondents to these channels.

3. Participants in 3 GSTC Attraction Criteria workshops: Approximately 75 in all
   a. Gunsan, Korea on September 16th, 2022 – Approx. 15
   b. Seville, Spain on December 14th, 2022 – 29
   c. Antalya, Turkiye on May 11th, 2023 – 27

   Note: 3a and 3b were "ground sensing" sessions conducted prior to GSTC's partnership with STB to determine the demand and views for the GSTC Attraction Criteria.

4. GSTC Members in GSTC's global network: 537 members[3]
   i. Academia(2.2%), Association (4.6%), Certification Body (8.6%), Consultancy (17.6%), Corporate and Business Travel (1.0%), Destination Management Organization (8.1%), Government Agency (2.9%), Hotel/Accommodation (5.6%), Media (1.0%), National Tourism Organization (5.9%), Non-Profit Organization (10.0%), Online Travel Agency (5.1%), Tour Operation (inbound) (8.6%), Travel Agency (4.4%).

5. Disadvantaged and under-represented groups: To be provided in an addendum to this report.

C. Outreach Methods
1. Survey Monkey with open ended questions on the criterion and indicators based on the GSTC Attraction criteria draft v1.06. Respondents were given the option to provide inputs for:

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[3] GSTC has reached out to all of its members and not specific targets due to the following reasons: 1) the definition and therefore the boundary of attraction is not exact. This is well stated in the GSTC Attraction Criteria Development Terms of Reference. A destination, parks, museums can be regarded as an attraction. 2) a broader audience inclusion would give more perspective on how to consider sustainability on Attraction. Many people would have at least once interacted with an attraction in their life span. Given that GSTC members are strongly committed to sustainability, the members possess the right to give their voices.
Please note, that only specific targets of Attraction will be given the opportunity to do the Feasibility Assessment. The Feasibility Assessment is only targeted to those who currently operate an Attraction and can provide inputs that are executed in practice. The Feasibility Assessment is therefore not open to the public and the stakeholders taking part in the assessment is carefully managed and controlled by the GSTC Secretariat.

      a.   all criteria and indicators; <u>or</u>

      b.   individual sections A, B, C, or D.

2. Use of word file to collect comprehensive responses on the Attraction Criteria draft. (*The word file was used the most by those who wanted to extensively discuss with their partners and other networks before providing their answers.)

3. Promotion
    a. GSTC Website www.gstcouncil.org
        i.   Home slider redirecting to the Public Consultation news page
       ii.   News posts on web

    b. Social Media Promotion: The post was featured/pinned to the top of all channels. There were a total of 4 posts in all channels from January to March 2024.
        i.   LinkedIn - Followers as of 15th March: 41,834
             ● Also shared on LinkedIn groups such as: GSTC Group / Sustainability Professionals / Sustainable Tourism Latin America /
             ● TravelMole Media Group
             ● LinkedIn ads with specific Attraction Targets were made.
                  a. Dates: From 18th of Jan to the 15th of March 2024
                  b. Number of ads: 10 targeted ads
                  c. Impressions: 146,443
                  d. Clicks: 876

       ii.   Instagram - Followers by 15th March 2024: 3,519
      iii.   Facebook - Followers by 15th March 2024: 27,026
      iv.   X (formerly known as Twitter) - Followers by 15th March: 9,369

    c. GSTC Electronic Direct Mail
        i.   PR - Media List GSTC 'Attraction Criteria 1st Public Consultation is Now Open': https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-attraction-criteria-first-public-consultation-open (1,124 deliveries and 830 total opens[4])
       ii.   January Monthly Newsletter: https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-newsletter-january-2024 (11,093 deliveries and 5,277 total opens)
      iii.   February Monthly Newsletter: https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-newsletter-februrary-2024 (11,141 deliveries and 4,896 total opens)
      iv.   Members Bulletin February: https://mailchi.mp/gstc/gstc-members-bulletin-2024-feb (1,090 deliveries and 1,068 total opens)

    d. Direct communications to targeted groups of GSTC Members.

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[4] Total open means that the receiver has opened the newsletter several times.

      i.   Direct mailing to GSTC Members
- 537 personalized emails sent in English and Spanish to the GSTC Members on February 28th, 2024.
  - ❖ A total of 493 emails were dispatched in English, comprising 371 sent to organization/destination members and 122 to individuals.
  - ❖ A total of 44 emails were dispatched in Spanish, 38 of which were sent to organization/destination members and 6 to individuals.

   e.   Networks of Advisory Group and key stakeholders.
      i.   Word of mouth and sharing of the GSTC Attraction Criteria development news and survey through their newsletters.
   f.   Promotion through webinars

GSTC and invited speakers of the webinars promoted the public consultation of the Attractions Criteria. For the IAAPA Sustainability Webinar, GSTC was invited to speak.

      i.   The IAAPA Sustainability Webinar, with the participation of the CEO of GSTC. IAAPA promoted the 1st Public Consultation during the webinar and later sent out an email with more details to all attendees[5].
     ii.   "Attractions' Collective Journey to Sustainability: Insights from The Royal Djurgården Society and Parques Reunidos" – 40 participants
    iii.   "Sustainability in Austria: Leading Projects as Prerequisite for Upcoming Developments" – 21 participants

4.   Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. To be submitted in an addendum to this report.

D. Responses received
1.   112 responses through Survey Monkey
   a.   GSTC and external experts assessed that the number of responses was sufficient to revise the draft of the Criteria meaningfully.

   b.   33% were from the Attractions industry. Respondents not falling within the 33% were national tourism boards or organisations overseeing attractions, which could be regarded as attractions. GSTC assessed that the responses from these organizations are meaningful and necessary, because of the similarities of destination and attraction.

   c.   By affiliation:
      i.   Travel & Tourism Industry - private enterprise 30.1%;
     ii.   Non-Profit Organization (NPO) or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) 25.6%;

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[5] The webinar was hosted and organized by IAAPA. GSTC was the presenter. Therefore the attendee number is not known.

      iii. Government agency (national, provincial, municipal and other) 6.8%;
      iv. Destination Management Organizations 3.8%;
      v. Consultancy 18%;
      vi. Certification Body 4.5%;
      vii. Academia 11.3%.

2. 17 comprehensive responses were received using Word file
   a. The Attraction Criteria draft version was sent to the respondents with a separate answer sheet. By using an answer sheet and not the survey monkey, respondents could discuss internally offline or online and provide answers that are from the organization's perspective. This approach was well appreciated by organisations because they had time to reflect on the criterion and indicator.

   b. Organizations (or experts from the organization) including FORREC[6], ECPAT[7], Green Star Hotel Certification, Royal Djurgården Society, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee (ICTC), Roundtable for Human Rights, Royal Caribbean Group, Mandai Wildlife Group, Singapore Tourism Board, The Blue Lagoon Island, World Wide Fund, University of Caribe, U.S. National Park Service and the Disadvantaged Groups have provided answers after discussing it internally within the organization.

3. GSTC has reached out to internationally recognized organizations for each of the sections B, C, and D. The organizations that were reached out to were:
   a. Section B: Roundtable for Human Rights and ECPAT
   b. Section C: ICOMOS ICTC
   c. Section D: World Wide Fund

   The organizations have provided very thorough input reflecting on their expertise and professions.

4. Response from the Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.
   a. To be submitted in an addendum to this report.

E. Summary of key findings

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[6] Shortened version of "for recreation". FORREC designs and plans theme parks, water parks, resorts, retail and mixed use developments and visitor attractions around the world.

[7] ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations that works to end the sexual exploitation of children

1. The summary under this section are extracts of key findings from the survey responses collected. The technical team will review all feedback received in their review of the draft criteria.

    a. Definition of an Attraction (current draft: A Tourist 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 or religious experiences):
        i. Suggestion: To add "primary" before "purposes of attracting" – i.e., A Tourist Attraction is a place of interest …. for the primary purpose of attracting visitors. …
        ii. Suggestion: To clarify meaning "identifiable entity" and provide further understanding of ownership and management structures.

    b. Definition of Stakeholders of an attraction (current draft: All individuals, groups or entities that are affected by the operations of the attraction, including visitors, local community, staff, suppliers, tenants, sponsors, and owners).
        i. Suggestion: To more clearly define the groups regarded as stakeholders by adding the underlined aspects: All individuals, groups or entities that are affected and/or have an interest in the operations and activities of the attraction, including visitors, local community, staff, suppliers, tenants, sponsors, government/local authorities, investors, and owners.
        ii. To define the boundary of a stakeholder, whether they should be individuals/organizations only "affected by" or "with an interest in" parties.
    c. Sections
        i. Section A: Demonstrate effective sustainable management
            ■ A3 Reporting and Communication to add: Communication is regularly maintained between the attraction and the stakeholders.
            ■ A7 Location, buildings and infrastructure. If the attraction is an amusement park, to clarify how best to align with integrity and capacity evaluation. GSTC to give examples or state how to align with international (national) standards or globally accepted guidelines.
        ii. Section B: Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts
            ■ B1 Community Support: Initiatives and activities should be strategic and relevant to the attraction's impact on the community. This is only partly reflected in the current draft and some project examples may not fit certain attractions – e.g., projects addressing the impacts of climate change may not be relevant to all attractions as it may not be a main impact. Instead, a risk-based

       assessment with corresponding mitigation should be implemented to ensure effectiveness.
- Suggestion to rephrase B1 and include "the organization engages" rather than "organization actively supports". The word engagement is more related to interaction and should be reflected in the Criteria.

iii.   Section C: Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts
- Suggestion to include in the title text: Protect, stimulate and enhance the relevance of cultural heritage for the wellbeing of communities and visitors.
- C1.5 Inappropriate interaction in general should not happen – not only with children. Suggestion to adapt the indicator accordingly, e.g. "Measures are in place to avoid culturally inappropriate interaction, especially with vulnerable groups including children."

iv.   Section D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts
- Suggest to change D3.5.5: If any, all living specimens of wild animals must be acquired in line with national and international (incl. CITES) species conservation regulations.
- Further suggestions: If any, all living specimens of wild animals must be acquired from certified second generation-born breeding stock in human care in line with national and international (incl. CITES) species conservation regulations.