

Audit guideline for destinations

The "Sustainability Standard Tourism South Tyrol" is based on the GSTC standard (GSTC-D) and is recognized by the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) as an equivalent standard. The successful implementation by the tourism organizations is audited by an external GSTC-accredited certification body (CB) at regular intervals of at least 3 years. The minimum requirements for the fulfilment of the criteria to be audited have been defined by IDM, whereupon the auditors of the CB have been trained accordingly.

Audit format

For Level 3 (GSTC recognized), the CB follows the audit process according to the GSTC accreditation guidelines: *GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025*.

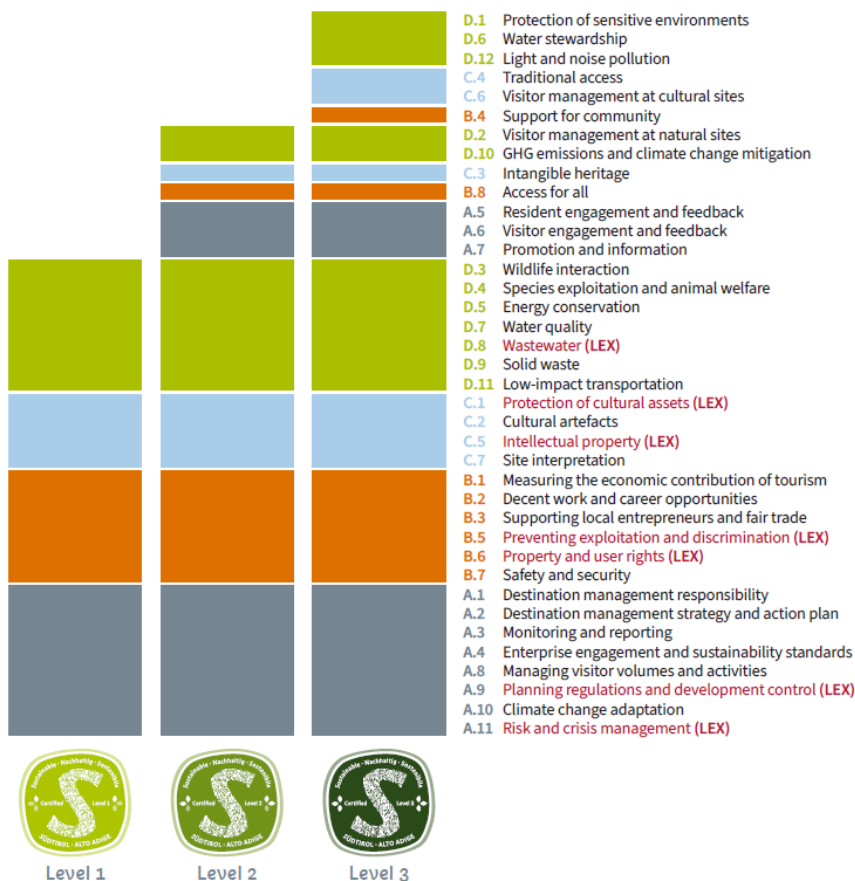
For Levels 1 and 2, the audit cycle follows the same logic and timeline as the Level 3 audit. The first audit (Year 0) must be conducted onsite in the same way as for Level 3. In the following two years (surveillance audits), the audits may be conducted as desk audits. In Year 3 (renewal audit), the audit must be conducted onsite again.

For all Levels IDM requires the CB to invite one IDM representative as an observer to the final discussion of the audit results, ahead of finalizing the final verdict/report.

Compulsory criteria for each Level

The following figure shows the compulsory criteria, listed by area, subject and level and **highlights the criteria covered by national or regional laws and this is recognized by GSTC.**

Criteria for tourism organizations



- Sustainable management (A)
- Socio-economic sustainability (B)
- Cultural sustainability (C)
- Environmental sustainability (D)

Criteria evaluation

After completion of the audit for each criterion, there can be the following results:

- **Full compliance as a good practice example (DARK GREEN):** the criterion is fully met and could be used as a good practice example for other Alpine destinations.
- **Compliance (LIGHT GREEN):** the criterion is met.
- It is possible to add a *recommendation* if the auditor thinks this can help the destination to reach the even higher level of “Full compliance as a good practice example” (DARK GREEN).
- It is also possible to add a *remark* if the auditor thinks that there is a certain risk that at the next audit this criterion could eventually turn into a minor nonconformity (YELLOW).
- **Minor nonconformity (YELLOW):** partial aspects of the criteria are missing.
- It is possible for the auditor to recommend a *corrective action* that helps the destination to reach compliance status (LIGHT GREEN).
- **Major nonconformity (RED):** significant aspects of the criteria are missing.
- It is possible for the auditor to recommend a *corrective action* that helps the destination to reach compliance status (LIGHT GREEN).

The evaluation can be set in the ;changeMaker! -Tool of IDM accordingly.

Recommendations, remarks and corrective actions can be given by clicking on the exclamation mark symbol in the ;changeMaker!-Tool. (s. below).

German version:

Es stehen 4 Bewertungen zur Wahl (diese werden auch im Mouse-Over textlich dargestellt):



Nicht erfüllt (rot). Das bedeutet eine wesentliche Abweichung (*major nonconformity*).
Signifikante Aspekte des Kriteriums sind nicht erfüllt.

Bitte formulieren Sie bei einer *major nonconformity* Maßnahmen, welche die Destination erfüllen muss und setzen Sie das Datum zur Erfüllung derselben gemäß GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025. Bitte stellen Sie das achteckige Symbol mit Ausrufezeichen am Zeilenende auf *corrective action*. Es soll die Farbe **ROT** annehmen.



Verbesserungswürdig (gelb). Das ist eine geringfügige Abweichung (*minor nonconformity*).
Unwesentliche Teile des Kriteriums fehlen.

Bitte formulieren Sie bei einer *minor nonconformity* Maßnahmen, welche die Destination erfüllen muss und setzen Sie das Datum zur Erfüllung derselben gemäß GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025. Bitte stellen Sie das achteckige Symbol mit Ausrufezeichen am Zeilenende auf *corrective action*. Es soll die Farbe **ROT** annehmen.



Erfüllt (grün). Das ist die angestrebte Bewertung (*compliance*).

Bei **Erfüllt** können Sie zwischen *compliance* oder *compliance with remark* differenzieren. Bei *compliance* können Sie trotzdem eine Empfehlung (= *recommendation*) aussprechen, das achteckige Symbol färbt sich **BLAU**.

Ist das Kriterium in der Hauptsache erfüllt, die Destination kann sich aber noch verbessern und muss das bis zum nächsten Audit tun damit keine geringfügige Abweichung (*minor nonconformity*) entsteht, dann vergeben sie bitte eine Anmerkung (= *remark*) und das Achteck färbt sich **GELB**.



Vorbildlich erfüllt (dunkelgrün). Hier können Sie Good-Practice-Beispiele würdigen und für die Zertifizierungsentscheidung hervorheben (*full compliance as good practice example*).

Bei *Good-Practice-Beispielen* bitten wir Sie, diese **im Textfeld unter dem entsprechenden Kriterium** zu kommentieren. Auf diese Weise werden empfohlene Maßnahmen im Auditbericht klar von Begründungen (*remarks* und *recommendations*) getrennt und die Handlungsaufforderungen sind für die Destinationen besser verständlich.

Italian version:

Sono disponibili 4 valutazioni tra cui scegliere (queste vengono anche visualizzate nel Mouse-Over testo):



Non soddisfatto (rosso). Ciò indica una non conformità maggiore (*major nonconformity*).
Gli aspetti principali del criterio non sono stati soddisfatti.

In caso di *major nonconformity* si prega di formulare le misure che la destinazione deve attuare e impostare la data di completamento delle stesse secondo il GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025. Si prega di impostare il simbolo ottagonale con punto esclamativo alla fine della riga su *corrective action*. Esso deve assumere il colore **ROSSO**.



Da migliorare (giallo). Si tratta di una non conformità minore (*minor nonconformity*).
Parti non essenziali del criterio mancano.

In caso di *minor nonconformity* si prega di formulare le misure che la destinazione deve attuare e impostare la data di completamento delle stesse secondo il GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025. Si prega di impostare il simbolo ottagonale con punto esclamativo alla fine della riga su *corrective action*. Esso deve assumere il colore **ROSSO**.



Soddisfatto (verde). Questa è la valutazione auspicata (*compliance*).

In caso di **Soddisfatto** è possibile distinguere tra *compliance* o *compliance with remark*. È possibile formulare una raccomandazione (= *recommendation*) e il simbolo ottagonale diventa **BLU**. Se il criterio è **sostanzialmente soddisfatto**, ma la destinazione può ancora migliorare e deve farlo entro il prossimo audit, si può assegnare un *remark* e l'ottagono diventa **GIALLO**.



Eccellente (verde scuro). Qui è possibile valorizzare esempi di good-practice e metterli in evidenza per la decisione di certificazione (*full compliance as good practice example*).

Per gli esempi di *Good-Practice*, vi chiediamo di **commentarli nel campo di testo sotto il criterio corrispondente**. In questo modo, le misure raccomandate nel rapporto di audit vengono chiaramente separate dalle motivazioni (*remarks e recommendations*) e le azioni richieste risultano più comprensibili per le destinazioni.

Audit results

Based on the above-mentioned outcomes for each criterion, the audit of a destination can lead to the following results:

- Level 1 – “Label level” (25 criteria in total: **18 criteria not covered by laws are compulsory – 7 criteria are covered by laws**):
 - **Main assessment** (year 0): a minimum of **13** of the 18 compulsory criteria for Level 1 are compliant & **5** can show minor or major nonconformities.
 - In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities. At the end of this period, **14** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **4** can be compliant with remarks.
 - **1st Certification Review Audit** (year 3): **15** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **3** can be compliant with remarks. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
 - **Surveillance Audit** (year 4): **16** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **2** can be compliant with remarks. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
 - **Surveillance Audit** (year 5): **17** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **1** can be compliant with remarks. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
 - **2nd Certification Review Audit** (year 6): **all 18 compulsory criteria for Level 1 must be compliant**. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
- Level 2 – “Label level” (32 criteria in total: **25 criteria not covered by laws are compulsory – 7 criteria are covered by laws**):
 - **Main assessment** (year 0): a minimum of **18** of the 25 compulsory criteria for Level 1 are compliant & **7** can show minor or major nonconformities.
 - In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities. At the end of this period, **19** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **6** can be compliant with remarks.
 - **1st Certification Review Audit** (year 3): **21** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **4** can be compliant with remarks. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
 - **Surveillance Audit** (year 4): **22** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **3** can be compliant with remarks. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.

- **Surveillance Audit** (year 5): **24** of the compulsory criteria must be compliant & **1** can be compliant with remarks. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
 - **2nd Certification Review Audit** (year 6): **all 25 compulsory criteria for Level 2 must be compliant**. In case there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.
- **Level 3 – “GSTC recognized - certification level”** (38 criteria in total: **all 31 criteria not covered by laws are compulsory – 7 criteria are covered by laws**):
- **Main assessment** (year 0) or **Certification Review Audit** (year 3): all **31** compulsory criteria must be **compliant**. If there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 6 months from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities. **At the end of this period, the criteria which were classified as nonconformities must at least turn into compliances** where remarks can be added.
 - **Surveillance audits** (years 1 and 2): If there are minor or major nonconformities, the CBs provide a period of 90 days from the issue date of the audit report for the closing of these nonconformities.

The nonconformities (minor and major) shall be documented in the audit report whereupon destinations will be instructed to inform the CB on their progress respecting the defined deadlines. In case of nonconformity with the defined objectives, the CB will address both, the destination and IDM, and evaluate the next steps defined in the *GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025*.

The destinations are certified according to the criteria. However, all the indicators provided must be processed to fulfil the criteria.

Result communication

If all criteria necessary for the certification of the respective levels are met, the destination (and IDM) receives confirmation from the certification body (CB) about achieving the respective level. On the contrary, for the criteria that are not met, the destination receives justification including suggestions for improvement.

If it is determined during a surveillance audit or a certification review audit that some of the criteria are no longer satisfied, the destination and IDM will be contacted by the CB, whereupon appropriate measures will be initiated as defined in the *GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025*.

N.B.: This document was updated according to the new GSTC ACCREDITATION MANUAL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES – DESTINATION Version 2.0 March 26, 2025.