



AWARD & CERTIFICATION PROGRAM 2022



Sintra (PT), QualityCoast Gold





Soca Valley (SI), Slovenia Green Gold



Torroella - L'Estartit (ES), Green Destinations Gold

A PROGRAM FOR ALL DESTINATIONS

Before the unprecedented COVID-19 **global health crisis** that rattled 2020, destinations around the world experienced continuous growth but also faced associated **challenges** to their environmental, cultural, and social balance and sustainability. When **restarting tourism**, destination managers are expected to **'build back better'**: by avoiding the negative impacts of tourism and enhancing its benefits.

Together with our partners around the world, Green Destinations offers the tools and **GSTC-Recognised** framework for sustainable tourism development by comprehensively assessing destination sustainability **policies and practices**, planning for improvements, learning from peers, and celebrating achievements with Awards or Certification.

Our programs have supported more than 200 destinations in 60 countries to deliver responsible tourism.

Green Destinations Awards recognise progress in sustainable destination management, policies, and political leadership. QualityCoast Awards are specially designed for destinations focusing on waterfront sustainability, seaside, and beach quality.

Green Destinations Certification is the ultimate recognition for ambitious destinations aiming for full compliance with the globally agreed sustainability standards, assessed with an evaluation process **accredited by GSTC**.

In short, our awards and certification programs offer something for **all types of destinations**: large or small, new to or experienced in sustainable destination management. Municipalities, cities, islands, regions, protected areas, and private destinations* can apply; while countries, states or provinces can opt for our "**Global Leaders Program**" to collectively introduce sustainable destination management and certification to a number of destinations within a territory.

(*) Accommodations, single buildings, attractions and theme parks are not eligible. Eco-lodges and privately-owned protected areas are eligible if there is effective stewardship for a considerable area that is otherwise not managed.



PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

We provide strong publicity and **market visibility** for our destinations, to inform travellers about clean, green and responsible destinations and to empower consumers to make well-considered travel choices.

The Awards and Certifications are presented at our annual **Green Destinations Days** conference and our yearly **ITB Berlin event**. These events provide our destinations international exposure and publicity opportunities about their sustainability achievements.

The annual **Top 100 Destination Sustainability Stories** competition invites destinations to showcase their best sustainability achievements by submitting a 'Good Practice Story'. Indeed, narratives and **stories** are often just as interesting for travellers as certification. ACP destinations are automatically pre-selected to the yearly Top100 competition.

After each award presentation destinations can organise a **media event** in the destination, giving the opportunity to present the result of efforts to stakeholders. **Award flags and banners** can be displayed throughout awarded destinations. Visitors recognise and **appreciate** the commitment - such displays enhance visitor appreciation and consumer ratings.

The **Good Travel Guide** website is our affiliate program to **showcase** destinations participating in Green Destinations Programs (Awards, Certification, Top 100). The Guide focuses on making responsible accommodations and activities visible to travellers by offering participating destinations certification for tourism **SMEs**: the **Good Travel Seal** and **Virus-Aware Seal**.



Tibau do Sul (BR), Green Destinations Silver



Norderney (DE), QualityCoast Gold



Gozo (MT), QualityCoast Gold

OUR AWARDS AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The **Green Destinations Awards** and QualityCoast Awards are a type of certification indicating (independent **auditor-evaluated**) compliance levels with the Green Destinations standard, recognised by the GSTC. Audits are required every 2 years, and every other audit takes place on-site.



Green Destinations Certified is our **GSTC-Accredited** program for destinations that aim for full adherence to the Green Destinations Standard guidelines. The audit is more rigorous involving broad stakeholder consultation to verify **compliance**, and all compliance should be fully supported by evidence. Every 3 years an on-site audit is required. Destinations are advised to apply for Certification if they have reached at least a Gold Award level, or prepared with a different (GSTC-Recognised) assessment or recognition program.



Contact us for **fees** which differentiate by **program** (Award or Certification), **destination type** (community, protected area or private destination) and **size** (inhabitants, surface or capacity).

OUR PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

	AWARDS	CERTIFICATION
RESULT OF THE APPLICATION	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum Award based on compliance-points earned per criterion 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal: 100% compliance with GD Standard "Conditional Certification" if <10% of criteria have Corrective Actions pending
COMPLIANCE VERIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance may be decided based on narratives and/or stakeholder confirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully evidence-based and stakeholder-confirmed compliance Yearly progress report on any pending Corrective Actions
CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following GSTC Accreditation guidelines for independent certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhering to GSTC Accreditation guidelines for independent certification
AUDIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 4 years: 1-day on-site audit Every 2 years: desk audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max every 3 years for 2-4 days, desk and on-site audit
PROMOTIONAL BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invitation to annual award ceremony Flags, social media posts, other exposure Free Basic page on GoodTravel.Guide Pre-selection for annual Top 100 competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As GD/QC Award, + featured on GSTC's Map of Certified Destinations Exclusive status as one of very few destinations (globally) to receive GSTC-accredited certification
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES	From € 2.100 (depending on destination size)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including auditor fees (excl. travel expenses) Excluding GD Training for DMO Staff 	From € 5.250 (depending on destination size)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excluding audit costs (depending on size) Including GD Training for DMO Staff

*Contact us for the applicable fees in your region.

Interested? For more information and registration, visit our website [here](https://www.greendestinations.org).



Saba (NL Carib), QualityCoast Silver



Bergueda (SP) Green Destinations Gold



Bonaire (NL Carib) QualityCoast Silver

Demo Destination ENGLISH

- Assessment & Reporting
- Action plans
- Sustainability report
- Remarks report
- Audit report
- Guidance report.
- Overview



Green Destinations Standard

0. Destination characteristics		86%
General information	1-10	
Scope of the assessment	11-13	
Sustainability Good Practice Story	14	
1. Destination management		65%
		23% 4% 23%
Commitment & organisation	1-5	
Planning & development	6-13	
Monitoring & reporting	14-20	
Legal & ethical compliance	21-26	
2. Nature, scenery & animals		63%
		38%
Nature & conservation	1-5	
Nature & animal experience	6-7	

0. Destination characteristics

General information

Criteria

- 0.1 Sustainability coordinator ✓ ●●●
- 0.2 Organisation managing the destination ✓ ●●●
- 0.3 Annual number of overnight visitors ✓ ●●●
- 0.4 Number of inhabitants ✓ ●●●
- 0.5 Destination attributes ✓ ●●●
- 0.6 Destination pictures & video ✓ ●●●

0. 1 Sustainability coordinator

Reporting | Guidance | Remarks | Action plan

Reporting

Completed Not yet completed

Sustainability coordinator

Demo Coordinator ENGLISH

Email

english.demo@gd.info

0. Destination characteristics

General information

Criteria

- 0.1 Sustainability coordinator ✓ ●●●
- 0.2 Organisation managing the destination ✓ ●●●
- 0.3 Annual number of overnight visitors ✓ ●●●
- 0.4 Number of inhabitants ✓ ●●●
- 0.5 Destination attributes ✓ ●●●
- 0.6 Destination pictures & video ✓ ●●●
- 0.7 Destination description ✓ ●●●
- 0.8 Sustainability pitch ✓ ●●●

0. 1 Sustainability coordinator

Reporting | Guidance | Remarks | Action plan | Best practices

English

To change the name of the Sustainability Coordinator contact@greendestinations.org

Email and Phone can be edited through 'My Profile' www.greendestinations.eu)

OUR METHODOLOGY

The Awards & Certification Program is structured by the **sustainability management** guidelines of our **Green Destinations Standard**, which is **recognised** by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) to cover globally agreed sustainability requirements.

The standard covers **six main themes**:

Destination Management

Nature & Scenery

Environment & Climate

Culture & Tradition

Social Well-Being

Business & Communication

Destinations signing up for the Awards & Certification program engage in a sustainability management cycle aimed at continuous improvement with periodic assessment and independent verification. The main steps include:

- Engagement and reporting:** induction training to destination sustainability, the certification program, how to apply the GD Standard and its online assessment platform. Coaching by GD secretariat
- Evaluation:** technical check and independent audit of reported sustainability compliance
- Certification:** a Certification Committee evaluates auditor conclusions and issues the Award or Certification, which remains valid for 2 or 3 years, respectively.
- Action planning** for improvements based on provided recommendations, guidance and good practice examples

SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Green Destinations benefits from a large international **network** of partners, representatives and auditors-advisors. They are trained to **help** destinations with **assessments**, complying with **criteria** and preparing **applications** for Awards or Certification.

To give an idea of support options, we designed **3 support packages** to fit different needs for professional assistance.

	BASIC	STANDARD	COMPLETE
Online kick-off meeting with destination team			
Desk research for supporting evidence			
Review process of provided documentation			
Reporting of compliance description & uploads			
Retrieving key info and data from stakeholders			
Tourism Impact Assessment Support			
On-site kick-off meeting with stakeholders			
Additional meetings with Stakeholders			
Visit destination to gather information			
Duration	4 days	8 days	12 days

The price of each package is based on daily rates. Contact us to enquire about local rates of these services in your region.

Green Destinations Training, launched in 2021, will offer online training, conferences and seminars for DMO staff, destination managers, practitioners, and key tourism stakeholders.

Find out more about the Green Destinations Training platform [here](#).



CONTACT US

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Leiden, the Netherlands

