

**GSTC Extraordinary Board Meeting
September 7, 2011
Meeting Minutes**

<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>	
<u>Board Members</u>	
Kelly Bricker	Staff
Anna Spenceley	Erika Harms
Jane Ashton	Liza Agudelo
Luigi Cabrini	
Herve Houdre	
Richard Edwards	Absent Board Members
Leilani Latimer	Fabian Roman
Jamie Sweeting	Judy Kepher-Gona
Ronald Sanabria	Steve Noakes
	Rick Parnell
	Herbert Hamele
Participants:	Seleni Matus
David Burton	Shannon Stowell
	Mei Zhang
	Charles Arden-Clarke

*Please note: The information from this call must be kept confidential and adhere to the Board's signed confidentiality agreements

OBJECTIVES

- To establish clear actionable items to secure resources moving forward and a clear commitment from each board member of their contribution (in-kind, in human resources, financial resources, names, contacts, others)
- Approval of the 2011 budget
- Approval of the pricing strategy for accreditation.

AGENDA

- 1) Budget discussion and approval; analysis of projections (Richard Edwards)
- 2) Funding/Fundraising : Sponsorships (Leilani Latimer); Grants (Ronald Sanabria); Membership (Shannon Stowell); tools and other opportunities (Kelly Bricker)
- 3) Accreditation (Cathy Parsons/ Erika Harms if Cathy is not available)
- 4) Resolutions, Next Steps, Commitments, Conclusions

The meeting started at 10:10 AM US Eastern time, using the UNF conference line and Skype videoconference. A motion was set to start the meeting with the discussion of the finances. Motion approved unanimously.

- 1) Approval of the Budget and Budget Discussion:** Executive Director Erika Harms describes the emergency scenario C for 2011 as requested by the Board at the previous meeting. This scenario was adjusted to give accreditation a priority by the end of the year.

Highlights:

- Most of Richard Bradley's time allocation (and compensation) for 2012 was moved to 2011 given the priorities to set up the accreditation process by the end of 2011.
- Leilani Latimer agreed to move remaining resources currently allocated to Market Access (contract with Solimar) to support Accreditation efforts.
- Board members are encouraged to step in and to cover for expenses as appropriate – as needed (e.g. hiring of an intern, donating time or facilitating other resources)
- Ronald Sanabria makes the observation that the balance under scenario C is more encouraging than with previous scenarios. Jamie Sweeting considers the scenario reflects a conservative approach. Erika agrees but points out it reflects what is needed to get Accreditation set up.
- Destination pilots are taken into consideration for the 2012 budget. Under a tight scenario for 2012, 4 pilots are considered; an optimistic scenario considers 10 pilots. The approach that will be followed is that the destination pilots will also serve as a source of revenue (not just at cost as originally envisioned).
- Two budget scenarios for 2012 are presented. The tight scenario includes a reduction of GSTC staff and considers a modest source of revenue. The more optimistic scenario retains operation expenses and increases revenue.
- Kelly Bricker asks if cutting staff time would impede ability to deliver. Erika highlights that as a membership organization there is a significant amount of time that needs to be dedicated to membership management; Janice was moved to support this area as communication expenses were reduced only to support accreditation. If staff is to be reduced, it will not happen until the end of the year.
- The question of unpaid internships was raised by Leilani. Erika explains UNF does not allow unpaid internships; this could be done through other organizations (e.g. Solimar)
- Jamie asks about level of confidence of getting destination pilots and other projects. Erika responds at least 5 destination pilots are very likely; for projects, there are a couple of proposals on the table waiting to be submitted; some are around \$300,000. Categories include dissemination of training tools, market access tools (IDB would support) and impact assessment using GSTC.
- Erika recommends reconvening in "X" amount of time (to be established) to analyze the financial situation and determine the need for an exit strategy or to move forward.

- Jane Ashton asks if strategic alliances have been looked up to take on some of the GSTC activities. Erika mentions that has already been considered and it'd be part of an exist strategy; details remain to be explored – whom and where. Leilani thinks it is important to keep this option in the radar; it could be seen as a merger rather than a closing.
- Ronald Sanabria comments it would be worth considering pieces of the GSTC could be merged to other organizations, as an alternative to having to raise funds for activities; outsourcing activities.
- Erika recommends putting a group to work on that strategy.
- Richard Edwards invites the Board to actively engage in revenue-generating activities. Invites the Secretariat to keep communication fluid on finances. Solid determination on when the “X” timeline needs to happen.
- Participating board members endorsed the budget scenario C and requested an electronic voting process.

Recommendations: Determine an appropriate time (“X” time) to reconvene and analyze financial situation and need for an exit strategy. Approve budget Scenario C and move forward; request electronic vote for approval of budget. Progress report will be shared in 30 days and Board will reconvene to analyze progress in 60 to 90 days.

Actions:

1. Board members to identify what activities (if any) could be covered through their organizations – as needed (e.g. hiring of an intern, donating time or facilitating other resources)
2. Secretariat to develop a template for monthly financial/activities follow up – send report in 30 days.

2) Funding/fundraising

A) Sponsorships: Leilani Latimer presents the sponsorships strategy document and highlights opportunities and diverse mechanisms to bring resources; explains the different levels of sponsorships and what sponsors would receive for their contributions. Sponsorship categories include: general, communications, annual meeting, and program (destinations, Education and Tools, Accreditation). Sponsors under the program category would not only be recognized by the value of the GSTC programs, but would have the opportunity to support and actively participate by becoming pioneers.

Highlights:

- The possibility and benefit of “piggy backing” the annual meeting with other events was discussed; main advantage would be to get members that are already there for the other meetings.

- Administration of annual meeting is a full time job – requires time and dedication
- Herve Houdre asks if it would be possible to have vendors as sponsors (as they do in big events); does that fit GSTC strategy. Erika warns this would need extreme caution.
- Kelly recommends creating a list of organizations that would NOT be able to join as vendors and add that piece of information to the sponsorship document.
- Kelly asks if the sponsorships document can be circulated to the entire Board. Erika will review it first and then circulate it.

Actions:

- a. Sponsorship committee/Secretariat to finalize sponsorship package to be shared with the Board so that Board members can share with their groups.

B) Membership Committee: Erika presents the membership situation on behalf of the Committee's Chair and invites Board members to join the committee. She describes the various ways through which they can contribute to increasing the membership.

Highlights:

- Currently there is an average of 10 new memberships a month.
- The Board is reminded of the standard invitation letter they can use to reach out to their constituencies and encourage new affiliations with the GSTC. If they obtain positive responses, please notify the Secretariat.
- Support Education and Tools – time that Board members have to participate in webinars
- Social media – Board members are invited to make use of the tools that are available to the GSTC to help in the efforts to retain/expand membership. There is a need to reach out to prospective large members for their potential for creating a larger impact, not just for their financial support, but for their capacity of spreading the GSTC message.
- While individual memberships are extremely valuable, there is the need for reaching out to bigger organizations
- The Executive Committee is making a recommendation to the Board on the number of people within an organization's category and size who can be granted membership rights. As it is currently, it is hard to monitor how many people use the login and make use of website resources (passwords and loggings can be shared); it will be important to determine this number for participation in webinars and other training opportunities.
- GSTC is not currently organizing events where prospective members could be engaged; invite the Board to step in and take in this role.
- Regarding the possibilities of mergers and collaborations, Leilani asks Jane if she could share ideas about how to best combine forces without competition.

Actions:

- a. Sponsorship committee/Secretariat to finalize sponsorship package to be shared with the Board so that Board members can share with their groups
- b. ExCo to present a tier scheme on number of people granted membership rights within an organization's category/size.
- c. Secretariat to circulate a list of strategic potential players in Europe

C) Grants: Erika discusses some of the grants that are currently taking place or in the pipeline

- Developed a project with the Department of the Interior for establishing sustainable tourism criteria for Morocco
- Working with APEC for a proposal (\$280,000)
- Education and training – interest with UNEP for criteria curriculum
- IDB – Ronald and now Santiago Soler helping to identify options- destination platform, SME's
- Steve Noakes – ILO, integrating sustainability Labor; \$15,000
- Support pilot destination case – Costa Rica

Highlights:

- Jamie recommends putting all that information in a table to share with the Board to evaluate opportunities. Talk off line about what RCC can do
- Kelly recommends approaching the membership and explore ways by which members who are developing proposals can bring the GSTC to come on board
- Ronald suggests looking at opportunities to engage with those members in various proposals but not just volunteering but successfully bringing resources. Suggests looking at the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance (USAID); now that is it closing, try to indentify if there are opportunities for the GSTC to play a role.
- Jamie points out now it is a good time to approach different programs/organizations as they are working on their 2012 budget. Erika follows up saying that is why the Secretariat is asking the Board to provide information and contacts for us to follow. One-on-one meetings with the Board members are suggested to get this information.

Actions:

- a. Set up 1:1 calls with Board members for potential contacts and information.

D) Tools and opportunities: Kelly highlights there seems to be a wave of action where university programs are pushing sustainability into their programs.

Highlights:

- Intend is avoiding reinventing the wheel; need to prioritize areas in immediate need. If Board members are aware of potential collaboration, please contact the Secretariat.
- Due the limited resources available to the Secretariat, the focus should be for those opportunities that have Board support and with the highest (and fastest) return of investment.
- It is suggested that working groups engage their members into producing specific deliverables. Need to advertise options within the working groups.

3) Accreditation Budget: Erika and Amos discussed the Accreditation budget and fees that was circulated to the Board.

Highlights:

- Leilani asks if the GSTC has a mechanism in place to prevent that Certification Bodies won't charge more than it is stipulated. Amos says there are mechanisms from excluding them if they are unethical; cannot tell them how much they can charge.
- Board recommends s circulating again the application process manual
- Important to invite all interested CBs; cannot cut off unless everyone is participating. Cut off will be application, not revision.
- Working towards accreditation (WTA) manual being developed
- Recognition of standards – send to Leilani for MA working group
- Anna raises questions on pricing – have numbers been confirmed with the market? Amos responds RB's were used as basis (know the market). Erika comments it is an estimate; desired outcome is volume, licensing is what will generate revenue.
- Jane asks if GSTC can become an Accreditation Body – answer is it would require a legally established organization, own sustainable financing; comply ISO; it would require technical expertise the GSTC does not currently have; much cheaper to outsource.
- No everyone will follow the WTA path. Idea behind initial lower costs is engage as many as possible and still benefit from the licensing; this model continues to be the less expensive.
- Urgency now is the recognition of standards – scheme endorsed by participating Board

4) Summary - Next Steps:

1. **Approval of Scenario C.** Secretariat will send out scenario C to whole Board for electronic vote and approval
2. **Sponsorship component.** Secretariat has received feedback only for 3 Board members indentifying where they can participate. Requests all other members to identify where they can contribute
3. **One-on-ones.** Erika will set up individual 1:1 with Board members

4. **Grant table.** Already in place; Secretariat will add columns suggested by Jamie. Please send more suggestions, if any
5. **Sponsorships strategy.** Secretariat will review and circulate to the entire Board.
6. **Opportunities for mergers.** Secretariat recommends allowing a month or two to see how things develop and progress. Leilani recommends the Board to look into those possibilities rather than having the Secretariat do it
7. **GSTA and GDA.** Look into the role GSTC could play now that they are restructuring
8. **Working groups.** Identify what specific tasks they can contribute to
9. **Accreditation.** Application scheme for recognition of standards is endorsed. Next step is to provide info to the MA group and the Board if interested. Goal is to have 20 by end of the year.
10. **Criteria review.** Board members are encouraged to send the criteria to their constituencies. Ronald recommends reaching out and use the public consultations as a mechanism to promote membership
11. **Membership renewals.** Secretariat is finalizing letters and procedures. Will be sent out shortly.