

**GSTC Board Meeting
December 12, 2011
Meeting Minutes**

<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>	
<u>Board Members</u>	
Kelly Bricker	Staff
Anna Spenceley	Erika Harms
Herve Houdre	Liza Agudelo
Richard Edwards	Amos Bien
Leilani Latimer	Janice Lichtenwaldt
Jamie Sweeting	
Ronald Sanabria	Absent Board Members
Charles Arden-Clarke & Deirdre Shurland	Judy Kepher-Gona
Fabian Roman	Rick Parnell
Shannon Stowell	Jane Ashton
	Steve Noakes
	Luigi Cabrini
	Herbert Hamele
	Mei Zhang

Agenda

1. Destinations – criteria development and early adopters’ process.
 2. Finances - Financial status up to October 31st, 2011
 3. Substitute board seat of Seleni Matus
 4. GSTC 2012
 - a. Annual Event
 - b. Board meetings – according to the By-laws:
“Section 11. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board will be held quarterly on the first Wednesday of that month, unless agreed otherwise by the Board”. For 2012:
 - i. January: Wednesday, January 4th – proposed January 11th
 - ii. April: Wednesday, April 4th
 - iii. July: Wednesday, July 4th – proposed July 11th
 - iv. October: Wednesday, October 3rd
- In addition, extraordinary meetings can be called in by the Board Chair

1. Destinations – criteria development and early adopters’ process. The Secretariat has been actively engaged in the Destinations Working Group and the Destinations Criteria. The Secretariat would like the Board to be more informed in the Destination WG activities to respond to the media, stakeholders, and members with conviction about the Destinations Criteria. The critique of the Destinations Criteria has come to surface since the launch of the pilot at the end of November. Three points were addressed by the Secretariat:

- i. The Strategic vision of the Destinations Criteria. Since the invitation for the early adopter program was distributed, many different parties have expressed interest and questions have been posed to the Secretariat regarding the purpose and benefits of the Destinations Criteria.
 - ii. Does the Destinations Criteria comply with ISEAL? How does this process compare with the original GSTC Criteria process?
 - iii. Clarification on the Early Adopter Program – Translating into a pilot program, outcome would be integrated into the 2nd phase of consultation of the Destinations Criteria
- a. Destinations and certifications have raised questions regarding the strategic vision of the Destinations Criteria. Due to the responses to the criteria it is evident that people want to be involved in the GSTC brand.
 - The following issues should be clarified for Destinations Criteria communications:
 - Will destinations be certified?
 - After the Destinations Criteria are complete, what is the destination's relationship to the GSTC? What are the consequences of the program?
 - How can the GSTC brand be further engaged?

b. The critiques of the Destinations Criteria reveal that there are discrepancies in the procedures in comparison to GSTC original process. The program must comply with ISEAL guidelines and be of the same quality as the first process.

- The Standards and Destination Working Groups need to work together
- ISEAL guidelines should be incorporated, since GSTC is working towards an ISEAL membership
- The same standards for the GSTC criteria need to be maintained with the Destinations Criteria. The GSTC responded to all critiques of the original criteria, the Destinations Criteria needs to be analyzed in the same way.
- The Working Group and the Board need to agree on the procedures of the Destinations Criteria. The process will be further discussed at the Destination WG meeting on December 19th.

c. The Early Adopter Program

- 10 applications have been received for the Early Adopter Program, even with the associated high costs. However there are strategic concerns:
 - For example, one of the groups has gone through certification process and doesn't want to repeat the same process
- Another applicant would prefer a local consultant to review
- The GSTC is creating expectations that are not quite clear; how can the Destinations Criteria meet the expectations of the participants?

- Pilot testing is an opportunity for developing the Criteria and testing the accountability of the criteria. The Criteria would offer a framework and could be used as a tool by destinations to prepare for certification.

Recommendations: The board recommends the Executive Committee works with the Destinations Working group on the strategic issues. The Early Adopters Program will have a clearly define written procedure to the requirements of ISEAL as well as to meet the same standards as the first process. A clarified “road-map” will be provided for the consultant; the procedures are dependent on setting the framework for STI. The Executive Committee and the Working Groups should discuss these concerns more in depth and then bring the proposed issues to the board; to prevent moving too quickly towards implementation rather definition of the Destinations Criteria.

2. GSTC Financial Status

- a. The Secretariat does not have the most updated financial report from the UNF; these numbers will be provided January 2012. Richard Edwards, walked the board through the excel sheet provided of the approved budget.
 - The membership push has proven successful; as well as the membership renewal numbers
 - Instead of hiring senior consultants, a junior consultant was hired to reduce overall costs
 - The direct funds from UNF remain unchanged
 - GSTC will start 2012 better than expected; there has been an increase in interest in consultancy projects
- b. There is still an urgency of the financial situation and the need to raise fundraising remains, but there have been positive results from the procedures put in place from the last board meeting.
 - The board expressed the need for more financial information, so that board members can effectively help with sponsorship and express confidence in the future of the GSTC.
 - The challenge is that all GSTC activities are inter-connected and their success is dependent on each other
- c. The GSTC is working on presenting a scenario for financial situation at the January 11th meeting, operations will be discussed at the 2nd meeting in January

Recommendations: Board members asked for a UNF finance team member to be present at the next meeting. The board requested periodic written reports on all activities of the working groups and the Secretariat. The board will then be able to determine the decisions that need to be made. The Secretariat decided that monthly reports will be feasible, distributed a week before schedule board meetings.

3. Substitute board seat of Seleni Matus

- a. Leilani Latimer volunteered to take over Seleni's role of Secretary on the Executive Committee. Her duties as Secretary are to attend the meetings and report on the procedures.
 - b. Seleni's position on the board will also be filled. In order to maintain a balance, the public authority category that Seleni represented must be replaced. The individual doesn't need to be from a certain geographic location.
 - c. It was suggested that Mexico and Brazil could be contenders
 - Brazil will be focus of many events due to the upcoming World Cup. Helena Rey from UNEP could assist in forging contacts. Shannon Stowell also has contact in Brazil; however much of the Ministry of Tourism was recently fired. The political situation is not quite stable.
 - d. The online process will open on December 26th.
 - e. The newly elected board member will attend the second board meeting in January, tentatively scheduled for the last week in January.
4. GSTC Events 2012
- a. Annual Event
 - The annual meeting will be held earlier in the spring to optimize sponsorship opportunities
 - b. The potential hosts for the meeting that have expressed interest are Argentina, China, South Africa (now moved to be a candidate for 2013), and Mexico (Chiapas and Huatulco,)
 - The best application and opportunities available is in Mexico
 - c. Chiapas offered to cover costs and engage sponsorships. A coinciding event of sustainable suppliers to hotels will be held in tandem to the annual meeting; those attendees could also participate in the GSTC Open Forum.
 - Access to Chiapas is limited compared to larger cities. As a destination, it meets the financial requirements, but not necessarily the mainstream requirements due to the transportation complications.
 - Sponsorship depends on the number that attends as well as the estimate of attendance; if participants cannot attend the meeting sponsorship will not be possible.
 - The event in Chiapas would stimulate Mexican sponsorships
 - Holding the event in Mexico would create a partnership between the GSTC and the country. The meeting in Chiapas would also represent collaboration between the federal and state governments.
 - d. The World Travel and Tourism Council is holding their meeting May 16-18 2012 in Cancun, Leilani encouraged the board to reach out to WTTC to collaborate with the GSTC for the meeting
 - There is the possibility that by partnering with WTTC, GSTC will not have access to funding as large donors are already funding the WTTC event.
 - Collaborating with the WTTC for the event could provide the "foot in the door" for the GSTC in terms of a future partnership
 - e. Fairmont also proposed hosting the meeting, they would be able to provide hotel rooms to staff and a favorable rate for guests, but they would not cover the rest of the expenses.
 - f. Board Meetings in 2012: Erika will circulate dates for 2012 board meetings and options for 2nd Jan meeting.

Recommendations: Jamie Sweeting will reach out to Tomas Mueller of MARTI and Shannon Stowell will reach out to his contacts to see if they can work with Mexico. Board members will reach out to WTTC. Erika will communicate with Chiapas that the decision has been delayed 2-4 weeks.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Destinations – criteria development and early adopters’ process.

- The Executive Committee will work with the Destinations Working group on the strategic issues.
- The Early Adopters Program will have a clearly define written procedure to the requirements of ISEAL as well as to meet the same standards as the first process. A clarified “road-map” will be provided for the consultant; the procedures are dependent on setting the framework for STI.
- The Executive Committee and the DWG should discuss concerns more in depth and then bring the proposed issues to the board to prevent moving too quickly towards implementation rather definition of the Destinations Criteria.

2. GSTC Financial Status

- Board members asked for a UNF finance team member to be present at the next meeting.
- The board requested periodic written reports on all activities of the working groups and the Secretariat. The board will then be able to determine the decisions that need to be made. The Secretariat decided that monthly reports will be feasible distributed a week before scheduled board meetings.

3. GSTC Events 2012

- Jamie Sweeting will reach out to Tomas Mueller of MARTI and Shannon Stowell will reach out to his contacts to see if they can work with Mexico.
- Board members will reach out to WTTC.
- Erika will communicate with Chiapas that the decision has been delayed 2-4 weeks