

Strong Sustainable Development via Regenerative Tourism in Destinations

Dr Ioannis Pappas
Director of Med Region
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

ΕΤΗΣΙΟ ΤΟΥΡΙΣΤΙΚΟ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ ΣΤΕΚ 2024
21 ΜΑΡΤΙΟΥ 2024

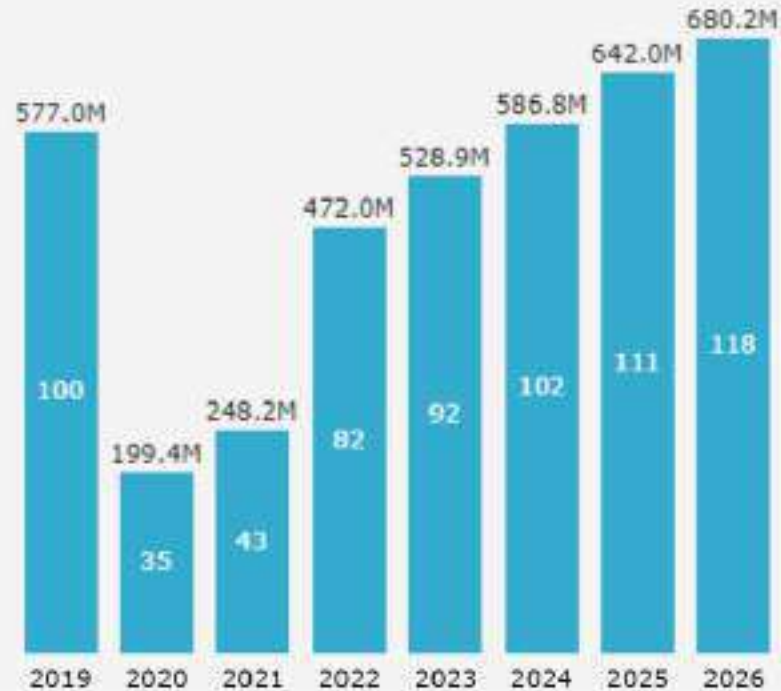
Travel Trends

Intra-European Travel

EUROPEAN
TRAVEL
COMMISSION

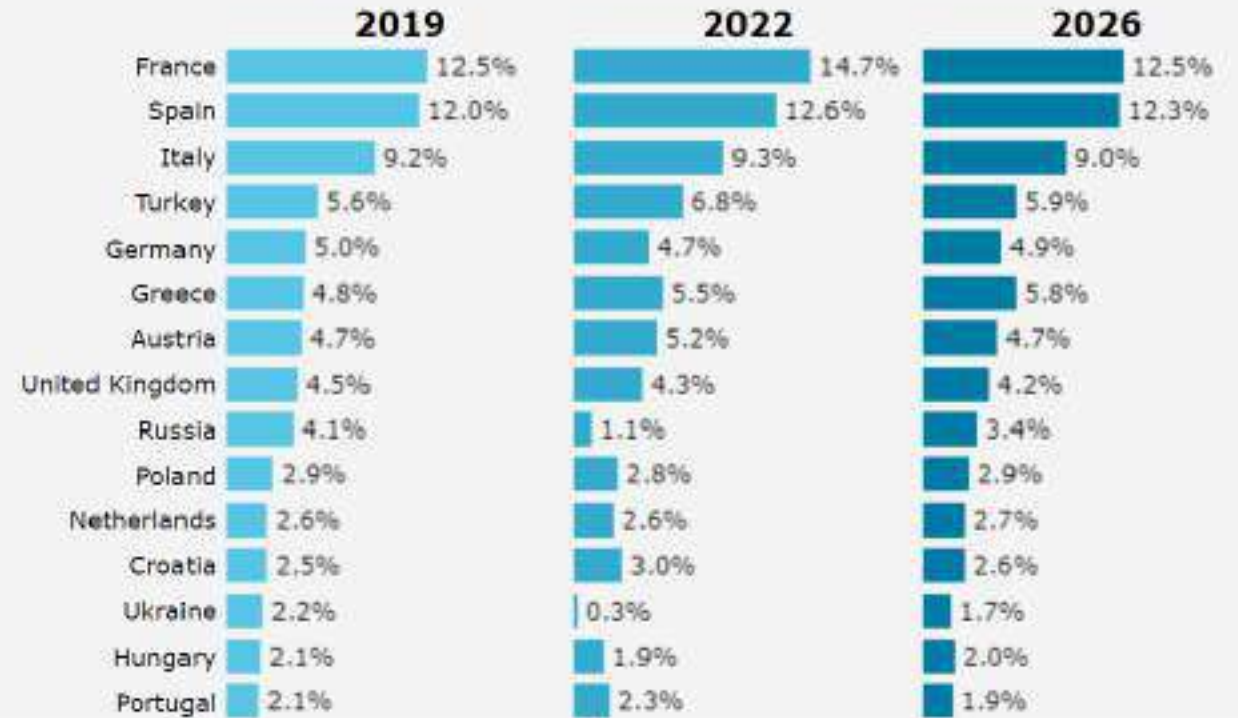
Intra-European Visitor Arrivals

Index (2019 = 100)



Top Intra-European Travel Destinations

Destination's share of total Intra-European arrivals



What is the Tourism Experience

Is that really
an authentic
experience??



Sustainable Tourism

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

Sustainable Tourism

“Sustainable Tourism” does not refer to a specific type of tourism

“Sustainable Tourism” is an aspiration for the impacts of all forms of tourism

including Adventure Travel and outdoor tourist activities

The OTAs Take Action

The leading online travel agencies (OTAs) have made it easier-than-ever to assist consumers in choosing the right accommodations and highlighting their users who have implemented sustainability initiatives.

Booking.com has added a **“Travel Sustainable” badge** to select listings

The logo for Booking.com, featuring the word "Booking.com" in a blue, sans-serif font.

Expedia offers a **Carbon Neutral Homes Category**

The logo for Expedia, featuring a blue circle with a yellow airplane icon and the word "Expedia" in a blue, sans-serif font.

Airbnb offers practical tips and lessons in their members' **Educational Hub**.

The logo for Airbnb, featuring a red outline of a stylized 'A' shape above the word "airbnb" in a red, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Regenerative Tourism

“Regenerative tourism is about ensuring the visitor economy delivers a net positive benefit for communities, the environment, and the destination.”

Dianne Dredge, 2021



A treehouse at Playa Viva, a small resort south of Zihuatanejo, Mexico, on the Pacific Coast, that seeks to balance environmental and community awareness with tourism.

Examples of Regenerative Tourism

- **Restoring Degraded Lands:** Farmers, in collaboration with tourism professionals, work to restore **degraded areas** such as deserts.
- **Conserving Pristine Rainforests:** Local communities manage ecolodges to protect and conserve **pristine rainforest** areas.
- **Biodiversity Restoration:** Initiatives include stopping livestock grazing and reintroducing **wild animals** to restore biodiversity

4 Regenerative Solutions For A Positive Future Through Tourism

Radical Transparency : [Fogo Island Inn](#), has pioneered the idea of “economic nutrition” as a means to help increase buyer awareness of the economic impact of their purchasing decisions to the local market while also spotlighting seller accountability about how much they are extracting from the local economy.



Collaboration : Collaboration is key. It’s a completely new frame in terms of our relationship with the planet and with each other. It’s a quantum leap. It’s a mindset shift. [Dubrovnik]



4 Regenerative Solutions For A Positive Future Through Tourism

Create Resilience From Diversification & Inclusion :

The travel industry must be proactive and decisive in driving this agenda across the sector if we are to bring forward more effective climate solutions. Seattle's [Black Farmers Collective](#).

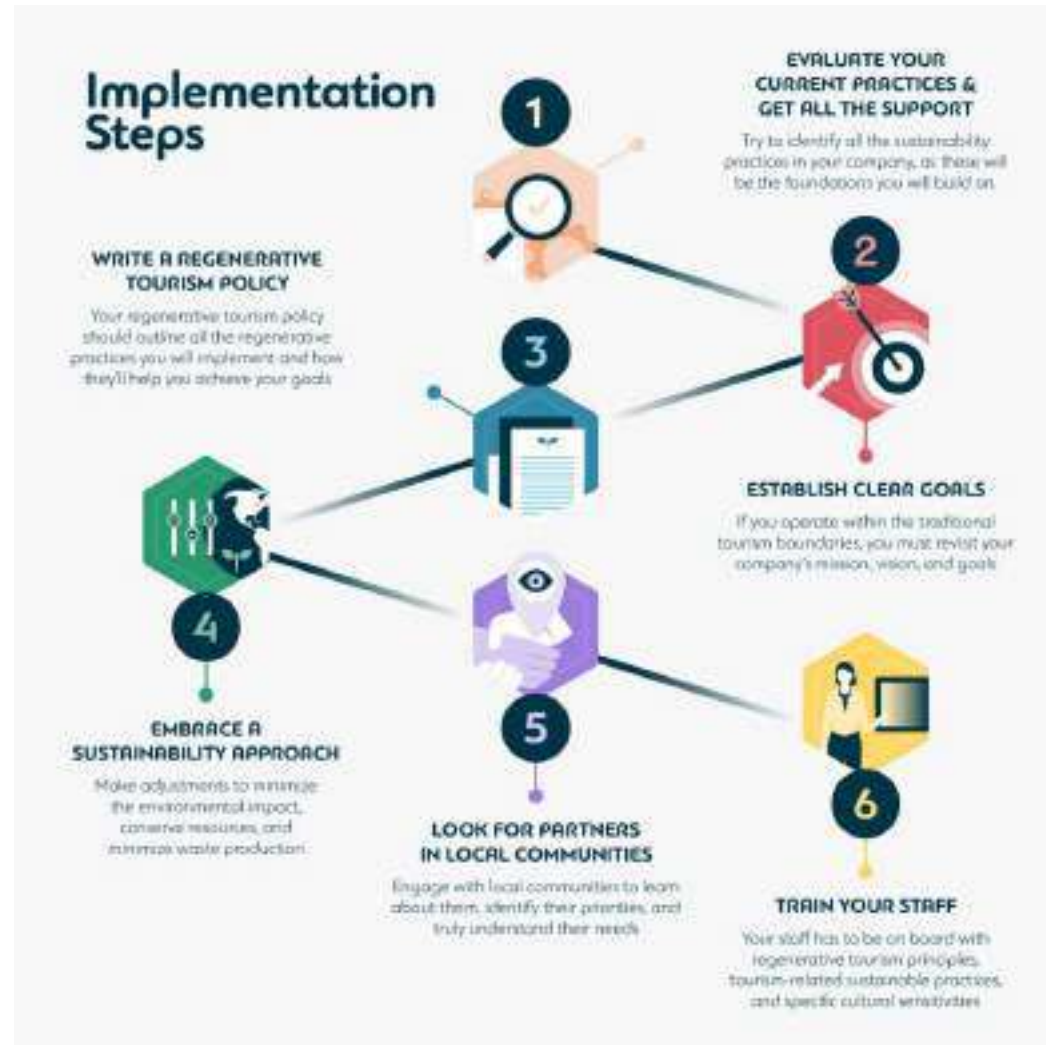


Education : 'The truth is diversification is the key for building resilience, whether you're an individual, an organization, a business, or a country. Empires are built when organizations decide to diversify either vertically or horizontally', Elizabeth Ojo, Director of Operations at [ALU School of Wildlife Conservation](#) (*Saira Hospitality Pop-up School*).



The Implementation of Regenerative Tourism

If you want to tap into the regenerative travel market as a tourism company, you can face many challenges.



Ref : mize.tech

Regenerative Tourism & Tech Trends

Technology and innovation are driving solutions across sectors. In regenerative tourism, **they are driving sustainable and regenerative solutions.**

- ✓ Smart grids and energy management systems;
- ✓ Internet of Things and Sensors;
- ✓ Waste Management Technologies (waste-to-energy systems, anaerobic digestion, advanced recycling systems);
- ✓ Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality;
- ✓ Blockchain (fair trade practices, authentication of eco-certifications, and tracking the origin of locally sourced products).

Regenerative Tourism Example in Cyprus



[Υπουργείο Τουρισμού](#)

[Δομή και Οργάνωση](#)

[Τουριστικές Επιχειρήσεις](#)

[Πληροφόρηση/Επικοινωνία](#)

[Νόμοι / Κανονισμοί](#)



2η Προκήρυξη Σχεδίου Χορηγιών για Αναβάθμιση Χώρων Εστίασης ή Καταστημάτων Πώλησης Παραδοσιακών Προϊόντων Διατροφής, περιλαμβανομένων όσων είναι ενταγμένοι ή επιθυμούν να ενταχθούν σε Σύμφωνα Γαστρονομίας όπως το «Taste of Cyprus»

[Αρχική Σελίδα](#) / [Πληροφόρηση](#) / [Επικοινωνία](#) / [Ανακοινώσεις](#)



**How to recognize what
is sustainable tourism?**

Standards

Many labels... much confusion...



GSTC Today



The leading global authority in
setting and managing **standards**
for sustainable travel & tourism

Some of GSTC's Members



GSTC Criteria – Global Standards for Sustainability in Travel and Tourism

So far, we have developed:

**Criteria
for Hotels and Tour Operators
(2008, rev. 2012)**

**GSTC Destination Criteria
(2013, rev. 2019)**

**GSTC Industry Criteria
(2017)**

**GSTC MICE Criteria
(2024)**

Each group has 41 Criteria in 4 pillars

**Sustainable
management**



**Socioeconomic
impacts**



**Cultural
impacts**



**Environmental
impacts**



Some GSTC-Recognized Standards



SUSTAINABLE
DESTINATION
LOCAL ENGAGEMENT
IN A LONG PERSPECTIVE



The Role of Sustainability Standards

Basis for certification

For training, education, awareness

Guidelines for legal and regulatory codes

Measurement & Evaluation

Market Access clarity

A city skyline at dusk, featuring a prominent skyscraper with a yellow top and a circular logo. The image is overlaid with a green gradient. The text "Assurance in Sustainable Tourism" is centered in white.

Assurance in Sustainable Tourism

Certification

Certification is defined as a voluntary, third-party assessment, through an audit, of a tourism enterprise or destination for conformity to a standard.

Certification helps verify claims

GSTC does NOT conduct certification. That is the job of Certification Bodies throughout the world; our job is to accredit those that certify.

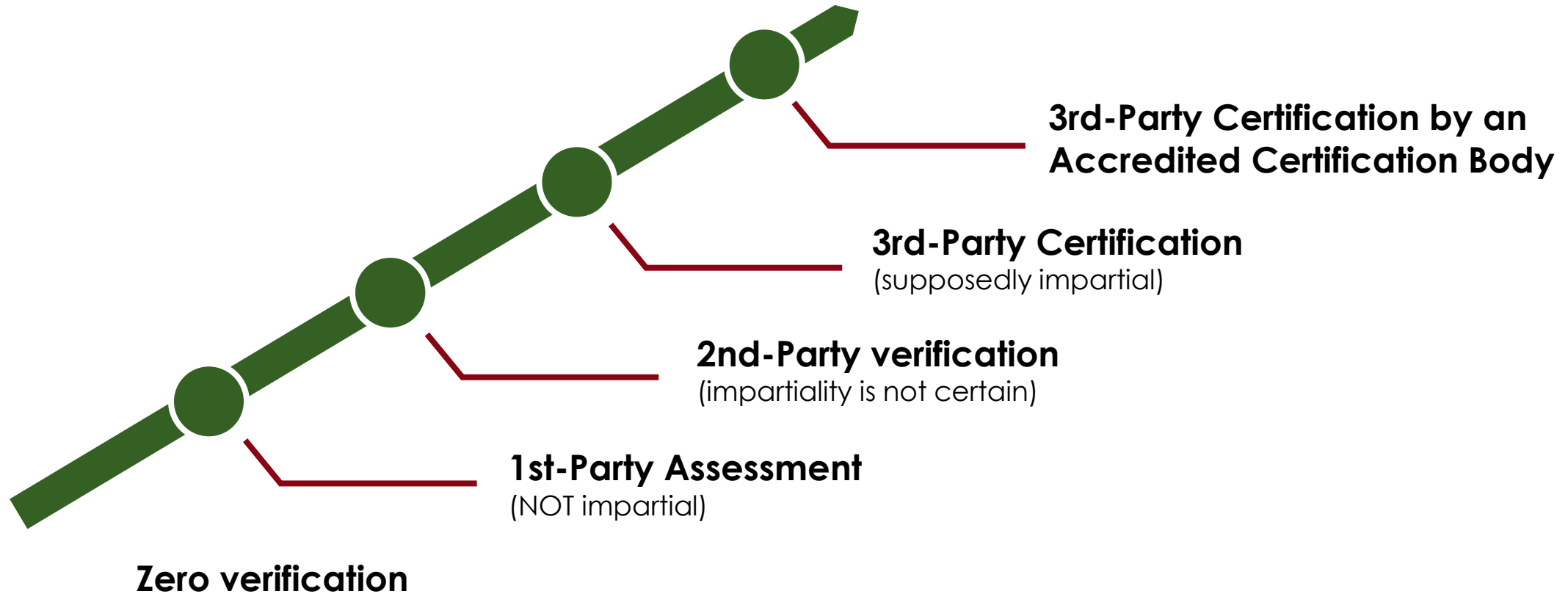
Assurance of Certification

How to choose a Certification Body? The range is enormous: from rigorous, impartial and excellent, to poor.

GSTC Accreditation is a mark of quality that verifies the process of how Certification Bodies certify businesses, in a competent and neutral manner. Procedures meet international principles for transparency, impartiality and competence.

“certifying the certifiers”

Levels of Assurance



GSTC Accredited Certification Bodies

(Accreditation Body)



*procedures
credibly verified*



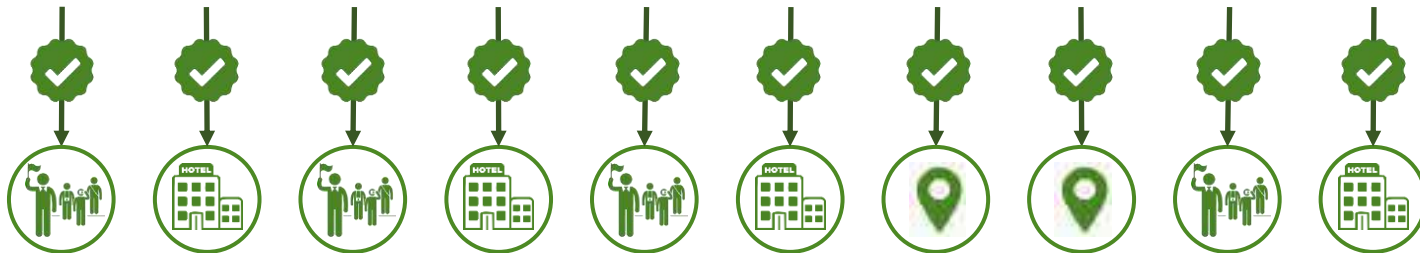
*transparent
impartial
competent*

**Unknown
procedures**



*transparent ?
Impartial ?
Competent ?*

GSTC-Accredited Certifying Bodies



Non-accredited Certification Bodies



GSTC - Accredited Certification Bodies

For Hotels, Accommodations
and Tour Operators



For Destinations



EARTHCHECK



Preferring and highlighting certified sustainable hotels

Booking.com

agoda

TUI GROUP

traveloka

make my trip

easyJet
holidays

hotelbeds

Jet2holidays®
Package holidays you can trust

“We have aligned our LightStay management system with the GSTC Criteria”

“We continue to identify opportunities to achieve certification to the GSTC Criteria for our hotels to ensure the sustainability of our operations”



Countries using the GSTC Frameworks



Highlighting certified sustainable tour operators

This is how customers will see your activity is certified



GET YOUR GUIDE

EN

Outer Great Barrier Reef & Whitehaven Beach: 2-Day Combo

Eco-Certified



DAY TRIP

Outer Great Barrier Reef & Whitehaven Beach: 2-Day Combo

Duration: 6 hours

4.3
146 Reviews

From
€ 74
per participant



DAY TRIP

Outer Great Barrier Reef & Whitehaven Beach: 2-Day Combo

Duration: 6 hours

4.3
146 Reviews

From
€ 74
per participant

Singapore Hotel Sustainability Roadmap

In line with the Singapore Green Plan 2030, the roadmap sets out clear targets and strategies for hotels to adopt in their sustainability journey.

At least 60% of hotel room stock to achieve sustainability certification by 2025



Sustainable Destination Development

Tool on sustainable destination development



Sustainable
Destination



Destination Standard

Criteria and KPIs
GSTC recognized



Destination Management

Public, private and
civil society



Destination Process

Involve & plan
Implement
Measure
Monitor



Destination Tools

Portal
Surveys, data etc
Training
Network



Destination Visibility

Visitnorway.com
Press
Awards

Destination Assessment



1. Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA
2. Mt. Huangshan, China
3. *St. Kitts & Nevis*
4. Fjords Norway
5. *Lanzarote, Spain*
6. Okavango Delta, Botswana
7. Cuzco & Sacred Valley, Peru
8. Lago Llanquihue, Chile
9. *Southern Sardinia, Italy*
10. Mara Naboisho Conservancy, Kenya
11. *St. Croix, USVI*
12. Sierra Gorda, México
13. *Samoa, South Pacific*
14. Riviera Maya, Mexico
15. *Lombok, Indonesia*
16. *Sieman, Indonesia*
17. *Pangandaran, Indonesia*
18. *Wakatobi, Indonesia*
19. *Cayman Islands*
20. Sinaloa Sur, Mexico
21. Sedona, Arizona, USA
22. Hwaseong Fortress, Suwon City, Republic of Korea
23. *Little Stirrup Cay, Bahamas*
24. Chelenko, Chile
25. *Labadee, Haiti*
26. *Cozumel, México*
27. San Pedro de Atacama, Chile
28. *Roatán, Honduras*
29. Belize City, Belize
30. Ras Al Khaimah, UAE
31. Dubrovnik, Croatia
32. *Corfu, Greece*
33. *Heraklion, Greece*
34. Athens, Greece

EU Green Claims & Early Results



...if passed, the environmental claims that companies

make would be subject to **strict**

substantiation requirements,
and prior certification by third-

party verifiers. Crucially, the proposal would

require Member States to fine companies up to 4% of their

profits — and bar them from public procurement contracts

— if they make unsupported environmental claims.

Market Access

Booking.com



- Booking.com launched its "**Sustainable Travel**" label program in 2021.
- The project aims to provide global travelers with professional, transparent and green information that can be used as a reliable basis for more responsible travel choices.
- There are three levels of identification. Certified accommodation is the highest level of recognition. GSTC-certified hotels will be eligible to automatically receive the highest level of sustainable travel labeling.

Changes announced by 8th of March 2024

What this means for you:

- **If your property has one or more third-party certifications (formerly Level 3+)**, we'll continue to showcase this by adding a label and the option for travelers to filter by certified properties.
- **The practices you shared with us will still be displayed on your property page**, regardless of your previous Travel Sustainable level or certification status. You'll still be able to add and update these practices on the Extranet.
- **Our Travel Sustainable name, leaf logo, and levels will be removed from all listings on March 25** to make sure our focus on third-party certifications is clear.



Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Website

www.gstcouncil.org

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/gstc

Facebook

[@GlobalSustainableTourismCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/GlobalSustainableTourismCouncil)

Twitter

[@GSTC](https://twitter.com/GSTC)

Instagram

[@gstcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/gstcouncil)

