



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE
2. DEFINITIONS
3. ORGANIZATION
4. IMPLEMENTATION
 - 4.1 Application
 - 4.2 Proposal and Contract
 - 4.3 Preparation of Audit Program
 - 4.4 Calculation of Audit Duration
 - 4.5 Conducting the Audit
 - 4.6 Assessment of Nonconformities
 - 4.7 Certification Decision
 - 4.8 Announcement of Certified Business
 - 4.9 Certificate Transfer
 - 4.10 Follow-up Audits
 - 4.11 Surveillance Audit Planning
 - 4.12 Unannounced Audits
 - 4.13 Recertification Audit Implementation
 - 4.14 Multi-Site Certification
 - 4.15 Group Business Certification
 - 4.16 Certification of Tour Operators
 - 4.16.1 Certification of Tour Products
 - 4.17 Scope Extension
 - 4.18 Complaints, Appeals
 - 4.19 Use of Certificates and Logos
 - 4.20 Changes in the Reference Standard or Certification Requirements Based on the Contract
 - 4.21 RoyalCert Certification and Surveillance Services Inc. Obligations
 - 4.22 Obligations of the Certified Business



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is an international business that promotes sustainability and social responsibility in the global tourism sector.

GSTC has established the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards as referred in Clause 2 in **GCIM** document (**GSTC Certification Implementation Manual**), which define the minimum requirements that tourism businesses (such as accommodations and tour operators) shall meet in order to demonstrate their commitment to environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability.

GSTC certification shall be conducted as a third-party conformity assessment, verified through audits carried out by an independent certification body accredited by GSTC.

Accreditation for GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards shall be conducted by the Accreditation Body (GSTC) or GSTC Endorsed National Accreditation Body (NAB) (i.e., TÜRKAK for Türkiye, DAKKS for Germany, UKAS for United Kingdom). Hereafter, GSTC refers to the Accreditation Body GSTC or GSTC Endorsed National Accreditation Body.

This Guideline defines the necessary requirements for the implementation of the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

It has been prepared to define and maintain the sustainability of these activities, thereby enabling RoyalCert to certify GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards in accordance with the "**GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies Industry Hotel/Accommodation & Tour Operator V4.1**" and the "**GSTC Certification Program and Certification Body (CS-CB) Framework V1.0**," respectively.

RoyalCert shall be a globally recognized certification body accredited by the GSTC, providing certification services for accommodations and tour operators in accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

The business operates with a team of experts specialized in the field of conformity assessment and sustainable tourism certification.

2. DEFINITIONS

All definitions referenced in this guideline can be found in the "**GSTC Glossary of Accreditation V1.0**" document. (<https://www.gstcouncil.org/accreditation/accreditation-documents/>)

3. ORGANIZATION

RoyalCert shall ensure the impartiality and independence of all personnel involved in GSTC certification activities.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Application

GSTC certification applications shall be received in person or electronically via email or through the official website www.royalcert.com.tr, using the Application Form.

All sections of the application form shall be completed in full, and the signed and approved version by the authorized representative of the applicant shall be submitted to RoyalCert.

All received applications shall be subjected to a preliminary review. This review includes the verification of the information provided in the application form and the requested supporting documents (such as Trade Registry Gazette, Tax Certificate, Signature Circular, Chamber Registration Certificate, and other relevant documents required for the application).

a) Application for Tour Operator

The audit duration for the suppliers of tour operators shall be determined by taking into account the number of suppliers, the geographical distribution of the tour areas (example, the tour route description below will be provided), the volume and frequency of operations, as well as the risk level associated with each supplier.

For instance, tour operators shall provide, at the application stage, the following route description for the purpose of defining the tours included in the scope, tour routes, and the number of suppliers:

Example: Istanbul Day Tours

Bosphorus Tour (Bosphorus boat tour, Rüstem Pasha Mosque, restaurant and meal service, Egyptian Bazaar)

Ancient City Tour (Sultanahmet Mosque, Hippodrome, Hagia Sophia, Grand Bazaar)

Balat and Fener Tour (Golden Horn, Fener, Balat, Galata Tower and Galata Bridge, İstiklal Street – Pera)

This information serves as a concrete indicator of the tour program scope and is used as a reference for determining the audit scope.

This assessment shall be based on the information provided during the application stage and verified during the audit planning phase.

b) Application for Hotel/Accommodation

For hotel and accommodation businesses, application documents shall demonstrate legal and operational eligibility (i.e., licenses, registrations, and sustainability system documentation).

Based on the preliminary evaluation of the application form and supporting evidence, the audit scope and duration shall be determined in accordance with the RoyalCert GSTC Certification Implementation Manual, GSTC Certification



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

Procedure, and Audit Duration Determination Instruction.

If the property includes multiple operational sites or service units (such as spa, restaurant, beach area, etc.), the audit plan shall take into account the scale and risk level of each component.

General Rules

In cases where high-risk activities are identified, additional time may be added to the calculated audit duration. Furthermore, the number of sampled suppliers within the scope of the tour program and the risk factors associated with these samples also affect the determination of the audit duration.

The effectiveness of suppliers in implementing sustainable tourism practices shall be evaluated through sampling, and the selected suppliers shall be audited on-site based on the number of suppliers, the certification they hold, and evidence regarding the operation of their sustainability systems.

If the business does not accept and proceeds with the certification audit within **6 months** from the date of application, the application shall be cancelled. However, this time frame shall not apply in cases of force majeure.

The business shall acknowledge that it will not be eligible to proceed with the GSTC certification process if any of the following conditions apply:

- Its certificate has been withdrawn within the last 2 years,
- Its certificate has been suspended within the last 6 months,
- It has direct or indirect involvement with any entity that has been successfully prosecuted for forced labor and/or environmental violations,
- The business is a client or holds an active contract with an entity that has been successfully prosecuted within the past 2 years for violations related to forced labor and/or environmental legislation.

The business holds an active certificate and shall be obliged to inform RoyalCert at any stage of the application process if it has any form of relationship with any entity that has been successfully prosecuted for forced labor and/or environmental violations.

4.2 Proposal and Contract

Following the evaluation, RoyalCert prepares the offer and submits it to the applicant along with the forms "**FR.06 Proposal and Contract and FR.06 Proposal and Contract Annex-A.**"

The offer becomes a valid contract only after it is signed and stamped by the applicant on each page, and subsequently

signed and stamped by the RoyalCert Certification Manager. The contract shall be executed in two original copies. One original copy is provided to the applicant business, and the other original wet-signed copy is retained in the RoyalCert client file

4.3 Preparation of Audit Program

According to the GSTC Certification Criteria, businesss within the certification scope are categorized into two main risk groups: high and low risk.

The risk level of the applicant tourism enterprise is determined based on the information provided in the application form. Taking this risk level as a basis, RoyalCert establishes the Audit Program in accordance with the nature and complexity of the applicant's operations.

For the audit to be conducted, following the mutual signing of the contract, the client shall submit all required documentation and records related to sustainable tourism practices (such as SMS, Manual, policies and procedures, risk assessment documents, implementation records, etc.) to RoyalCert at least 5 business days prior to the agreed audit date.

RoyalCert shall review the submitted documents and assign an auditor in accordance with the certification scope. The designated auditor shall prepare the audit plan, and the audit plan shall be delivered to the client by RoyalCert at least 1 week before the audit date.

The Audit Program identifies the type of audit to be conducted initial, surveillance, or recertification—and is designed to cover a three-year certification cycle. The three-year cycle begins with the certification decision following the initial audit. Surveillance audits shall be conducted every 12 months within this cycle. Each subsequent cycle shall begin with the recertification decision.

The finalized Audit Program, which specifies the audit type, scope, duration, audit dates, audit team members, and which processes of the client are to be audited against the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards, shall be communicated to the client.

The client shall be obliged to notify RoyalCert in writing **within 14 days** in the event of any changes in scope, sites, operational practices, or any other factors that may affect the audit program.

4.4 Calculation of Audit Duration

The audit durations and frequencies shall be calculated in accordance with the RoyalCert GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards) procedures, taking into consideration the latest applicable version of the



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards and relevant standards.

4.5 Conducting the Audit

In accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards, initial certification and recertification audits shall be conducted on-site.

Auditors and technical experts to be designated to the audit team shall be designated by RoyalCert based on the scope of the client's activities. The audit scope, date, time, and audit team details shall be shared with the client, and written confirmation with signature shall be obtained.

RoyalCert allows GSTC-Accredited CS (Certification Schemes) provided that multiple levels of compliance are ensured the minimum level meets the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized and the certification process for any level shall comply with the requirements stated in this Guideline, as long as the level is referred to as certification.

Example: a certification scheme awards hotels in 3 levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

The Bronze level of this certification scheme shall comply with all GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards and hold a valid and currently Recognized status in the GSTC.

In case the client raises an objection regarding the assignment of the auditor(s) to be involved in the audit, RoyalCert shall evaluate the appeals and, if deemed appropriate, make the necessary changes.

The audit team shall be available on the scheduled date in accordance with the audit type: on-site for physical audits, and via online platforms for remote audits.

Throughout the certification process, including the application stage, the client shall designate a responsible individual as the Management Representative who shall oversee the audit-related processes on behalf of the client. The designated person shall be officially notified to RoyalCert and shall be present on-site during the audit.

In case the audit team does not speak the language of the client, an audit may be completed only with a certified translation of documents and using a capable interpreter during the audit (who shall not be a staff member of the enterprise being audited). The fee of the service will be charged to the client.

The audit team shall evaluate the client's operations and services in accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards under the RoyalCert GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards). The audits shall be conducted based on current valid version of the documents published by GSTC, including the Audit Checklist for Hotels/Accommodations and the Audit Checklist for Tour Operators.

The client's operations and services shall fully comply with all criteria within the requested scope of certification.

During the audit, all questions listed in the RoyalCert audit checklist shall be reviewed through on-site implementation, and practices and corresponding evidence for each question shall be thoroughly recorded in the audit report.

The audit report, while not containing a certification decision, shall be shared with the audited business and include all audit findings in written form.

The certification evaluation and, where applicable, the decision-making process shall be carried out by the Certification Committee in accordance with RoyalCert procedures and requirements.

4.6 Assessment of Nonconformities

If any deviations from the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards are identified within the business's system, nonconformities shall be documented and classified as either minor or major in the **FR.37 Non-Conformity Notification Form**.

The client shall identify corrective/preventive actions to eliminate the major/minor nonconformities detected during the audit within 14 days and submit them in writing to the auditor for approval. Following the auditor's approval, the client shall provide the closure evidence of NC(s) within a **maximum of 90 days (3 months)**.

The client is required to submit the evidence of corrective actions to RoyalCert at least 15 days prior to the end of the 90-day deadline. The final 15 days of the 90-day closure period are reserved for RoyalCert's internal review, verification and approval process.

All NCs shall be reviewed and verified in accordance with evidences submitted by client as per relevant GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards. After verification of NCs it shall be sent to the client as an attachment **FR.10/FR.10-A Audit Report** by Team Leader. At same time audit report and verified nonconformities shall be submitted to Certification Committee.

Tangible evidence of the activity performed shall be taken as the basis during the verification process

In the event that the corrective actions are not effectively implemented within the specified timeframe, the certification process shall be rendered invalid, and the business shall be required to submit a new application for certification.

4.7 Certification Decision

The certification decision shall be made by the Certification Committee following the review and evaluation of the client file. The Committee shall assess the audit findings, audit conclusions, and any other relevant information (e.g. restrictions on participation in public tenders, the client's



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

comments on the audit report). In cases where the review reveals uncertainties or situations requiring further clarification, the Certification Committee may request additional information from the audit team leader who prepared the report.

The following conditions shall be fully met in order to proceed with the certification decision:

The correction and/or corrective actions for all non-conformities listed below have been reviewed, accepted, and verified for effectiveness:

- One or more requirements of the reference standard have not been fulfilled, or
- A situation has been identified that raises significant doubts regarding the business's ability to achieve the intended outcomes of its sustainability management system.
- For all other non-conformities, the client's proposed correction and/or corrective action plan has been reviewed and deemed acceptable.
- It has been reviewed and confirmed that the audited client meets all applicable requirements of the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

In the event that the Certification Committee issues a negative decision regarding the issuance of the certificate, or if a condition preventing the use of the certificate is identified, RoyalCert shall require the client to submit a written request addressing the identified reasons and to request a follow-up audit accordingly.

If the Certification Committee decides to grant the GSTC certificate, the GSTC certificate shall be issued. The issued certificate shall include the following information:

- Name and geographic location of the certified client.
For multi-site clients: The head office address and a list of the sites covered under the certification scope,
For group clients: The names and addresses of all group members included in the certification scope.
- The current and valid version of the standard used as the basis for the audit,
- The date of issuance of the certificate, along with the dates of any scope extension, scope reduction, or recertification,
- The certificate validity period (expiry date),
- A unique identification code (certificate number),
- GSTC Logo,
- The certification scope clearly defined in a way that avoids any ambiguity or misinterpretation, considering the type of activities, products, and services implemented at each site,
- The name, address, certification mark, and hologram of RoyalCert, and where applicable, the client's

logo—provided that its use does not cause any confusion or misrepresentation.

4.8 Announcement of Certified Business

RoyalCert shall establish and maintain a database of businesss certified under the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards. This database shall be revised when necessary and made available to relevant parties upon request. Additionally, RoyalCert shall ensure that certified businesss can be accessed and verified via its official website.

4.9 Certificate Transfer

In the event that a tourism enterprise certified by another certification body under the GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards) requests to continue its certification with RoyalCert, the applicant business shall submit the following information and required documentation to RoyalCert.

RoyalCert shall notify GSTC of each certificate transfer request within **five (5) business days** from the date of receipt of the application.

According to the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards, certificate transfer requests shall not be accepted under the following circumstances:

- The applicant business has unresolved major non-conformities and/or other non-conformities that have not been closed by the current certification body.
- The applicant business's certificate is currently suspended.
- There is an unresolved complaint between the applicant business and the certification body from which the certificate was originally issued.

4.10 Follow-up Audits

The maximum timeframe for the closure of major non-conformities requiring a follow-up audit, including on-site verification activities and the decision-making process carried out by RoyalCert, shall not exceed **90 days (3 months)**. The verification of non-conformities and issuance of the certification decision shall be completed within a maximum of **3 (three) months**.

The audited business is obliged to submit evidence of the closure of non-conformities within a maximum of 90 days (3 months), in accordance with RoyalCert's audit and decision-making processes.

If no written notification confirming the closure of non-conformities is submitted within the specified timeframe,



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

- A certificate shall not be issued for businesss in the initial certification process.
- For already certified businesss, the certificate shall be subject to suspension and/or withdrawal.

Follow-up audits may be planned as on-site audits in order to verify the closure and effective implementation of the identified nonconformities.

The client is required to submit the evidence of corrective actions to RoyalCert at least 15 days prior to the end of the 90-day deadline. The final 15 days of the 90-day closure period are reserved for RoyalCert's internal review, verification and approval process.

The client shall be officially informed of the decision regarding the follow-up audit.

The scope and method of the follow-up audit shall be clarified, and the audit shall be planned and conducted accordingly.

4.11 Planning Surveillance Audits

In order to verify the continued compliance of the audited business's activities and services with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards, surveillance audits shall be conducted as part of the certification process.

These audits shall be scheduled at 12-month intervals from the date of initial certification, within the scope of the business's audit program.

Surveillance audits may be conducted as on-site audits, remote audits (where conditions permit), or a combination of both methods.

The duration of surveillance audits shall be re-evaluated and updated as necessary, considering factors such as major changes implemented by the client, updates in businessal structure, and the overall maturity level of the management system.

This re-evaluation shall be initiated at the end of the ninth month from the date of initial certification and shall be completed within **14 calendar days**.

During this period, the planning unit of the certification body shall contact the client to update and/or verify the information required for the planning of the surveillance audit.

Any changes that may affect the audit duration shall be assessed based on the most recent information provided by the client.

If a need for revision or update is identified based on this assessment, the surveillance audit duration shall be recalculated in accordance with RoyalCert procedures.

Following the updated audit duration, revised audit fee details shall be communicated to the client, and written approval shall be obtained.

Once mutual agreement is reached, the process of assigning

the audit team shall commence.

The audit team shall consist of auditors authorized and qualified by RoyalCert, and technical experts may be included where necessary.

If the team includes more than one member, a Lead Auditor shall be appointed to coordinate the on-site audit.

Upon finalizing the assignment of the audit team, the relevant auditor shall be provided with the audit program.

Final audit details, including the date, scope, and team composition, shall be communicated to the client.

Upon receiving the client's confirmation, the surveillance audit planning process shall be initiated.

The Lead Auditor shall prepare the audit plan in accordance with the audit program.

While preparing the plan, previously identified non-conformities, criteria to be monitored, and any identified risk areas shall be taken into consideration.

The finalized audit plan shall be submitted to the client. Upon client approval, the surveillance audit shall be conducted on the agreed date.

4.12 Unannounced Audits

Unannounced audits are conducted by RoyalCert without prior notice to the client in order to observe and evaluate any substantiated situation that may have a significant impact on the client's compliance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

Situations that may trigger an unannounced audit include:

Serious complaints made public,

Complaints submitted to the accreditation body or GSTC,

Complaints received by certified hotel/accommodation or tour operator clients,

Reports in the media or on social media indicating non-compliance with GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards

Misleading, incorrect, or unauthorized use of the GSTC certificate.

Any complaint or situation that may necessitate an unannounced audit shall be reviewed and evaluated by the Technical Executive for the GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards).

If deemed appropriate, it shall be included in the audit planning upon the approval of the Certification Manager.

The unannounced audit shall be conducted on-site with a primary focus on observing and evaluating the issue that is the subject of the complaint or concern.



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

4.13 Recertification Audit Implementation

A recertification audit shall be conducted prior to the expiration of the certificate's validity period. Recertification audits shall be carried out as on-site audits.

The business is responsible for monitoring the validity period of its certificate. If the business wishes to continue with certification, it shall notify RoyalCert at least three (3) months prior to the expiration date of the certificate.

Upon receiving such notification, RoyalCert shall prepare a new certification program covering a three-year cycle for the business.

If the business does not request the continuation of certification, the certificate shall automatically expire at the end of its validity period.

If the recertification audit is not completed before the expiration of the certificate, or if the effectiveness of the corrective and preventive actions for any major non-conformities identified during the recertification audit cannot be verified, recertification shall not be granted, and the certificate shall become invalid.

4.14 Multi-Site Certification

Multi-site certification is granted to businesss that carry out similar activities under a shared sustainability management system, provided that a legal agreement exists between a defined central function—responsible for planning, control, and management of activities—and the associated sites. A multi-site business is defined as one that possesses the following characteristics:

Businesss that have a defined central office where specific activities are planned, controlled, or managed, along with a network of local offices or sites where such activities are partially or fully carried out, shall be defined as a multi-site structure.

During the audit process, if a major nonconformity is identified at any site (facility), RoyalCert shall not perform the following actions:

- For initial certification or recertification processes, no certificate shall be issued for any site until the identified nonconformities are satisfactorily closed.
- During surveillance audits, the site where the major nonconformity is detected shall be temporarily excluded from the certification scope.

4.15 Group Business Certification

RoyalCert may provide a single certification service based on the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards for multiple small and/or medium-sized tourism enterprises (hotels/accommodation facilities and tour operators).

In order to provide certification services for group businesss, each group member shall be a legal entity and shall operate under the same management system. Group business applications shall be assessed by RoyalCert in accordance with the GSTC Accreditation Manual, and all activities related to the certification process shall be planned and shared with the respective group businesss.

The compliance of group clients with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards shall be assessed during the on-site group certification audit.

The audit findings related to group clients shall be evaluated and recorded in the Audit Report together with the supporting evidence.

In order for group clients to be granted GSTC certification, all criteria specified in this document shall be fully met by the client.

The audit duration for group clients shall be calculated by Technical Executive for GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards), taking into account the additional man/days required for the review of the compliance criteria referenced in *Clause 15* of the "*GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies Industry Hotel/Accommodation & Tour Operator V4.1*" and "*GSTC Certification Program and Certification Body (CS-CB) Framework V1.0*"

RoyalCert shall audit a sample of the group members to evaluate the effectiveness of the sustainability management system.

The sample size shall be determined based on the results of the risk assessment. The minimum number of group members to be audited each year shall be the square root of the total number of members in the group.

In addition, RoyalCert shall select a representative sample of the tour products offered by the tour operator to evaluate the effectiveness of the sustainability management system. The sample size shall be determined based on various factors, including the diversity of services (multi-day and/or excursion tours), operational volume, risk level, and geographical distribution.

This assessment shall be based on the information provided during the application phase.

The selected sample tours shall cover different types of suppliers (such as accommodation, transportation, restaurants, guides, and attractions) and shall prioritize tours with higher sustainability risks.

During initial certification, surveillance, and recertification audits, different combinations of sample tours shall be selected to ensure comprehensive coverage.

The audit duration shall be determined according to the actual on-site observation time required for each sampled tour.



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

In the case of multi-day tours, unless otherwise justified, full participation for the entire duration of the tour — including observation of the high-risk suppliers — shall be expected.

RoyalCert applies a sanction policy in cases where nonconformities are identified during the certification processes of group clients. Sanctions shall be implemented collectively to the entire group in accordance with RoyalCert procedures.

Clients are required to access the updated version via RoyalCert's official website (www.royalcert.com) and comply with the provisions of the **'TL.06 Suspension, Withdrawal, and Scope Reduction Instruction'**.

The failure of a group manager or internal auditors to detect nonconformities shall lead to the application of sanctions. Similarly, the failure of group management to take action regarding identified nonconformities or to impose appropriate sanctions on group members shall also result in the application of sanctions.

The existence of major nonconformities — such as the ineffective operation of the Management System (SMS), the failure of services to meet the relevant standards, or the offering of non-certified services as certified — shall result in the suspension of the certification for the entire group.

In order for applications to be evaluated under the group business category, the group members shall fulfill the group business requirements specified in the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards within the scope of their applications.

Requirements Applicable for Group Certification

The following evaluations of all legally established tourism enterprises included in this certification service, referred to as group client certification service, shall be carried out by RoyalCert.

- Group members shall be individual entities offering similar tourism services.
- Group members shall operate within the same country and in the same language.
- The group shall have a mechanism in place to manage the implementation and maintenance of the same Reference Standard.
- The group shall establish and maintain a sustainability management system.
- The sustainability management system shall have a mechanism to systematically ensure and evaluate the compliance and performance of each enterprise within the group, including internal audits.
- A group manager shall be appointed to be responsible for the operation of the sustainability management system. The group manager may be a cooperative or association of group members, a

consultant, or an external auditing body.

- All members of the group shall formally commit to complying with the group's rules and management system, the requirements of the Reference Standard, and certification obligations.
- Group members shall be legally established businesss under their own name or brand.
- Each member of the group shall be internally audited at least once per year.
- The results of the external audit of the group members shall be compared with the results of the group's internal audit.

RoyalCert shall ensure compliance with the GSTC requirements for group businesss in order for the GSTC Group Certification to remain valid.

- Group members shall have a formal agreement with the group manager
- RoyalCert shall review and evaluate the relevant agreement to ensure that at least the following aspects are clearly defined:
 - a) A formal commitment by the group member to fulfill the requirements of the sustainability management system and the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards
 - b) A commitment by the group member to provide the necessary information to the group manager
 - c) A commitment by the group member to comply with the instructions of the group manager
 - d) An obligation by the group member to accept internal and third-party audits
 - e) An obligation by the group member to report identified nonconformities.
 - f) The right of group members to withdraw from membership
 - g) A clear description of the procedures to be followed in the event of suspension or termination of group membership

All group members shall have access to the requirements of the Reference Standard and to the specific certification requirements applicable to group certification.

- The requirements of the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards may be presented in any form or medium.
- Documents may be based on an external standard developed by the group or on an internal standard derived from an external standard.
- Documents that group members need to understand, such as contracts and internal standards, shall be written in a manner appropriate to their local languages, cultures, and knowledge levels.



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

- Group members shall have adequate knowledge of standards, requirements, and production methods based on appropriate education, training, skills, and experience.
- The group shall identify the necessary competencies for group members and shall provide training or take alternative measures to meet these needs. Training records of members shall be maintained by the group.
- When establishing the Sustainability Management System (SMS), the group manager shall conduct a risk assessment related to compliance with the Reference Standard and the specific certification requirements applicable to group certification. The risk assessment shall, at a minimum, include the identification of risks at the operational level of group members and the evaluation of the SMS's performance.
- The group shall carry out a risk assessment appropriate to the nature, scale, and complexity of all group members. The risk assessment shall be conducted in a manner that preserves the integrity of all group members and ensures compliance with the Sustainability Management System and the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

The risk analysis assessment document shall clearly define communication with the group manager, the management of any changes in the management and operational structure of any group member, the management of all other changes that could affect the sustainability management system, and compliance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

The relevant assessments shall be conducted by the GSTC audit team, and the findings shall be included in the audit report.

- Group members shall provide services only in accordance with the requirements of the Reference Standard and the specific certification requirements applicable to group certification.
- Measures shall be taken to ensure that services outside the scope of certification are not presented in a way that implies certification.
- Group managers shall conduct internal audits to determine whether individual group members meet the requirements of the Reference Standard and the specific certification requirements applicable to group certification.
- Each member of the group shall be audited annually, unless otherwise specified by an individual certification program. GSTC auditors shall evaluate the ability of group members' internal audits to meet the criteria of **ISO 19011:2018**.
- GSTC auditors shall also assess the competence of group members' internal auditors according to the **ISO 19011:2018** standard.

- Less frequent audits may be justified based on various factors, including the results of risk assessments. Audits shall be conducted at different times of the year and shall not be scheduled so regularly as to become predictable.
- New group members shall always be audited and their compliance verified before their services are certified.
- Internal inspectors may provide advice to group members but shall not audit the members they have advised. They shall remain independent from management and shall not audit or inspect their own work.
- The group manager shall make decisions regarding the status of individual group members annually. These decisions shall be based on the results of internal audits and other relevant information.
- Measures shall be taken to ensure that the findings of internal auditors are not unduly influenced by group managers or group members.
- Group members shall have the right to appeal against any findings that lead to their removal from the group.
- The Sustainability Management System (SMS) shall include the application and enforcement of sanctions against individual group members who fail to comply with the standards or other applicable requirements.

Records covering the relationship between the group manager and the group members shall be maintained and kept up to date, including at a minimum the following:

- Contracts between the group and individual group members,
- List of group members,
- Records of the sale of certified services,
- Internal audit reports,
- Nonconformities, sanctions, and follow-up actions arising from both internal and external audits,
- Complaints and appeals.

In cases where a group member is unable to establish or maintain records, the group manager shall assume responsibility for maintaining those records.

All group members shall be recorded in a list. This list shall be updated as necessary and shall include at a minimum the following information for each member:

- Name of the member or the assigned code,
- Address(es) and activities provided at each address,
- Certification status,
- Dates of internal audits,
- Scheme-specific required data.



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

4.16 Certification of Tour Operators

Applications from tour operators shall be evaluated according to the RoyalCert procedures established based on the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

If the applied scope is deemed appropriate, an audit program shall be initiated.

The scopes are defined as follows:

Type of Tour Operators;

Outbound Tour Operator:

Businesses that operate outbound tourism services covering activities undertaken by a visitor residing outside their own country, either as part of an international tourism trip or as part of a domestic tourism trip.

Inbound Tour Operator:

Businesses that operate inbound tourism services covering activities undertaken by a non-resident visitor within the main country as part of an inbound tourism trip.

Domestic Tour Operator:

Businesses that operate domestic tourism services covering activities undertaken by a resident visitor within the reference country as part of a domestic tourism trip or an international tourism trip.

Destination Management Companies (DMCs):

DMCs may also be referred to as Ground Handlers or similar terms.

These businesses organize and operate tours, accommodation, transportation, and other tourism-related services for incoming tourists on behalf of outbound Tour Operators at the destination.

Business Scope of the Tour Operator:

- A wholesale tour operator is a travel professional that creates travel packages to be sold to travellers directly or through travel agencies at a discount.
- As a seller of their services on a retail basis.
- As an owner of their own transport vehicles, or lease from others, or a combination of the two.

Tour operators may offer a variety of products/services within the four (4) categories of tour operators defined above.

In the case where a tour operator operates in multiple categories, RoyalCert shall determine whether the certification scope shall encompass all categories or if each

tour operator activity category requires separate certifications.

If all activity categories of the tour operator fall under a common sustainability management system, all categories shall be considered within the certification scope. The scope of the applying tour operator's services is determined based on the **Application Form for T.O.** and the submitted corporate documents.

The audit of Tour Operators shall be conducted in accordance with the GSTC Sustainable Tourism Criteria. Supplier data pertaining to the business shall be obtained during the application stage.

The data obtained shall be evaluated by RoyalCert in accordance with the requirements of the GSTC Sustainable Tourism Criteria for the business, taking into account factors such as the number, volume, size, scope of the tours, geographical location, and risk level of the suppliers. Based on this evaluation, the audit duration shall be determined, and an offer shall be prepared.

The audit process for tour operators includes the review of the sustainable management system under the GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards) for the tour operator's head office, and where applicable, its affiliated offices, as well as the tour programs included in the scope. This process also involves the assessment of the adequacy, compliance, and effectiveness of the suppliers' performance, including their contracts, and the review of records, including on-site audits if necessary.

In the calculation of the audit duration for the tour operator, a sample evaluation representing all suppliers of the tour programs included in the certification scope will also be considered. The current guidance document published by GSTC will be used as a basis for the sampling of tour operators' suppliers: "**GSTC Sampling Guidance for Tour Operators v1.0 May 2024.**"

GSTC certification is conducted by assessing the compliance of the tour operator's services—both those delivered directly to clients and those provided through suppliers—against the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards and the sustainability management system, based on the declared scope of operations.

The audit process includes the evaluation of supplier performance monitoring mechanisms, control measures implemented for service providers in the supply chain, review of internal procedures and reporting, and the incorporation of sustainability provisions into contractual agreements and their implementation.

This assessment is carried out through sampling of selected tour packages offered by the tour operator, with on-site or remote evaluations of the suppliers involved in those



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

packages. The audit duration and planning are determined based on factors such as the scope of services, the types of suppliers engaged, business scale, and ownership structure of the tour operator.

Tour Operators are encouraged to promote the certification of their service providers under recognized sustainable tourism standards. This promotion shall be supported by evidence of available certification programs and records showing an increase in the number of certified suppliers within the operator's management system.

During audits, RoyalCert verifies the following for all categories of Tour Operators:

- The Tour Operator implements a preferential contracting policy for suppliers holding valid and recognized sustainability certifications.
- In product offerings where accommodation services constitute a major component, particular emphasis is placed on contracting certified sustainable hotels, with priority given to those certified by GSTC-accredited Certification Bodies (CBs).
- Evidence of an increasing number of certified hotel properties is documented in the operator's management system records and supplier monitoring reports.
- Where land transport services are subcontracted, priority is given to suppliers using renewable energy vehicles and holding sustainability certification.

Note: According to "**GSTC Accreditation Manual for Certification Bodies Industry Hotel/Accommodation & Tour Operator V4.1**" and "**GSTC Certification Program and Certification Body (CS-CB) Framework V1.0**", land transport providers are a category of tour operator that can be audited by a RoyalCert or another CB.

- The Tour Operator's contracting policy shall, at a minimum, state that in cases where two or more bids are comparable in terms of price and quality, preference shall be given to the supplier holding a recognized sustainability certification.
- All supplier contracts shall include provisions requiring the implementation of a minimum level of sustainable practices, along with the obligation to regularly report such practices to the Tour Operator.

Within the Tour Operator's management system, the **main** groups of suppliers playing a critical role in service delivery are monitored and evaluated under the following categories:

Under Criterion A1, the Tour Operator's sustainability management system shall be evaluated in terms of the quality of its reporting infrastructure and data collection capacity, including performance information related to the supply chain.

The overall quality of sustainable procurement practices is evaluated for the following key categories of products and services:

- Hotels / Accommodation providers
- Transportation service providers
- Attractions and visitor sites

This evaluation is conducted based on the sustainability practices, monitoring systems, contractual requirements, and, where applicable, certification status of the suppliers in these categories.

Aviation components of Tour Operator contracting, and operations are outside the scope of GSTC Accreditation for Tour Operator certification. However, the RoyalCert shall assess the Tour Operator's conformity with GSTC Criterion D2.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) from the following perspectives:

Whether specific aviation components are necessary in place of lower-GHG-emitting transport options such as trains or other land-transport vehicles; and

Whether the aviation booking is directly managed by the TO.

Sampling of Contracted Suppliers

Sampling of Contracted Suppliers shall be selected in accordance with based on '**Audit Duration Determining Instruction**' based on "**Guidance on Sampling of Tours for the GSTC Tour Operators v1.0 May 2024**".

While determining the audit periods and suppliers to be audited based on the risk analysis, the number of sites where the tour operator operates, the number of passengers, the size of the business according to the number of suppliers are taken into consideration.

If the tour operator's supplier is certified by RoyalCert or another accredited business with GSTC certification, the sampling audit is exempted, provided that the scope and duration of the GSTC certification are verified. However, in such cases, RoyalCert may limit its evaluation to determining the scope, validity, and sustainability of the findings related to such certification and may decide whether this constitutes sufficient evidence of compliance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

In the audits to be conducted on tour operators, the number of suppliers shall be determined and the audit shall be carried out by sampling according to the "**Guidance on Sampling of Tours for the GSTC Tour Operators v1.0 May 2024**". The



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

contracts made by the suppliers with the tour operator shall undertake to conduct audits within the scope of the Sustainable Management System and the tour operator shall audit its supplier within this scope and provide evidence. Auditors shall also audit the method and implementation of the sustainable management system of the TO supplier.

In audits conducted on tour operators, the sampling methodology shall be based on risk-based factors such as operational scope, number of destinations served, passenger volume, and supplier scale. The selection and evaluation of suppliers shall follow the principles outlined in the ***“Guidance on Sampling of Tours for the GSTC Tour Operators V1.0, May 2024”***.

Contracts between the tour operator and its suppliers shall include clauses requiring the implementation of a minimum level of sustainability practices and their monitoring. The tour operator shall conduct monitoring activities accordingly and maintain records as part of its management system.

Auditors shall evaluate the tour operator's management of its supplier relationships in terms of sustainability, including the scope and effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms, the implementation level of required practices, and the validity of any existing certifications.

Assessment of Non-Conformities

The basis for GSTC certification is the full compliance of all suppliers with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards. The evaluation of the non-conformities detected shall be carried out for tour operator and each supplier as specified in ***clause 4.6*** of this guideline.

Certification Decision

The certification decision process is carried out based on the results of document review and on-site audits conducted for the tour operator and its suppliers in accordance with ***Clause 4.7 of this guideline.***

If any of the suppliers within the scope of the tour operator are found to be in clear violation of the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards, and such nonconformities are not identified or managed by the tour operator's sustainability management system, a certification decision shall not be issued in accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

The evaluation of a tour operator's suppliers as part of the certification audit, including favorable audit outcomes, does not entitle the suppliers to receive a GSTC certificate. The GSTC certificate is issued solely in the name of the tour operator and applies exclusively to its certification scope.

4.16.1 Certification of Tour Products

The Tour Product is considered an integral part of the Tour Operator's certification scope and therefore does not require a separate technical scope definition or an additional application process.

In certifying a Tour Product, RoyalCert shall specifically evaluate the following GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards in each audit and obtain evidence of compliance for each criterion directly attributable to the certified Tour Product ("Product-Specific Evidence"). RoyalCert shall assess and record the Product-Specific Evidence for each of the following GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

- A5 Customer experience
- A6 Accurate promotion
- A9 Information and interpretation
- B2 Local employment
- B3 Local purchasing
- B4 Local entrepreneurs
- B5 Exploitation and harassment
- B7 Decent work
- B8 Community services
- B9 Local livelihoods
- C1 Cultural interactions
- C3 Presenting culture and heritage
- C4 Artefacts
- D1.1 Environmentally preferable purchasing
- D2.2 Transport
- D2.4 Solid waste
- D3.3 Visits to natural sites
- D3.4 Wildlife interactions
- D3.5 Animal welfare
- D3.6 Wildlife harvesting and trade

For GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards where Product-Specific Evidence is not required, RoyalCert shall evaluate the relevant criteria during the audit and may choose to conduct this evaluation either at a cumulative level or on a product-specific basis.

In the event that the Tour Operator's certification expires or is withdrawn, the related certificates shall be immediately rendered invalid.

While the Tour Operator's certificate is under suspension, no certification activities shall be conducted or issued under its name.

Eligibility for Product Certification:

The GSTC Excursion Certification is applicable only to day tours (excursions).

Excursions shall be operated by a Tour Operator that has already been certified by RoyalCert in accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards.

The Tour Operator shall be categorized under the appropriate



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

"Type of Tour Operator" as declared in the certification application.

Excursions are eligible for certification only when the suppliers, transport providers, and destinations remain largely consistent throughout the calendar year, with minimal changes in itinerary.

When alternative key suppliers are used, the selection shall be made from the operator's approved supplier list defined within its management system.

Customized or personalized excursions are not eligible for GSTC certification

Requirements for Excursion Certification

- An excursion shall be certified only if it is operated by a Tour Operator that is certified regarding GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards by an RoyalCert;
- The Tour Operator is currently certified by RoyalCert per the terms of GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards;
- Excursions shall be operated by a certified Tour Operator that is categorized per the terms of Type of Tour Operator;
- Excursions shall be certified only if in the case that the product operates in largely the same manner for a full calendar year, with minimal changes to land transport suppliers and vehicles, attractions, and the itinerary. When alternate key suppliers are provided to replace the regularly used suppliers, the Tour Operator selects them as a matter of standard operating procedure from their approved list within their management system; and
- Customized Excursion packages shall not be certified.

Requirements for Certification of Excursions

Specific Excursions shall be clearly defined and documented for auditing by the RoyalCert, indicating its marketed name plus key features including places visited and types of land transport vehicles used;

Changes to the standard itinerary of the Excursion shall conform to the requirements of the management system and all other elements of Section for Tour operators and tour products

The Excursion suppliers shall be controlled by the Tour Operator management system, including but not limited to:

1. Attractions are selected and monitored with a focus on avoidance of visits that are harmful to the environment as follows:
 - High risk attractions located in the areas having high natural and/or cultural conservation value or high risk activities with wildlife or sensitive cultural site visits like marine mammal parks/shows and indigenous communities shall have documentation to explicitly demonstrate compliance with each aspect of criterion and each aspect of the indicators applicable to that criterion and;
 - The documentation shall be updated annually with historical evidence to demonstrate continued conformity over the previous year. Clean energy vehicles shall be required in the contracting process over higher-GHG emitting vehicles except where reasonable procurement of such vehicles is not possible; and
2. Sustainably procured food service shall be provided as much as reasonably possible.

Cancellation of Certificate

Certifications of Excursions shall be cancelled immediately in the case the Tour Operator certification expires or is revoked.

4.17 Scope Expansion

In the event that GSTC Certificated clients notify us of their requests to add new sites and/or services to the scope of the certificate, it shall be assessed whether the relevant sites/activities affect the risk level of the client. As a result of the assessment, the relevant sites and/or activities shall be added to the most recent surveillance or recertification audits of the audit program. If the audit results are appropriate, the scope of the certificate shall be expanded.

In accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards, the scope of the GSTC Certificate cannot be expanded before the audit of the sites to be added to the scope of the document is carried out.

Based on the request of multi-site clients to add a new group of sites (more than one site) to their GSTC Documents, a separate sample selection shall be made for the sites to be added.

The sample selection shall reflect the size, business structure, sustainable management system and complexity of all new sites to be added. After the new sites are added to the document, a sample site selection shall be made by adding to the general site total for subsequent audits (surveillance and recertification).

4.18 Complaints, Appeals

Complaints, appeals and disputes from applicants, clients, clients' customers and third parties regarding GSTC



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

Certification processes shall be evaluated impartially by RoyalCert in accordance with the requirements of GSTC Accreditation body and other relevant institutions and standards. The acceptance, investigation and decision of complaints and appeals shall be carried out in a manner that does not lead to a discriminatory practice against the appeal/complainant. RoyalCert keeps the management process for appeals and complaints publicly available on its website. All complaints, appeals and disputes evaluated and closed by RoyalCert shall be notified by e-mail to td@gstccouncil.org address of GSTC within 5 days.

4.19 Use of Certificate and Logos

The business may use the GSTC certificate in its proposals, promotional materials, communications, and advertisements to indicate that its products and services are delivered under a verified sustainability management system. However, the certificate is valid only for the scope and location(s) explicitly stated on the certificate, and it shall not be used in reference to any other scopes or sites.

The business shall not jointly advertise or promote other tourism services that are not certified under the GSTC-Recognized Standard alongside its certified services or in association with the certification. Such promotion shall in no way imply that the uncertified product, process, or service is approved or certified under the GSTC-Recognized Standard.

The GSTC certificate shall not be transferred to any other business or legal entity under any circumstance. The validity period of the certificate is three years, and business whose certificate expires are required to immediately cease the use of the certificate and associated logos. In the case of suspension or withdrawal, the business shall discontinue all references to certification and remove from use all materials bearing the GSTC certification mark, including documents, promotional materials, and advertisements. The use of the certificate and logos shall be limited to approved materials, shall not be misleading or ambiguous, and shall comply with the formats specified by RoyalCert and GSTC. When referring to their certification status in communication media (e.g., websites, brochures, documents, advertisements), business shall comply with the RoyalCert GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards) requirements, shall not make or permit misleading claims, and shall not use or allow the use of the certificate or logo in a deceptive manner. When the scope of certification is reduced, all promotional materials shall be revised accordingly. The certificate shall never be used in a way that implies certification of a product, service, or process, nor shall it give the impression that the certification applies to activities outside the certified scope. Certification documents may only be reproduced and shared in full or as specified in the GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards). The certificate shall not be used in any way that undermines the reputation of RoyalCert, GSTC, or the

accreditation body, or erodes public trust. The use of logos and certification marks shall be clearly understood and authorized; the name, address, and marks of RoyalCert and GSTC shall only be used accurately and appropriately. These rules are defined in the document "***TL.03 Logo Usage Instructions***," available at www.royalcert.com. For any non-compliance, RoyalCert may apply corrective actions, suspension or withdrawal of certification, public disclosure of the nonconformity, or legal actions if necessary. Where applicable, certification and audit tools may include additional evaluation requirements for the use of the GSTC name and marks.

4.20 Changes in the Reference Standard or Certification Requirements Based on the Contract

Any changes in the ***ISO 17065:2012*** standard, the GSTC Accreditation Manual, or the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards on which certification is based shall be officially communicated to certified businesss. RoyalCert is authorized to define an appropriate transition period for the implementation of such changes by the certified clients. During this transition period, provided that it does not violate applicable legal regulations or create unfair competition, the validity of the existing certificate shall remain in effect until the end of the transition period.

RoyalCert shall notify certified clients of any changes in certification requirements by issuing a revised version of this Guide. This Guide constitutes an integral and binding part of the certification agreement, and by signing the agreement, the business is deemed to have accepted in advance any future revisions and commits to comply with such changes.

Compliance of each client with the revised conditions shall be confirmed through the signing of this agreement. This confirmation shall be completed prior to the first audit conducted after the effective date of the revised requirements.

4.21 RoyalCert Certification and Surveillance Services Inc. Obligations

RoyalCert is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information and documentation related to the client, in accordance with applicable procedures. This confidentiality obligation is ensured through confidentiality agreements signed by all certification personnel, auditors, and technical experts involved in the certification process. Such information may only be shared with the accreditation body upon official request. In cases where disclosure to third parties is legally required, RoyalCert shall inform the concerned business prior to such disclosure.

The services provided by RoyalCert are limited to GSTC audit and certification activities. RoyalCert is not permitted to offer any consultancy services related to the establishment or implementation of management systems in accordance with the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards. The



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

business is committed to maintaining impartiality in all certification processes and refrains from engaging in any activity that may create a conflict of interest.

RoyalCert shall notify the concerned business in writing of any customer complaints arising from nonconformities within its management system. Depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, RoyalCert may schedule an additional verification audit for the business.

RoyalCert is responsible for informing certified clients as soon as possible of any significant changes to the certification system, including standards, procedures, or rules. Clients are expected to implement the required adjustments within the defined transition period. Such notifications shall be communicated through the official website, email, or other appropriate means.

RoyalCert reserves the right to amend the application documents related to GSTC certification services. However, such amendments shall not be applied retroactively; previously acquired rights shall remain valid, and the implementation of changes shall take effect as of the official amendment date. All changes shall be communicated to certified clients and applicants in progress via the official RoyalCert website.

RoyalCert is responsible for maintaining, updating, and publicly publishing a list of certified, suspended, and withdrawn businesses via its official website. This list shall be updated on a monthly basis. It shall include the name and address of the certified client (including each site for multi-site or group businesss), the scope of certification, certificate number, issuance date, validity period, and accreditation status.

RoyalCert is obliged to keep all records of clients related to GSTC certification activities during the validity period of the document

RoyalCert has "Professional Liability Insurance" against risks that may cause or result in damage within the scope of audit and certification activities, and the scope and limits of its liability shall be stated here. RoyalCert has no responsibility if the documents issued are not recognized by third parties. RoyalCert has the right to audit its certified client if deemed necessary

RoyalCert assumes responsibility for all Work assigned to subcontracted auditors and/or technical experts. The service provided by RoyalCert will be provided in accordance with **ISO 19011, ISO 17065**, GSTC Accreditation Manual and other accreditation rules

In the event that RoyalCert voluntarily relinquishes its accreditation or its accreditation is withdrawn by the accreditation body, all businesss certified by RoyalCert shall be placed under the oversight of another certification body

approved by the accreditation authority. In such cases, clients shall be required to take the necessary steps to transfer their certification to a new certification body in order to maintain the validity of their GSTC certification.

RoyalCert may, when deemed necessary, allow the participation of observers in audits, such as representatives from the accreditation body, trainee auditors, or technical observers. The presence of observers does not affect the validity of the audit process, and the business shall be informed in advance.

4.22 Obligation of the Certified Client

The certified client is fully responsible for complying with all rules, procedures, and obligations outlined in this Guide as part of the GSTC certification framework.

The business is responsible for monitoring and complying with all updated certification practices and related documents published on www.royalcert.com. Furthermore, the business is obligated to implement and maintain the requirements of the GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards as part of the certification process.

Certified client is liable to comply following

- Allowing the conduct of evaluation and surveillance, including provision for reviewing documentation and records, and granting access to relevant equipment, locations, areas, personnel, and subcontractors where applicable,
- Enabling the investigation of complaints communicated to the client and ensuring proper evaluation,
- Taking appropriate corrective action regarding complaints or deficiencies affecting compliance with certification requirements, and documenting the actions taken,
- Permitting the participation of observers (e.g., representatives from the accreditation body, trainee auditors) in audits when applicable,
- Granting access to RoyalCert, the accreditation body, and the program owner (GSTC) to all premises, records, and certification-related documents,
- Taking all applicable safety precautions for audits and informing RoyalCert and the accreditation body (GSTC) in advance about relevant safety requirements,

Opening premises to the accreditation body for any type of audit—including unannounced audits—aimed at monitoring compliance with the GSTC Certification Program (GSTC Standard and GSTC Recognized Standards) implemented by RoyalCert, and providing any documentation or records related to the audit as requested,

- Making certification-related claims that are



ROYALCERT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES INC

GSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

(This document is prepared as binding instruction and it is an integral part of 'FR.06 GSTC Certification Proposal and Contract')

consistent with the scope of certification and not misleading,

- Not using product certification in a way that may bring RoyalCert into disrepute or making any statement considered misleading or unauthorized by RoyalCert,
Upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, ceasing use of all related advertising materials and taking required actions as defined by the certification scheme, including return of certification documents,
- If sharing certification documents with others, reproducing them in full or as specified in the certification scheme,
- Complying with all applicable RoyalCert and GSTC requirements when referencing product certification in communication materials such as documents, brochures, or advertisements,
- Complying with all requirements prescribed by GSTC regarding the use of conformity marks and information related to the certified product,
- Maintaining a record of all complaints received regarding compliance with certification requirements and making these records available to RoyalCert upon request,
- Informing RoyalCert without delay of any changes that may affect the client's ability to conform with certification requirements.