



Guide for Partners

**GSTC-Accredited Certification
and Quality & Sustainability and Awards for
local communities, regions and protected areas.**

**Guide for parties interested in becoming
Official Representative or Preferred Partner**



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Introduction

The primary objective of the Green Destinations Certification & Awards program is to motivate and train destinations to adopt a Sustainability Management System as a structural solution towards becoming a more attractive destination for leisure and business travellers. Recognition of progress and good practice is provided through (pre-certification) Awards, and ultimately Certification.

In order to make the Green Destinations Program available to destinations around the world, we have chosen for a decentralised approach through external professionals, businesses and non-profit organisations in the field of destination management and sustainable tourism.

You are invited to support destinations in your country, region or network, by disseminating and implementing the Green Destinations Program as a Representative or a Preferred Partner.

This is a way for you to develop a destinations network and make a “sustainable business” in tourism.

This guide sets out the details of the different business opportunities to become involved in the Green Destinations program.

Please read this ‘Guide Partners’ in conjunction with:

- **The Guide for Destinations ([Program Guide, available in several languages](#))**
- **The Rules & Procedures for GD Certification & Awards**

Option 1: Official Green Destinations Representative

In this option you will operate the program for a group of destinations or in a specific region or country, as our Official Representative for the **Awards and Certification programs**.

After signing a Licence agreement, you can ‘claim’ a number of destinations that will then only be approached by you, and not by other Green Destinations Representatives, during a certain period. If these destinations decide to participate in the GD Program, you will be compensated as the customer relationship management lead.

Participating destinations pay an annual membership fee¹ which is invoiced by and paid to you as the GD Rep. 33% of the fees paid to you by participating destinations is made payable to Green Destinations, as a “license fee”. So the license fee is entirely no-cure-no-pay: you do not pay a minimum annual fee to Green Destinations.

The license fee to be paid to Green Destinations is a percentage of the fees paid by the destination: for the QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awards: 33% of the membership fee.

For any additional consultancy and training supporting the destination in the sustainability reporting (e.g. organising a stakeholders meeting, training online or onsite, supporting working on the online platform), the Representative considers the possibility and the benefit to involve a Green Destinations trainer-adviser in the offer to destinations for up to one third of the consultancy work, especially to “train the trainers”. See also the paragraph “Training, consultancy and specialist advice”.

¹ See for fee details ‘GD Guide for Destinations’

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For Green Destinations Certification: not all tasks can be delegated to Representatives due to the rules of GSTC-Accreditation. So as soon as your destinations starts GD Certification, you will enter into discussion with Green Destinations about the best way of dividing tasks under the responsibility of the Green Destinations Certification Committee. In some cases it will be possible to appoint a GD Rep into the GD Certification Committee, to do the tasks of the GSTC-Accredited Certifier.

As a Representative, you will be responsible for:

- a. **Listing** Destinations that you intend to approach and involve in Program in a Prospect list, in order to avoid any competing approaches (usually up to 10 per country).
Informing Green Destinations about your Prospect list of exclusive destinations, and about the result of your approaches, every three months.
- b. **Approaching** destinations to increase their awareness of the Green Destinations program and secure their involvement in the program.
- c. Formalising destination involvement in an **Award Agreement** and invoicing the **annual membership fee** (taking into account VAT according to legislation in the country of the destination). See the GD Program Guide - Annex 1. Annual fees.
- d. Agreeing with destinations and with Green Destinations on offering **consultancy and training** supporting the destination in the sustainability reporting (e.g. organising a stakeholder meetings, training online or onsite, supporting working on the online platform).
- e. **Operating the program:** account management, invoicing and financial administration (taking into account VAT according to the national legislation in the country of the destination) and forwarding Part of the incoming fees to Green Destinations.
- f. Appointing somebody in your organisation to be in touch with participating destinations as a **“coach”**, to provide technical guidance on how to work on the online assessment platform. During the first year of membership, the coach will spend 16 to 24 hours for technical online support during the period of self-assessment; in later years the role of the coach will be much smaller.
- g. Hiring a 3rd party **auditor**, an expert to make an independent desk assessment of destinations compliance to the GD Standard via the GD online platform. Auditors shall be contacted by Representatives, but they must be approved by Green Destinations. This is subject to a general check whether an auditor is qualified.
- h. Setting **auditor fees**, which may vary per country, or case-by-case (ask Green Destinations for guidance on the fees and the number of days per audit).
- i. Reviewing/evaluating **auditor reports** (full/partial/no compliance decision per criterion and Auditor Remarks); discussing any doubts with Green Destinations Certification Committee.
- j. **Notifying destinations** about the assessment results:
 - Request Green Destinations to **calculate Award level** and notify the destination of result;
 - Send destination a neat Audit Report with recommendations for partial and non-compliant criteria.
- k. Agree with destinations on the **presentation of certificates** to award-winning or certified destinations, at Award ceremonies, either locally in destinations (entirely organised by the destination), or in a combined Award Ceremony for a country (or group of countries), hosted by one of the destinations. If more Representatives are active in a country, you cooperate with them in a combined Award Ceremony.

Responsibilities of Green Destinations

In return for the “license fee”, the Green Destinations Certification Committee takes care of:

- international program development;
- instruction of the coach (or the coaches) of the Representative;
- GSTC-Recognition of the Standard and GSTC-Accreditation of the GD certification;
- maintenance, update and continuous improvement of the online assessment & reporting system and learning environment;
- international marketing & promotion (e.g. website, Top 100 competition, international events).

Green Destinations’ responsibilities also include (but not necessarily free of cost):

- Facilitate platform translations into important languages
- Provision of Award certificates and flags
- Auditor-Advisor trainings
- Collection and dissemination of good practices and tools to facilitate meeting the Standard.

Training, consultancy and specialist advice

Specialist advice, training or any other and active support to completing the self-assessment for Awards or Certification is **not** included in your obligations as a Representative (nor in your role as a coach). It is not more destinations can expect for their Green Destinations membership fee, and it is important to clarify that towards your clients or prospects. However, if you and the destination conclude that more support is required for training or know-how to complete the self-assessment (e.g. training of destination managers, organisation of a stakeholder workshop), you may offer consultancy support to the destination.

As a GD Representative your company is first responsible adviser for any additional consultancy, for the selection of consultants and for setting fees. The “trainer-adviser” may be somebody from your team, or an external specialist. However, for transparency reasons you and the destination may prefer that the consultant and the coach are different persons. If you do not have a suitable trainer-consultant, contact Green Destinations for the pool of trained auditors-advisors.

In case your destination participates in a GSTC-Accredited certification, strict rules apply between the roles of certifying body, consultant, and auditor. So if you are a consultant for a destination, it is no longer possible to be their coach on behalf of the certifying body.

Green Destinations auditor-advisor trainings are offered to allow you and your team to perform adequate auditing, training and consultancy tasks.

Option 2: Green Destinations Preferred Partner

In this option, experts and expert organizations (profit or non-profit) are licensed to carry out part of the program for Green Destinations, including:

- Approaching destinations in their country or network to join the program
- Supporting destinations in their preparation for Awards or Certification:
 - As a *coach* (only technical assistance e.g. understanding criteria and navigating the online platform);

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- optionally: as *trainer-consultant* delivering Green Destinations Support Service (actively assist destinations with their self-assessment – see ‘Training, consultancy and specialist advice).
- Assist GD with Account management² for these destinations

Interested parties can become Preferred Partner if they are:

- (prepared to be) trained in Green Destinations assessment and certification (preferably through a GD Auditor-Advisor training);
- committed to actively approach destinations in their country or network
- committed to support the destinations without becoming a GD Representative or Auditor for these destinations;
- agree with Green Destinations on a Preferred Partner status for a particular group of destinations. (Preferred Partner agreements will take account of countries or regions for which an exclusive license has been given to a GD Representative)

Remuneration

When a Preferred Partner brings in a “new” destination to the GD Certification & Awards program, the following options exist for the new destination (see also the Guide for Destinations):

1. Destination development membership (access to platform and its resources).
2. Green Destinations and QualityCoast Awards program
3. QualityCoast Certification (this option is not GSTC-Accredited, it will not be promoted in the GD Guide for Destinations).
4. GSTC-Accredited Green Destinations Certification.

Preferred Partners will be offered as long as the destination remains a GD-ACP member with the support of Preferred Partner:

- a. 17.5% commission of annual membership fee paid by the new destination; for bringing in any new destination and for supporting GD in membership account management;
- b. another 17.5% of annual membership fee paid by the new destination; for performing the role of coach on the online platform;
- c. the opportunity to offer the destination additional consultancy support. As a Preferred Partner you are free to implement your consultancy; however, you may consider involving experts or trainers from Green Destinations or GD Representatives to enhance conformity to the GD Standard.

N.B. For a Preferred Partner, working as a coach for a destination is compatible with a consultancy role.

Destination Development

Destinations not yet ready for (or interested in) Awards or Certification may choose **Destination Development** membership where they only have access to the online platform and its resources. The role of a GD Representative or Preferred Partner is in this case focussing on supporting the destination with a GDSS: developing a baseline assessment; organise stakeholder meetings to define a vision, set up a stakeholder committee and develop strategy and action plans for improvements.

² Supporting GD in membership account management mainly consists of monitoring whether the destination is content with its participation in the GD program, help solve any (language) issues, collecting membership fees, organising local award ceremonies etc.

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In return for bringing in a new destination as a new Destination Development Member, for supporting GD in membership account management and online coaching on the platform, the GD Rep or Preferred Partner will be offered up to 50% of the annual fee (paid by the new destination) as long as the destination remains a member with the support of GD Rep or Preferred Partner.

Important roles in participating destinations

Every participating destination is expected to appoint a Destination coordinator or a **Sustainable tourism coordinator**: the destination's first responsible for its participation in the program. The Sustainability coordinator is assigned and usually employed by the destination. A Coordinator can be the DMO-manager, or a public official in the field of tourism or environment.

The Destination coordinator is invited to become one of the **Green Destinations Ambassadors**: people working in or for destinations committed to sustainable tourism, supporting destination stewardship. GD Ambassadors can be instrumental in destination assessment as a local Sustainable tourism committee.

Annex

Summary overview of roles and tasks

Further information

<http://greendestinations.org>

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Leiden, The Netherlands, August 2019

Annex – Summary overview of roles and tasks

Representative	Description	Tasks	Remuneration	Fee to GD	Requirements
Green Destinations Representative	Operates the program on behalf of GD for a number of agreed destinations (max 12 months), registered in a regularly updated and shared document.	<p>Within the territory agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recruit new destination members (organising trainings, workshops, presentations etc.) <p>For agreed destinations (max 10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Account Management - Coaching - Secretariat - <i>Representative staff may do Auditing or Consultancy provided a) this is done on staff's personal account; b) these staff members are not involved in the destination's application process</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 67% of annual membership dues; business opportunities from consultancy and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 33% of annual membership dues. In case of consultancy, hire GD to train your trainers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trustworthy sustainable tourism professional or organisation - Received GD Auditor-Advisor Training - Received GD training for destination managers
Preferred Partner	Operates part of the program for agreed destinations	<p>Within the territory agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit new destination members (organising trainings, workshops, presentations etc.) <p>For agreed destinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Account Management - Coaching - <i>Optionally: consultant OR auditor</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35% of annual membership dues (collected by GD) - fees for consultancy or audits (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In case of consultancy, try to involve GD to enhance conformity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trustworthy sustainable tourism professional or organisation - Received GD Auditor-Advisor Training - Received GD training for destination managers
Key Roles					
Account management	Staff member of Representative or Preferred partner. Main contact person for destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First and continuous contact with (prospective) members - Help reminding destinations of award expiry and organising award renewal process - Help collecting membership fees - Represent GD-ACP at public events and GD Award ceremonies - In participating destinations, encourage people to become Ambassadors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 67% of annual fees to representative / 35% of annual fees to Preferred Partner 		
Coach	Normally a staff member of GD Representative. Provides technical guidance to destinations*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain member how to navigate the online platform and interpret criteria - Technical check if application is ready for audit - Optional: additional on-site training of destinations (extra payment) - In participating destinations, encourage people to become Ambassadors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 67% of annual fees to representative / 35% of annual fees to Preferred Partner 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable tourism professional - Received GD training for destination managers
Secretariat	Program administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinating the assessment and audit - reminding destinations min 6 months before award expiry to apply for award renewal - admin: invoicing, contracting, communication etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 67% of annual fees to representative 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Junior Sustainable tourism professional - Received GD Auditor-Advisor training
Consultant/ advisor	Can be a staff member of Representative. Assists destinations in completing the assessment and formulating actions for improvements*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complete assessment as destination staff on the online platform - ensure adequate involvement of destination stakeholders - In participating destinations, encourage people to become Ambassadors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible, suggested support service, offered in consultation with GD. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable tourism professional - Received GD training for destination managers - Received GD Auditor-Advisor Training
Auditor	Preferably not a staff member of Representative. Audits destinations' assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes an independent online or on-site audit of destinations, every 2 years - Produce audit report with recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audit fees are set by the Representative, in principle covered by Representative from 67% of annual fees. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable tourism professional - Received GD Auditor-Advisor Training
Certifier	makes final decision on criteria compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - check auditor results and remarks, - instruct GD to calculate ratings that define the Award level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 67% of annual fees to representative 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Sustainable tourism professional - Received GD Auditor-Advisor Training

*) Representative, coach nor consultant may take over the role of destination coordinator, who should remain primarily responsible for the assessment and for the coordination and improvement of destination sustainability.

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Per destination, GD Representative staff and contracted parties can take multiple roles but some roles cannot be combined:

	Advisor	Coach	Auditor	Certifier	Secretariat
Advisor	-	✓	✗	✗	✓
Coach	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Auditor	✗	✓	-	✗	✗
Certifier	✗	✓	✗	-	✓
Secretariat	✓	✓	✗	✓	-

Please note:

- If **Coach** is also the **Auditor** of a destination, he/she cannot be the **Certifier** for that destination
- Preferably **Advisor** and **Audit** roles should administratively be executed on personal accounts (the Advisor invoices the Destination; the Auditor invoices the Representative); also using personal email addresses (not any email address related to the Representative's organisation)
- **Certifier** and **Secretariat** roles should be carried out by staff of the GD Representative organisation