

Singapore achieves global destination sustainability certification

Singapore, 28 February 2023 – Singapore has been certified¹ as a sustainable destination based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)'s Destination Criteria, after being the first to apply the certification process on a country level. This reflects Singapore's efforts and commitment in becoming a sustainable urban destination.

The GSTC Criteria are the global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, and Singapore was certified based on our performance in four pillars: sustainable management, socio-economic sustainability, cultural sustainability and environmental sustainability. Singapore's achievement reflects the commitment towards the Singapore Green Plan 2030, and is also in line with the Singapore Tourism Board's (STB) Tourism Sustainability Strategy. The Tourism Sustainability Strategy was launched in 2022 and sets out actionable strategies for the tourism industry so that Singapore can become a sustainable urban destination.

Singapore's certification follows similar achievements by key tourism partners such as Sentosa Development Corporation, Resorts World Sentosa and Marina Bay Sands Singapore, which had also achieved certification based on the relevant GSTC Criteria.

Mr Keith Tan, Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board (STB), said: "We are proud to receive this certification, which reflects Singapore's commitment to the Singapore Green Plan 2030 and becoming a City in Nature, where large experiences come with a small footprint. Being certified is just the beginning of our journey. Tourism businesses must do more to internalise sustainability as part of their offerings, so that they can contribute to making Singapore greener and more liveable. Our vision is to become one of the world's most sustainable urban destinations and we now know we are on the right track."

Mr Randy Durband, Chief Executive Officer, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) said, "The commitment from Singapore's tourism sector to support their national Singapore Green Plan 2030 is apparent based on their holistic approach to sustainable tourism. We see first-hand some of their efforts to engage key subsectors of tourism in meaningful ways. Gaining destination certification requires that level of commitment and holistic approach. We commend them and are pleased to support their efforts for continuous improvement."

¹ By Vireo Srl, a GSTC-accredited certification agency based in Italy.



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STB will continue to engage its partners, build on the destination's existing strengths and ramp up efforts in areas of improvement. These are the highlights of Singapore's sustainability performance across the four pillars:

Sustainable management

Singapore is implementing multi-year strategies and action plans on sustainable management, such as the Singapore Green Plan 2030. Announced in 2021, the Green Plan charts Singapore's ambitions and targets over the next ten years, strengthens its commitments under the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Paris Agreement, and positions the country to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Another example is the Tourism Sustainability Strategy, which was developed in line with the Green Plan. The strategy charts three strategic focus areas to steward the tourism industry's sustainability efforts – becoming a sustainable urban destination, building a sustainable tourism sector, and showcasing Singapore as a sustainable urban destination. For example, STB worked closely with industry associations to co-develop Hotel and MICE Sustainability Roadmaps which set out clear targets² for tourism businesses

Socio-economic Sustainability

Singapore also demonstrated efforts to maximise the social and economic benefits of tourism for locals. These include supporting and spotlighting local entrepreneurs, providing a safe and secure working environment, a user-friendly built environment, as well as supporting career opportunities and training in tourism.

STB's Tourism Sustainability Programme (TSP) also supports tourism businesses across all stages of their sustainability journey – from building workforce capabilities, to leveraging technology and test-bedding sustainable solutions.

The Made With Passion (MWP) initiative³ also spotlights and promotes over 100 local heritage brands globally, while Design Orchard provides an integrated retail and incubation space for local talent to flourish.

On the jobs front, STB's Tourism Careers Hub was established in January 2022 to facilitate job matching for locals, upskill workers to meet evolving demands, and drive business transformation efforts.

² E.g., 60% of hotel room stock in Singapore to attain internationally-recognised hotel sustainability certification by 2025; all six purpose-built MICE venues to obtain internationally or nationally recognised sustainability certification – or both – by 2025.

³ Made with Passion is a national marketing initiative by the Singapore Brand Office and the Singapore Tourism Board and supported by Enterprise Singapore to promote consumer awareness and appreciation for our local lifestyle brands.

MEDIA RELEASE



Cultural Sustainability

Singapore has various initiatives to conserve and enhance its tangible and intangible heritage. For example, there are legislation and conservation guidelines to protect more than 7,200 conserved buildings, entire historical districts, and national monuments. The Singapore Botanic Gardens was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015, making it the first and only tropical botanic gardens in Asia on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Hawker Culture in Singapore was also successfully inscribed as Singapore's first element on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on 16 Dec 2020.

To celebrate Singapore's heritage, STB supports visitor experiences that showcase the country's diverse cultures such as annual light-ups and celebrations in cultural precincts. These include the Chinatown Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration, Deepavali celebrations, and the Hari Raya Light-Up.

Environmental sustainability

Singapore has implemented a range of measures to enhance greenery, strengthen ecological connectivity between green spaces, and conserve its biodiversity. For example, the OneMillionTrees movement aims to plant one million additional trees across Singapore by 2030 and the target is on its way to being met. The country is also charting concrete targets and demonstrating real-world sustainability applications to manage its scarce resources. Singapore enhanced its international climate commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. It has committed to green⁴ 80% of buildings by 2030 and has already done so for nearly half of its buildings in 2022.

Tourism products and experiences have also been built with sustainability in mind. For example, many Singapore hotels are incorporating sustainable features into their design, with some winning awards for their eco-friendly efforts. In 2020, the Sands Expo and Convention Centre at the Marina Bay Sands became the first carbon-neutral MICE venue in Singapore. Gardens by the Bay, which houses over 1.5 million plants, is the living embodiment of 'City in Nature'. Tour operators are also offering sustainability-focused tours showcasing Singapore's rich biodiversity, its journey with water, power, waste management, and local culture.

You may download a photo from this [link](#).

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⁴ A building is considered to be green if it meets minimum environmental sustainability standards set by the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) or achieve the BCA Green Mark certification.

MEDIA RELEASE



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About the Singapore Tourism Board

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is the lead development agency for tourism, one of Singapore's key economic sectors. Together with industry partners and the community, we shape a dynamic Singapore tourism landscape. We bring the Passion Made Possible brand to life by differentiating Singapore as a vibrant destination that inspires people to share and deepen their passions.

More: www.stb.gov.sg or www.visitsingapore.com | Follow us:
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About the Global Sustainable Tourism Council

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council® (GSTC®) establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, known as the GSTC Criteria. There are two sets: Destination Criteria for public policy-makers and destination managers, and Industry Criteria for hotels and tour operators. They are the result of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism. They are arranged in four pillars: (A) Sustainable management; (B) Socioeconomic impacts; (C) Cultural impacts; and (D) Environmental impacts.

The GSTC Criteria form the foundation Accreditation for Certification Bodies that certify hotels/accommodations, tour operators/transport providers, and destinations as having sustainable policies and practices in place. GSTC does not directly certify any products or services; but provides an accreditation program through its partner ASI/Assurance Services International to accredit Certification Bodies.

The GSTC is an independent and neutral organization, legally registered in the USA as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that represents a diverse and global membership, including national and provincial governments, leading travel companies, hotels, tour operators, NGO's, individuals and communities – all striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism.

Information for the media: www.gstcouncil.org/about/for-the-press