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OVERVIEW OF THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL STANDARDS AND SUGGESTED INDICATORS FOR MICE

In the context of globalization and growing environmental awareness, the issue of sustainable development has become increasingly relevant across all sectors of the economy, particularly in the field of business tourism. The MICE industry (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conferences/Conventions, and Events/Exhibitions) plays a crucial role in shaping regional image, stimulating economic activity, and developing infrastructure, while simultaneously exerting a significant impact on the environment and local communities.

Accordingly, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) standards for the MICE sector serve as an essential tool for harmonizing approaches to sustainable management, ensuring socio-economic responsibility, and preserving cultural heritage. These standards provide a foundation for assessing and certifying sustainable practices in event organization, raise awareness among market participants, and act as a reference point for educational and professional programs.

The GSTC MICE Standard (for Venues, Event Organizers, and Events & Exhibitions) aim to serve as the global sustainability standards for the industry and were created to provide a common understanding of sustainable tourism in the MICE industry throughout the world. The GSTC MICE Standard are the minimum that any MICE business should aspire to reach. They are organized around four main themes: effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community, enhancing cultural heritage, and reducing negative impacts on the environment (Figure 1).

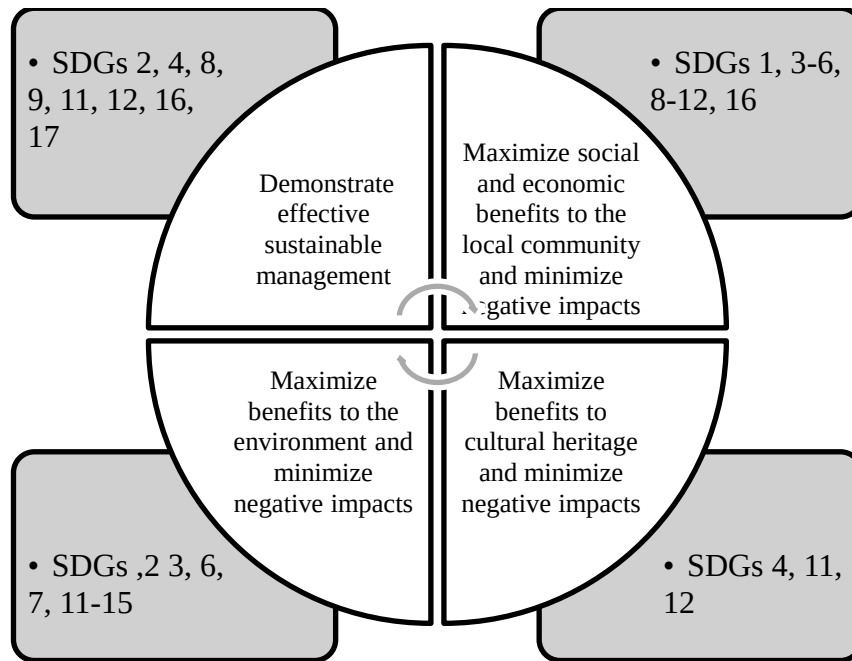


Figure 1 – The main themes of GSTC MICE Criteria
Source: the authors' own study based on [1]

Some of the uses of the GSTC industry criteria for MICE include the following: help define sustainability in a holistic manner; raise awareness of the breadth and nature of sustainability; serve as the basis for certification for sustainability; serve as basic guidelines for MICE businesses to become more sustainable which includes guidance for identifying more sustainable suppliers and service providers; provide greater market access in the growing market for sustainable businesses, serving as guidance for the MICE businesses in choosing suppliers and partners; help consumers identify sound sustainable MICE businesses; serve as a common denominator for information media to recognize sustainable MICE businesses; offer both the public and private sectors a starting point for developing sustainable MICE business requirements; serve as basic guidelines for education and training on sustainable MICE by universities, hospitality schools, or associations; demonstrate leadership that inspires others to act.

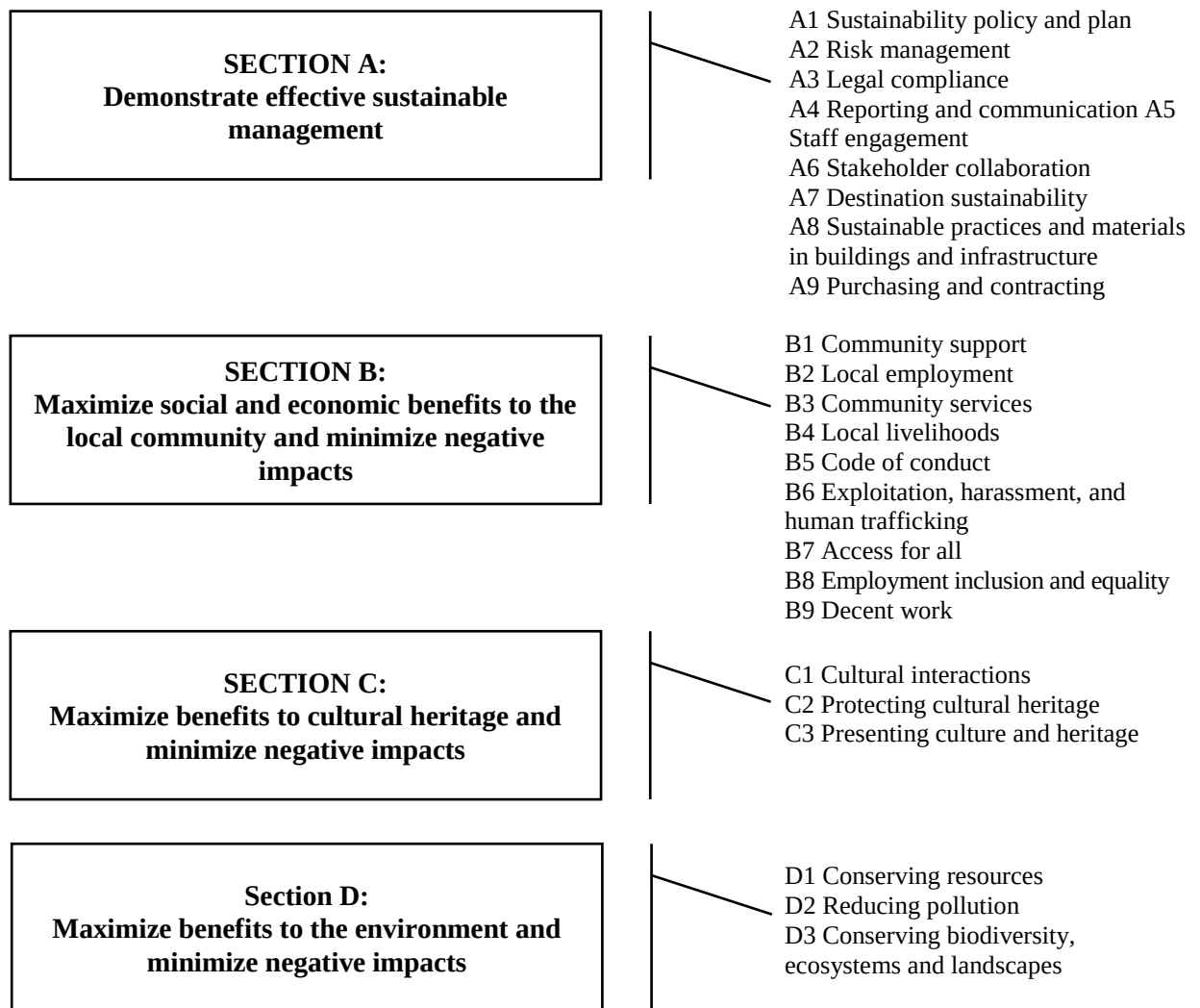


Figure 2 – GSTC industry criteria for MICE

Source: the authors' own study based on [1]

The GSTC Standard indicate what should be done, not how to do it or whether the goal has been achieved. This role is fulfilled by performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation, all of which are an indispensable complement to the GSTC Standard. The performance indicators presented in the figure 2 are designed to provide guidance in measuring compliance with the GSTC MICE Criteria.

By aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the GSTC Criteria offer MICE stakeholders a strategic foundation for minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive contributions across social, economic, cultural, and ecological dimensions. The suggested performance indicators serve as essential tools for assessing

compliance and guiding implementation, while also supporting education, certification, and market access. Ultimately, the GSTC MICE Standards empower businesses and institutions to lead by example, fostering a more responsible and resilient global tourism sector.

Reference:

1. Global Sustainable Tourism Council. URL: <https://www.gstc.org/> (date of access: 17.10.2025).