

Leading the way in Sustainable Tourism **according to to GSTC Criteria**

~Building Relationships and Connections through Movement and Contributing to Social Solutions~

Tokyo, JAPAN - On September 1, 2023, Japan Airlines (JAL) became the world's first airline group to join The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), an organization that establishes and manages global standards for sustainable tourism (*1). This membership allows JAL to utilize GSTC's specialized knowledge on SDGs quality in tourism and its global network.

To contribute to the realization of sustainable tourism incorporating GSTC's philosophy, JAL has partnered with Sakura Quality Management Co., Ltd. (hereinafter "Sakura Company"), the only organization based in Japan to have received recognition of its unique evaluation standards by GSTC. Through this partnership, JAL aims to promote and expand sustainable tourism.

(*1) Press release dated October 6, 2023, "JAL becomes World's First Airline Group to Join the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)" <https://press.jal.co.jp/en/release/202310/007665.html>



Nikko Hotels International has obtained the "SAKURA QUALITY An ESG Practice" certification, a standard recognized by the GSTC. (Left: Grand Nikko Tokyo Daiba, Right: Hotel Nikko Alivila/Yomitan Resort Okinawa)

Sustainable tourism is positioned as a key initiative in the government's "The New Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan" inbound recovery strategy. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) defines it as "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities." To evaluate tourism activities, objective indicators such as GSTC Criteria are in demand for its assessment.



Through this partnership, JAL and Sakura Company will offer tourists the option of sustainable tourism recognized by global standards, creating new connections and relationships through travel, and contributing to the resolution of social issues such as overtourism, environmental destruction, and the loss of local culture and traditions.



JAL is a member of the GSTC

JAL will continue to contribute to the promotion and expansion of responsible tourism, region revitalization, economic development, and the increase of related populations.

Future initiatives (Examples):

- To contribute to the promotion of certification for domestic accommodation facilities, JAL is dedicated to fostering auditors internally. Independent qualified auditors (*2) will conduct certification audits to ensure their credibility.
(*2) Qualified Auditor: Qualified individuals who have completed the GSTC Auditor Training and passed both written and practical exams. Other requirements to become qualified auditors shall be reviewed and confirmed by the GSTC-Accredited Certification Body.
- JAL will organize seminars, education, and consulting services, and set up a system to receive inquiries from Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and others, working in cooperation with related local government agencies and local communities to contribute to regional revitalization and the creation of human flow.

For inquiries regarding certification audits for accommodation facilities, education, and consulting, please contact: sust@jal.com

■ About GSTC Criteria

Tourism businesses certified by GSTC, the global standard gain trust from consumers and investors by demonstrating their actual consideration for the environment and society, recognized by a third party. This enhances their brand value and competitiveness.

The current [GSTC Criteria](#) include the following types:

1. ["Criteria for Destinations"](#) aimed at public policymakers and destination managers.
2. ["Criteria for the Tourism Industry"](#) (For Hotels and Tour Operators) aimed at accommodation facilities and tour operators.

The GSTC Criteria is composed of four main pillars applicable to the entire tourism industry: sustainable management, socio-economic impact, cultural impact, and environmental impact.



■ **About Sakura Quality Management Co., Ltd.**

The operating company of Sakura Quality, a quality certification system and quality improvement program for accommodation facilities. Currently, Sakura and their consulting company are in the process of preparing for the GSTC Accreditation as a certification body, and aim to obtain accreditation in 2024. In the future, they plan to expand the scope of certification to tour operators. For details on their certification system, please refer to the Sakura website (<https://www.sakurastay.com/en/>).