WORKING MATERIAL 1.15 · CHAPTER 1 — THE VISION OF OWNERSHIP (SECTION A) · SETTING: MONTEVERDE, COSTA RICA

From Vision to System: What Chapter 2 Will Ask

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7a — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 1.15 (book page 185)

GUIDING QUESTION

A year after deciding to make its sustainability readable, a small lodge has a policy, a plan, a register, a report and a binder of procedures. Section A of the standard has been answered on paper. The harder question is whether the system will hold where the guest cannot see it — in the community, among the staff, in the forest and the water.

1 · Verification Pact: market claims against the standard

Copied from the book. The last column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know it.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A property with section A documented is ready for certification	No	The standard has forty criteria; sections B, C and D carry twenty-six of them, assessed at the level of indicators	
A v3 certified property only needs to renumber its documents	Only partially true	Much carries over in substance, but A3 and A14 are new, A13 is consolidated, and audits are based on the v4.0 indicators	
Section A is administrative paperwork	No	A10 to A14 concern land, buildings, purchasing and food, among the largest impacts a hotel has	
The annual review can wait for the audit	No	A1.8 requires an annual review of implementation and an update based on its findings	
A small lodge can skip the annual report	No	A4.2 requires one; A4.3 allows a format appropriate to size, capacity and audience	
The person overseeing the plan must be a senior manager	No	The A7 guidelines allow responsibilities in existing roles, with at least one person designated to oversee the plan	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property, and note where it shows.

☐ Treating a complete set of section A documents as readiness for certification.

☐ Spending the second year refining documents instead of gathering evidence for sections B, C and D.

☐ Postponing the annual review of the plan until an auditor asks for it.

☐ Renumbering v3 documents without remapping them against the v4.0 indicators.

☐ Leaving operational criteria without a named person responsible for their evidence.

☐ Recording only favourable results, so that the system can never show improvement.

☐ Holding the review among managers only, without the staff who carry out the plan.

☐ Assuming that section A, once written, will remain true without being updated.

3 · A Checklist for the End of the First Year

The book's checklist, with a column for your own answer.

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
Has the plan been reviewed with the staff and updated on the findings?	A1.8 requires an annual review and update	
How many criteria of section A are evidenced, not only practised?	Section A is the frame on which the rest of the standard is assessed	
Who, by name, is responsible for each criterion of sections B, C and D?	Without a named owner, operational criteria remain unevidenced	
Does the second annual report compare performance with the first year's baseline?	The A4 guidelines ask for year-over-year comparison	
Have we mapped against the v4.0 indicators, not only the criteria?	Audits are based on indicators	
If certified under v3.0, what is our plan before 30 December 2028?	Certifications under v3.0 lose validity at the end of the transition period	

4 · What would show this is working

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. Indicator references point to the GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0; where the evidence lives is this book's practice, not a requirement of the standard.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Has the annual review of the plan been held, and targets reviewed (A1.5, A1.8)?	Review minutes and revised plan	☐
Has the property been mapped indicator by indicator, not only criterion by criterion?	Indicator-level gap map	☐
Does each criterion of sections B, C and D have a named person responsible?	Responsibility column of the gap map	☐
Are open questions (wages, invasive species, wastewater) being answered and recorded, whatever the result?	Wage comparison, species list, test results	☐
For a property certified under v3.0, is the transition planned before 30 December 2028?	Transition checklist	☐

> *What this sheet is not: the GSTC Hotel Standard does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard's criteria, indicators and guidelines govern the real case. Independent material; not affiliated with or endorsed by the GSTC. The standard's own text at www.gstc.org prevails.*