WORKING MATERIAL 1.6 · CHAPTER 1 — THE VISION OF OWNERSHIP (SECTION A) · SETTING: TULUM, MEXICO

Accurate Promotion and the Price of a Green Word

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7a — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 1.6 (book page 73)

GUIDING QUESTION

A sustainability claim is a promise about a fact, and facts change while websites do not. Criterion A5 asks that every claim be based on actual practice and supported by verifiable data. What happens when a hotel's promotion describes the property it was, rather than the property it is, and how does an owner bring the two back together?

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 claim that was true at opening remains acceptable	No	A5.2 requires claims based on actual practices; the guideline excludes actions no longer actively implemented	
General words like "eco-friendly" do no harm	No	The guideline to A5.2 excludes generalised claims	
Solar panels on site justify "off-grid" or "powered by the sun"	No	D1.1 and D1.2 require energy by type and the proportion of renewables, which the claim must match	
Buying offsets justifies a "carbon neutral" claim	Only partially true	D3.6 places offsets after reduction, and its guideline treats them as a complement, not a substitute; the claim still needs verifiable data	
Accuracy concerns only sustainability claims	No	A5.1 covers all promotional materials, including media and on-site signage, for facilities and services	
Saying nothing about sustainability avoids the risk	No	A5.3 requires transparent and accessible information on sustainability commitments	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

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

☐ Keeping founding claims after the practices behind them have changed.

☐ Using general words such as "eco-friendly" or "green" with no defined practice behind them.

☐ Describing renewable energy without stating its proportion of total use.

☐ Promising "zero plastic" while single-use bottles remain in use.

☐ Treating offsets as a basis for neutrality claims without reductions and data.

☐ Checking the website and forgetting platform listings, signage and what staff say.

☐ Making operational changes without reviewing the claims they affect.

☐ Removing all sustainability information instead of correcting it.

3 · A Checklist for Every Green Word

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

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
Where do our sustainability claims appear, including platforms, signage and staff answers?	A5.1 and A5.2 cover all promotional materials, not only the website	
Is each claim supported by data or documentation we could show today?	A5.2 requires claims supported by verifiable data or documentation	
Does any claim exaggerate, generalise, imply a commitment or describe a practice that has stopped?	The guideline to A5.2 excludes all four	
Which operational changes would make each claim untrue, and who must be told?	Claims drift when operations change without anyone checking promotion	
Do our energy and plastic claims match what D1 and A13.6 would require us to measure?	Later criteria give claims their measurable form	
Is our information on sustainability commitments easy to find?	A5.3 requires transparent and accessible information, not silence	

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 every sustainability claim, in every channel, been collected in one list?	Claim inventory covering website, listings, social media, signage	☐
Is each claim based on actual practice and supported by verifiable data or documentation (A5.2)?	Evidence file for each claim	☐
Does any claim exaggerate, generalise, imply commitments or describe actions not actively implemented?	Claim review against the guideline to A5.2	☐
Do promotional materials and on-site signage represent facilities and services accurately (A5.1)?	Current website, listings and signage	☐
Is information on our sustainability commitments transparent and easy to find (A5.3)?	Website page or annual report	☐

> *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.*