TEMPLATE · CERTIFICATION-READINESS CHECKLIST · FIVE QUESTIONS BEFORE SIGNING

# The Certification-Readiness Checklist

*Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7b — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapters 4.1 (book page 201), 4.2 (book page 215), 4.3 (book page 227), 4.4 (book page 239) and 4.8 (book page 289)*

**HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST**

Five questions to answer, in writing, before the hotel signs with a certification body and again before the initial audit. Each answer should point to a document the hotel holds.

**WHO THE RULES BIND**

The accreditation, impartiality, risk-assessment and certificate rules cited here are set by the GSTC Accreditation Manual (AM-I v4.1) and bind certification bodies, not hotels. The questions help the hotel check what the body has promised to do. Indicator A5.2 of the GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0 (claims based on actual practice and verifiable evidence) does bind the hotel.

## 1 · Is the certification body accredited for the hotel/accommodation scope, and by whom?

*Source: subchapters 4.1 (p. 201), 4.2 (p. 215)*

What to record: The scope as the body publishes it; the accreditor (the GSTC or a GSTC-Endorsed National Accreditation Body); where you checked (the GSTC's published list), and the date.

| Answer | Evidence filed at | Ready? |
|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No<br>☐ To check |

## 2 · Which reference standard will it use?

*Source: subchapters 4.1 (p. 201), 4.4 (p. 239)*

What to record: GSTC criteria (Alternative A) or a GSTC-Recognized standard (Alternative B), named with its issue status, as written in the contract and the audit plan.

| Answer | Evidence filed at | Ready? |
|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No<br>☐ To check |

## 3 · Has anyone in the audit plan advised the hotel in the last two years?

*Source: subchapters 4.2 (p. 215), 4.4 (p. 239)*

What to record: Every name in the audit plan checked against the hotel's written declaration of advisers in the last two years; the date the declaration was sent to the body.

| Answer | Evidence filed at | Ready? |
|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No<br>☐ To check |

## 4 · Which factors of the certifier's risk assessment apply?

*Source: subchapter 4.3 (p. 227)*

What to record: Tick the factors below that apply to the property, and the evidence the hotel holds for each.

| Risk factor | Rule | Applies? | Evidence the hotel holds |
|---|---|---|---|
| Likelihood of negative impacts from the operation | AM-I 8.13.1–8.13.2 | ☐ Yes ☐ No | |
| Country's Rule of Law Index (low risk only at 0.60 or higher, together with minimal impacts) | AM-I 8.13.2–8.13.3 | ☐ Yes ☐ No | |
| Location in or near a sensitive area: UNESCO World Heritage, IUCN Categories I–IV, Ramsar, or national lists | AM-I 8.13.4 | ☐ Yes ☐ No | |
| Public information: media, online searches, social media, the hotel's own website | AM-I 8.13.5 | ☐ Yes ☐ No | |
| Ownership structure and outsourced businesses (laundry, security, landscaping, excursions) | AM-I Annex C1.4 | ☐ Yes ☐ No | |
| Extremely low risk — all five: ≤ 20 rooms and ≤ 5 staff; no meetings, weddings or function spaces; locally owned, not multi-site; not in a sensitive area; internet for remote audits | AM-I Annex C1.6 | ☐ Yes ☐ No | |

| Answer | Evidence filed at | Ready? |
|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No<br>☐ To check |

## 5 · Do the hotel's claims say no more than its certificate will say?

*Source: subchapters 4.8 (p. 289), 4.1 (p. 201)*

What to record: Every channel that mentions sustainability or certification compared with the business name, reference standard and scope the certificate will carry; uncertified services visibly separate.

| Answer | Evidence filed at | Ready? |
|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No<br>☐ To check |

| Checklist | Entry |
|---|---|
| **Certification body considered** | |
| **Completed by (role) and date** | |
| **Reviewed again before the initial audit on** | |

> *Independent material; not affiliated with or endorsed by the GSTC. The standard's own text at www.gstc.org prevails. This checklist does not recommend or rank certification bodies.*