WORKING MATERIAL 4.15 · CHAPTER 4 — THE CERTIFIER'S LENS · SETTING: PUERTO AYORA, GALÁPAGOS, ECUADOR

Recertification and the Three-Year Cycle

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7b — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 4.15 (book page 373)

GUIDING QUESTION

A certificate carries an expiry date, and most owners read it as a finish line: the day by which the hotel must pass again. The Accreditation Manual reads it differently, as the end of a cycle in which every year has its audit and every requirement must be seen at least once. What does a certification body look at when it returns for recertification, and what has a hotel been preparing for, whether it knew it or not, since the day it was first certified?

WHO THE RULES BIND

The GSTC Accreditation Manual (AM-I v4.1) cited on this sheet binds certification bodies, not hotels. Where a row refers to it, it describes what the certifier must do and what the hotel can check; it is not a requirement of the GSTC Hotel Standard.

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
Recertification is a formality if surveillance went well	No	It is an on-site audit (8.14.3), planned on the results of previous audits (8.10.6)	
A certificate renews automatically unless something goes wrong	No	Recertification must be planned and completed before expiry (8.10.3–8.10.4)	
A low-risk hotel can be recertified remotely	No	Remote or hybrid modes apply to surveillance; recertification is on site	
The new cycle runs from the expiry date of the old certificate	No	It runs from the recertification decision (8.10.5)	
Surveillance audits may leave parts of the standard unexamined	Only partially true	They may focus on key processes, but all requirements must be covered within the cycle (8.18.3)	
Once certified, a hotel only needs to prepare for each audit	No	Certification is maintained only while the hotel continues to comply (8.18.5)	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

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

☐ Treating the certificate's expiry date as a finish line rather than the end of a cycle.

☐ Preparing intensively before each audit and leaving the system untouched in between.

☐ Expecting a recertification audit to be remote because surveillance was.

☐ Adding suppliers, services or staff without asking which indicators the change touches.

☐ Keeping targets that were met in the first year unchanged for the rest of the cycle.

☐ Skipping an internal audit or an annual review in a busy year.

☐ Letting the system depend on one or two people without training successors.

☐ Scheduling recertification so late that findings cannot be closed before expiry.

3 · A Checklist for the Year Before Recertification

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

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
Do we have an internal audit, an annual review and a published report for every year of the cycle?	The recertification auditor reads the cycle, not the week	
Has every surveillance finding been closed with evidence of effectiveness?	Clause 8.10.6 shapes the audit on the results of previous audits	
What has changed in the operation since the last audit, and did the system absorb it?	Drift begins where change was not brought into the system	
Have our targets moved where the figures showed they had been met?	A1.5 asks for review and update, not confirmation alone	
Has every requirement been examined at least once during the cycle?	Clause 8.18.3 requires coverage of all requirements within the cycle	
Is recertification scheduled early enough to finish before expiry?	Clauses 8.10.3–8.10.4 require completion before expiry	

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?
Are targets reviewed annually and moved when met (A1.5)?	Three years of review minutes with reasons for changes	☐
Is there an annual review and an annual report each year of the cycle (A1.8, A4.2)?	Review minutes; published reports	☐
Is the data series continuous, without gaps (A4.5)?	Monthly data sheets	☐
Is every finding of the cycle closed with evidence (A8.3)?	Findings register	☐
Are new and renewed suppliers reviewed (A13.13), with a trigger for any new service or contract?	Supplier list; change routine form	☐
Is the internal auditor role covered by more than one person?	Audit calendar with names (This book's practice)	☐

> *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.*