Certification

and Awards Programme

Audit Report

Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit

October 2021

GSTC
GSTC-ACCREDITED
CERTIFICATION BODY

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1. Introduction and background

This report presents the results of evaluating the destination of **Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit** against the Green Destinations Standard.

The Green Destinations Standard is 'Recognised' by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council to be aligned with commonly agreed and regularly updated set of guidelines (GSTC-Destination criteria) that define sustainability of tourism destinations.

Evaluation with the Green Destinations Standard aims to:

- Assist destinations in identifying and analysing weak elements in their policies, as a basis for an agenda for improvement;
- Inform consumers and the travel industry on the sustainability levels of participating destinations.

The system enables destinations to show how exactly they “make a difference” when they receive recognition through the Awards program or become certified. In combination with the Green Destinations Reporting System, this destination award and certification program provides transparency on all issues that consumers associate with sustainability.

The system informs the creation of quality and sustainability maps for destination policymakers and stakeholders. In addition, it enables consumers to compare destinations through performance; this can help consumers in the process of holiday selectimg their next holiday destination.

This report sets out how the Awards and Certification are attributed; the details of the audit; the assessment results and remarks on non-compliances; and presents the auditors' final conclusions.

Green Destinations Assessment & Certification

Green Destinations offers two types of recognition for sustainability good practice:

1. ‘Certification’ is attributed in case all mandatory Green Destinations Standard criteria are fully complied with.
2. ‘Awards’ (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) are attributed based on scores that calculated from compliance to the Green Destinations Standard Criteria.

Attribution of Ratings and Awards

Scores are assigned to all Green Destinations Standard (policy) criteria, ranging from 0 to 2:

- “0” meaning non-compliant (or not sufficient motivation/information/evidence provided)
- “1” meaning partially compliant, or compliance expected in the very near future (e.g. policy is being drafted, there is evidence that this is being executed) of any quality (or no information provided for an indicator);
- “2” indicating full compliance for a criterion.

For the Criteria, a (1-10) score per theme (Nature, Environment, Culture etc.) is calculated based on the scores for each criterion in the theme.

Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum awards

The Ratings are calculated to 6 themes and an overall score. The total score defines the Award level:

Total Overall Score	Award	
>5.9	Bronze	
>6.9	Silver	
>7.9	Gold	
>8.9	Platinum	
100% GD Standard Compliant	**Certified**	GSTC Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Awards are branded as 'QualityCoast' or 'Green Destinations Awards'; as benchmark in the process towards destination Certification.

If the compliance to the mandatory criteria is approaching 100%, the destination qualifies for “Green Destinations Certified”. Applicants for this recognition undergo a rigorous audit and are required to have solid evidence of climpliance to all criteria. *GD Certified* destinations are entitled to carry the logo of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) – the UN body that oversees and accredits sustainability certification in the tourism sector.

Assessment Results and Follow-up

Green Destinations issues this Report with an overview of criteria scores and with suggestions for further improvement. Successful applicants will be featured on our websites. No public reference will be made about unsuccessful applications.

Successful applicants become Awarded Destinations

Applicants who achieve Bronze or higher Award levels will be invited to one of our international events, where they will receive the Award Certificate, and an Award Flag. Awarded Destinations can order extra flags and banners, which can be displayed throughout the destination's territory during the validity of their Award (24 months) or Certified (36 months) status.

Prior to the lapsing of their Award or Certification validity period, applicants will be encouraged to submit an application for Renewal. The assessment of the new application will take into consideration the coherence between the improvements indicated in the previous one and the integration of the suggestions and the recommendations made by the Auditor.

Appeals & Complaints

An appeal is a formal, written request by an applicant that deals with a formal reconsideration of an Award or certification decision, following receipt of their audit result or any further feedback provided regarding post-audit improvement evidence, made by Green Destinations.

A complaint is a formal written communication of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by Applicants, Auditors, and other relevant stakeholders, relating to the activities of Green Destinations staff, contractors, auditors, or Members holding a Green Destinations Award or Certification where a response from Green Destinations is expected.

Applicants can make Appeals within 90 days after any award or certification decision made by Green Destinations, following communication of the audit result and during the initial period granted for the submission of improvements, which is within 90 days of the communication. Green Destinations reserves the right to refuse any appeal which is not submitted within this timescale.

Appeals and complaints are requested to be sent by email to contact@greendestinations.org, marking the subject line with 'Appeal' or 'Complaint'.

It is not possible to make any appeals by telephone, fax or other communication channels.

Appeals and Complaints will be reviewed by an Appeals & Complaints Panel that will be appointed by the Programme Manager and consist of a Senior Auditor and two members of the GD Appeals & Complaints Committee with sustainable tourism and certification experience.

2. Evaluation and audit process: Desk Audit

The pre-certification ***Awards*** are issued for periods of two years; require an on-site audit every 4 years; and a desk-audit every 2 years. ***Certification*** is valid for a period of 3 years and every 3-yearly audit will be on-site.
In this case, **Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit** received a **desk audit**.

Evaluation of the application of **Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit** started with the submission of a self-assessment on the online platform. The Green Destination Secretariat subsequently performed a ‘Technical Check’ to evaluate whether the self-assessment was complete; and has reported back to the Destination on any missing aspects. When the self-assessment was deemed sufficiently complete by the secretariat, the audit was ordered.

During the audit, information relevant to the audit objectives, scope and criteria, including information relating to interfaces between functions, activities and processes was collected and recorded by appropriate sampling. Verifiable information has been used as audit evidence. The audit evidence is based on samples of the documented information and information provided by staff members. Therefore there is an element of uncertainty in auditing, and those acting upon the audit conclusions should be aware of this uncertainty. All objective evidence is uploaded to, and contained in the online reporting and audit system.

The audit was performed in two phases. During the first step (digital verification), all documentation and documented proof such as procedures, policies, contracts, statistics, etc. provided by the destination were checked to confirm: existence and implementation of the sustainability management system; consistency in the implementation of policies and procedures; and compliance to the minimum required by the Green Destinations Standard. The auditor prepared a list of remarks for any inconsistencies, insufficiently documented compliance or other doubts.

Based on the Desk Audit, the auditor has drawn up his/her verdict on criteria compliance (non-compliant, partially compliant or fully compliant) and indicator performance; which was finally presented as 'recommendation' to the Certification Committee. The Committee has reviewed the auditor recommendations and made the final decision on criteria compliance and indicator performance.

Confidentiality

Unless required by law, the audit team, the Committee and those responsible for managing the audit program will not disclose the contents of documents, any other information obtained during the audit, or the audit report, to any other party without the explicit approval of the audit client. If disclosure of the contents of an audit document is required, the audited client will be informed as soon as possible.

3. QualityCoast & Green Destinations Awards

QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awards are labels indicating achievement levels against the **Green Destinations Standard.** QualityCoast Awards were initiated in 2007 by the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) as program to measure the success of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) for coastal communities, towns and islands.

In 2016, the successful QualityCoast sustainability assessment methodology was made available to non-coastal destinations through the **Green Destinations Standard** which received 'Recognised' status by the UN body for sustainable tourism – the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) for adhering to globally agreed standards for sustainable destination management. In 2017 QualityCoast became part of Green Destinations' Assessment & Certification Programme, which in 2018 received 'Accredited' status by the GSTC for adhering to procedures for sustainability certification. In the same year, the **'Green Destinations Award'** was launched: equivalent to the QualityCoast Award but applicable to non-coastal destinations.

The importance of QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awards for tourism sustainability

Participation of destination management organisations in the Award program improves their awareness performance and achievements in an international context. The comparison with other awarded destinations provides the community with a good picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The assessment and recommendations provide the local authority with guidance to be considered in an agenda for improvement.

QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awarded destinations join a network of like-minded communities and share their experiences and best practices in order to improve sustainability and social responsibility in tourism. Their performance in these fields is connected to international tourism marketing through certification under the supervision of the GSTC Accredited Green

Destinations Certification Body issuing the Awards.

Promotional benefits of participation in Green Destinations Awards & Certification Program

Green Destinations carries out marketing & communication of the Awarded destinations to promote them as the most attractive destinations for visitors interested in nature and landscape, environment, and cultural identity; and to highlight their performance in tourism quality and sustainability. The marketing includes:

- invitation to present a Good Practice Story at yearly Global Green Destinations Days conferences
- social media publicity campaign
- dissemination in 'Kust&Zee gids' (200.000 for Dutch destinations only)
- promotion via the yearly Top 100 competition (Awarded destinations automatically pre-qualify for Top 100 selection - www.greendestinations.org/top100)
- newsletters
- a page on www.goodtravel.guide - a Green Destinations affiliate platform to promote sustainable destinations and committed businesses to consumers

The destination's own international tourism marketing can profit from the status of QualityCoast or Green Destinations Awarded destination. Experience in several countries learns that this will continue to generate media publicity nationally and internationally. Sustainability-based marketing efforts will increase the "green profile" of the destination both externally and internally and this will help to mainstream sustainability on local policy and decision making. Contact certification@greendestinations.org for promotional materials such as flags, banners, high-resolution logos, imagery etc.

"QualityCoast" is registered by Coastal & Marine Union - EUCC as a European Union trademark; the use of the name is restricted under European law. However, QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awards are open for applications from all continents.

4. Audit details

General

Name destination	Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit
Lead auditor name	Anna Boneta
Additional auditors	-
Date(s) onsite audit	
Scope of the certification	Green Destinations / Quality Coast Awards
Scope of the audit	The municipality of Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit situated in the county of Baix Empordà, Girona (Spain)
Audit result	Gold

Locations visited

Name	Location	Date

Persons met / consulted

Name	Position	Date

5. Audit results

The audit and evaluation have generated the following results.

The **Overall Scores** are generated by the simple average of the scores on each of the 6 themes.

The Award level is defined by the **Total Overall Score:** >5.9 = **Bronze**; >6.9= **Silver**; >7.9= **Gold**; >8.9 = **Platinum**

Award Scores	
Destination Management	7.0
Nature & Landscape	9.3
Environment & Climate	7.9
Culture & Tradition	9.2
Social Well-being	9.0
Business & hospitality	8.9
Total	**8.6**

Total	8.6
Award level	Gold Award
“GSTC Certified” Compliance level*	54.4%

*The “GSTC Certified Compliance level" indicates how many of the mandatory criteria from the Green Destinations Standard are fully complied with, and thereby indicates how far the destination is from full “ GSTC Certified” level. “Certified” destinations are committed to full compliance to the Green Destinations Standard compulsory criteria, and will receive worldwide recognition through the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) – the UN body that has accredited the Green Destinations Certification Program.

Green Destinations Standard Scores

The overview below indicates compliance to the Green Destinations policy standard.

- Green: # compliant criteria
- Orange: # partially compliant criteria
- Red: # non-compliant criteria
- Grey: # non-audited criteria (e.g. optional or N/A)

Theme	Criteria	Achievements
1. Gestión del destino	20	10 / 6 / 4
2. Naturaleza y paisaje	8	6 / 2
3. Medio ambiente y clima	20	9 / 8 / 3
4. Cultura y tradición	6	5 / 1
5. Bienestar social	18	16 / 2
6. Negocios y Comunicación	12	9 / 3

6. Remarks & non compliances

This section lists remarks that have been formulated by the auditor and Certification Committee for specific criteria. Criteria without remarks are not included in this section.

Remarks can be of the following types:

- Remarks to 'compliant' criteria
  - Positive remark recognising particular best practice performance
  - Criteria compliance approved but additional information (evidence) will be required upon award renewal

- Remarks to 'partially compliant' or 'non-compliant' criteria:
  - Recommendation to improve in the short term: aspects that are not in order or in place; but can be solved or improved with limited efforts
  - Recommendation to improve in the mid-term: aspects that require more thorough action to improve on and should be considered of high importance for the next application in 24 months

To qualify for "Green Destinations Certified" only mandatory criteria that are not yet compliant should be addressed. Improving non-compliant criteria will improve award level, but not the GD Certification compliance percentage.

Please note that the indicated deadlines for completion are suggestions in order to assist planning ahead for the next Award renewal.

✓ Approved ✓R Partial compliance ✗ Non compliance

1. Gestión del destino		
Gestión del destino		
1.1. Coordinador de sostenibilidad	✓R	Information for section b) is available in section a). It should be moved to b). Information for section c) is missing. A job description of Marta Vilavedra's position should be exposed, indicating her tasks as Sustainability Coordinator (see Guidance). *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2021*
1.2. Management structure	✓R	For section a), the organigram should include the names of the team members. The organigrams provided in the document "Torroella de Montgrí y l'Estartit: Comprometidos con la Calidad, la

		Sostenibilidad y la Cultura." (pg. 14 and 15) and available in criterion 1.7, would comply with this criterion. For section b), even if it is explained that the organisation works following sustainability indicators marked by quality systems, no sustainability policy or guideline has been found in the uploaded document. For next audit, please provide an Internal sustainability policy or report. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
1.4. Stakeholder involvement (prev. Tourism sector involvement)	✓	During the last audit it was informed that 23 business were undergoing the adhesion process to CETS phase II. It would be interesting to update this number for every GD audit.
Gestión del destino		
1.5. Inventario de activos de destino	✓R	The provided document is quite complete, but more information referring to the sensitiveness of each asset could be provided. As noted in the previous audit and technical check, it is highly recommended using the combined Inventory & Tourism Impact Assessment template provided. It allows creating a more structured inventory of the destination resources, attractions and assets. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.6. Tourism Impact Assessment	✓R	The results of the visitor monitoring mentioned in the previous audit have been provided, but no impact analysis or management actions have been undertaken (or at least, not explained in this report). Further explanations and examples are needed. One of the provided documents is a touristic demand analysis, but no impacts on touristic attractions or assets are analysed. This document complies with criterion 6.17 but not for this one. As noted in the last audit, it is highly recommended using the combined Inventory & Tourism Impact Assessment template provided. It allows identifying positive and negative

		impacts of tourism on destination assets and seeing and checking more clearly future advances. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.7. Política o estrategia de gestión de destinos	✓	The provided document is not exactly a Tourism Strategy, but that combined with the "Estrategia de turismo sostenible 2021-2025" provided in criterion 1.8 would comply with this criterion. To maintain compliance, for next audit please provide update of the strategy indicators and progress. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.8. Tourism action plan	✓	Very complete action plan. Only missing information on how it is made available to the public (section b). *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2021*
Gestión del destino		
1.10. Visitor monitoring	–	The document "Anàlisi de la demanda turística de Torroella de Montgrí – l'Estartit" should be mentioned in section a) and made publicly available in the website (and provide weblink in section b). The section b) weblink refers to an inhabitant satisfaction report, but this criterion is about visitor monitoring, not inhabitants. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.11. Visitor satisfaction	✓R	Indicator 2 is 2019, not 2020 ("Anàlisi de la demanda turística de Torroella de Montgrí – l'Estartit"). In section a), a public weblink to the document "Anàlisi de la demanda turística de Torroella de Montgrí – l'Estartit" should be added. In section b), no explanation on how action has been taken in response to monitoring results has been provided. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
1.12. Gestión de la afluencia de los visitantes (antes: Estacionalidad)	✓	Main measures to manage visitors are focused on avoiding seasonality. Even if

		there is not a specific strategy to manage visitors, the examples provided are considered sufficient to comply with this criterion. The documents "Anàlisi de la demanda turística de Torroella de Montgrí – l'Estartit" and the results of the visitor counter analysis have very useful data but no further analysis has been performed for planning actions towards visitor management. For next audit, it is expected that, based on the visitor pressure quantified by the mentioned analysis, it should be explained how this data is used to plan visitor management measures, not only in time but in space too. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.14. Comportamiento de los visitantes en lugares sensibles	✓	Visitor behaviour issues have not been described, although a wide range of guidelines for visitor behaviour have been provided. For future audits, behaviour issues should be explained, along with the assessment of the effectiveness of the guidelines if possible. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
Gestión del destino		
1.15. Sustainability Indicators & Monitoring (prev 'Indicators')	✓R	Uploaded documents do not match with this criterion. Indicator reports should be uploaded instead of linked. It could be mentioned that the "Torroella de Montgrí y l'Estartit: Comprometidos con la Calidad, la Sostenibilidad y la Cultura." includes indicators for each action of the plan. For next audit, examples and explanations should be provided on how indicators are used to plan new actions, how the destination responds to the monitoring results. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.16. Review and evaluation	✗	More information on how targets of the policy and action plan have been evaluated should be added. It is not clear how (or if) this monitoring is performed. As noted in the

		previous audit, no evaluation of the 2018 tourism policy have been provided either. As the "Torroella de Montgrí y l'Estartit: Comprometidos con la Calidad, la Sostenibilidad y la Cultura." includes indicators for each action of the plan, for next audit, updates on these indicators should be reported. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.18. Complaints against certification	✗	It is not explained how internal complaints are recorded and dealt with. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
Gestión del destino		
1.19. Ethical code & Corruption	✗	As per the past audit, the ethical code of the destinations should be added and explained how is it communicated to the staff and how that staff is committed to reinforce the ethical code (e.g. pledge signature). *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
1.20. Fair competition & responsible public procurement	✗	PDF upload is missing but the provided link is considered sufficient for compliance of section a). For section b), explanation on how the national and local policies are implemented and enforced is missing, along with examples. For next audit, please explain how the destination enforces procurement policy that includes both integrity and sustainability elements. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
2. Naturaleza y paisaje		
Naturaleza y paisaje		
2.2. Impacto del turismo en la naturaleza	✓R	For section b), it should be explained which specific measures are undertaken for optimising tourism impacts on nature, based on the monitored data mentioned in section a). Also, the impacts from most important/prominent forms of tourism should be described. *Deadline for completion: 15 September,*

		2023
2.4. Invasive alien (exotic) species	✓	Link provided in section b) does not work. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2021*
Naturaleza y paisaje		
2.8. Bienestar de los animales en cautividad	✓R	Horse riding activities are no longer offered in the destination web. Nevertheless, the Parc de les Aus is still active and has captive animals for touristic purposes, some of them, exotic. More information on this facility is required for compliance (suitability of the facilities, ethical code, staff formation, etc.) *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
3. Medio ambiente y clima		
Medio ambiente y clima		
3.2. Contaminación lumínica	✓R	Main sources and impacts of light pollution are not explained. Light sources (especially related to tourism) should be identified. The uploaded document "Pla per a l'energia sostenible" is from 2013 and does not address light pollution issues. The provided map provides information on light protection areas but not actual light pollution. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
Medio ambiente y clima		
3.4. Water sourcing	✓	For the next audit, results of the study "Girona, a region sensitive to water (2018-2021)" should be presented. *Deadline for completion: 15 October, 2023*
3.6. Water quality monitoring & response	✓	No information has been provided on the system in place aimed at responding to water quality issues. No issues have been detected so far, but this system should be explained for next audit. *Deadline for completion: 15 August, 2023*
3.7. Tratamiento de aguas residuales	✓	No challenges explained. Doesn't seem to be a problem (Indicator Report value is 100%). To maintain compliance, for next audit please provide information on the

		waste water tratment of the rural areas and the 3% of water that is not treated. The septic tank policy and licencing should be explained. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
Medio ambiente y clima		
3.8. Reducción de residuos sólidos	✓	Page 27 of the docuement "PLA COMARCAL DE PREVENCIÓ DE RESIDUS" includes quantitative waste reduction goals. These should be mentioned in section a). For next audit, more information on how efforts are put to reduce food waste in the tourism sector should be given.
3.9. Separación y reciclaje de residuos	✓	There are not recycling goals set because goals are focused on waste reduction instead of recycling. Recycling monitoring, facilities and process is explained. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
3.10. Waste disposal	✓R	It is not clear which is the final disposal of residual waste. The provided link to Urbaser webpage does not include this information. Information, goals and indicators on the Solius dumping site should be provided. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
3.11. Littering	✗	Littering refers to the incorrect disposal of waste at an unsuitable location. This has not been addressed in the information provided. More information should be provided on measures taken in the destination to address littering among both locals and visitors, with a focus on public spaces and areas popular with tourists. These measures should include efforts towards reducing the occurrence of littering behaviour as well as clean-up actions (for instance). *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
Medio ambiente y clima		
3.12. GHG emissions and climate	✓R	The uploaded document includes

change mitigation		quantitative reduction GHG emission goals, but these are from 2013. No information on GHG emissions monitoring has been provided nor progress is presented. The Spanish Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) should be mentioned and new GHG emission reduction goals should be set based on the NDC. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
3.13. Reducción de las emisiones del transporte por viajes	✓R	The "Pla d'acció per a l'energia sostenible" sets a goal for internal mobility GHG emissions reduction (2.252,7 tn CO2). Information on how visitors move around the destination, should be given and which initiatives have the destination taken to reduce emissions (shared electric cars, motos or bikes rental offer, for instance). *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
3.14. Low-impact mobility	✓R	Please update information on the traffic calming (pacification) of the harbour area, as noted in previous audit. For next audit, please update the status of the 2.1 activity of the "Planes de sostenibilidad en destinos" document. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
3.15. Public Transportation	✓R	Please update how conversation with the Generalitat are going and if any progress has been made. Are the provided bus lines new? As noted in the previous audit: Public transport is an issue in the destination. There is even a citizen initiative that collects signatures for the inclusion of the Baix Empordà to the Territorial Movility Authority (ATM). This inclusion would represent the adoption of an Intagrated Fare System, higher frequencies, etc. In an area as diverse and spread as the Baix Emporda, it is a high priority to harmonise public transport. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
3.16. Reducir el consumo de energía	✓R	Same comment from last audit. No goals

		have been set. The "Pla de Sostenbilitat turística" should be uploaded when avilable. Measures should focus on reducing energy consumption including quantitative goals and monitoring. The mentioned initiatives are about reducing GHG emissions, not energy consumption. Please explain what is being done to reduce energy consumption and how visitors **and residents** are encouraged. Nevertheless, the adhesion of touristic companies to the CETS, entails the reduction of energy consumption although it is not explicitly encouraged. Measures taken by the certified business to encourage energy use reduction to visitors could be mentioned. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
3.17. Energía renovable	✓R	The uploaded document does not include renewable energy production goals and still, the plan is from 2013. No information on renewable energy production monitoring has been provided nor progress is presented. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
4. Cultura y tradición		
Cultura y tradición		
4.5. Respecting authenticity	✓	Indicator 1 is missing *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2021*
5. Bienestar social		
Bienestar social		
5.11. Monitoring economic impacts	✓	ETIS indicators are missing; and not all data from the criteria is included in the report data (e.g. investment data, revenue per available room)
5.12. Apoyo a los empresarios locales	✓	The destination interest in adhering touristic companies to the CETS, entails its supporting.
5.14. Promoting local employment in tourism	✓R	Indicator 1 is not completed. Local employment has not been addressed in the information provided. How the destination

		promotes employment in tourism by consulting local business should be explained, along with trainings provided in this matter. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
Bienestar social		
5.15. Avoiding overtourism	✓R	The provided link does not work. The latest ETIS results should be uploaded, along with a brief mention of the main indicator results regarding overtourism. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
5.16. Explotación de la propiedad	✓	Sections b) and c) are empty, but information for b) is provided in section a). Some relevant developments and trends monitoring information is missing (section c). Short-term rental houses regulation has been uploaded, responding to the past audit's remark. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2021*
6. Negocios y Comunicación		
Negocios y Comunicación		
6.2. Estándares de sostenibilidad	✓R	For full compliance, destinations are required to promote GSTC-consistent schemes. From the answer it is unclear how the mentioned schemes are consistent with GSTC-industry standard.
6.4. Water consumption (enterprises)	✓R	Indicator 1 in not completed. As Promoting initiatives like the CETS certification among local business entails the reduction of water consumption and many other sustainability measures in order to fit in the CETS criteria. It is advised to upload the CETS criteria that certified business need to comply with. During the last audit, it was required to explain how enterprises are encouraged towards, and informed about, reducing and reporting water consumption for compliance. This information has not been provided. It is recommended to issue some kind of manual to guide and give advise to enterprises on

		how to become more sustainable (including best practices among water use reduction). Also, please upload evidence of the pricing structure mentioned. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
6.5. Solid waste (enterprises)	✓	The destination has perfectly provided information and resources to effectively reduce and recycle solid waste, as recommended during the past audit.
6.6. Energy consumption (enterprises)	✓	Promoting initiatives like the CETS certification among local business entails energy and GHG emissions reduction. It is advised to upload the CETS criteria that certified business need to comply with. The action "8.2.1 Incentivar a les empreses que disposen de certificació ambiental i/o energètica" is only applicable for already certified business. For next audit, specify how the destination encourages energy reduction for the rest of tourism-sector businesses. For the next audit, please provide information on the above-mentioned, how it has been monitored and the results obtained. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2022*
6.7. Greenhouse gas emissions (enterprises)	✓R	GHG emission compensation is not actually encouraged by the destination. Information on national and international carbon markets should be provided to businesses, along with tools to calculate their emissions. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
6.8. Equal and fair employment (enterprises)	✓	The destination should assure the application of the mentioned Decreto Ley. For next audit, please provide information on how this information is disseminated through the tourism-sector businesses. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*
6.9. Activity providers code of practice	✓	Only trained guides can perform activities in the Natural Park. To maintain compliance, for next audit please provide information

		on how tour guides are trained to apply a relevant code of practice and how tourism sector stakeholders are guided/informed about applying the code of practice. *Deadline for completion: 15 September, 2023*

7. Auditor recommendations and conclusions

Overall impression

Torroella's commitment towards sustainability is firm. And so it is proved by the destination's engagement with the Green Destination's Award & Certification Program that accomplishes its ***third*** year. Along with this certification, Torroella introduced in 2006, the ISO 9001 and ISO14001 standards and a voluntary European environmental management system, EMAS. Since 2014, the municipality participates in the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) and since 2016, in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

All these certifications show the true commitment towards sustainability of Torroella and its strong willingness to continue this path. Sustainability has become a fundamental pillar and common perspective for all the departments of the municipality, for the development of the tourism sector in the destination. This coordination is fundamental for a proper management and, in the case of Torroella, also the private sector shares this view.

The relationship with the private sector is noteworthy thanks to, in big part, the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism (CETS) that allows tourism business to meet sustainability criteria for the promotion of the Natural Park and to actively participate as key stakeholders in the decision-making concerning the touristic management of the Natural Park and, indirectly, the whole destination.

For its part, the protection of nature is strongly regulated due to the presence of the mentioned Natural Park Montgrí, Illes Medes and Baix Ter since 2010, and certified by the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism sine 2016. The presence of the Natural Park inevitably puts in value the territory and highly conscious of it, the destination has made huge efforts to preserve its landscape and contribute to the conservation of all natural areas.

Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit also features cultural and historical heritage, such as the Montgrí Castle, that traces the human and historical development of the territory. But not only tangible heritage is conserved, also intangible cultural assets are strongly promoted through the organisation and hosting of many music festivals of different types. These initiatives, attract a diverse public and helps diversify the destination touristic offer and the seasonal tourism.

The COVID-19 crisis has had severe consequences for the tourism sector, and Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit has not been an exception. Mobility restrictions have been present for a big part of 2020 and some continued during 2021. Also, internal work of the municipality has been lowered and this has been taken into consideration for the present evaluation.

Additional remarks

Following the recommendation from the last onsite audit, the destination has developed a waste reduction and management program for tourism-related businesses. This is a noteworthy initiative that is encouraged to be continued and extended to include energy and water consumption reductions by providing information and resources to implement green solutions that tailors the destination.

For the future, it is strongly recommended to continue involving more businesses in the CETS certification in order to consolidate the territory’s commitment to a sustainable tourism model. In this sense and, in order to comply with some of the theme 6 criteria, it is recommended to upload or describe the CETS requirements concerning water, energy and waste reduction for businesses.

In addition, Green Destinations' affiliate portal Good Travel Guide developed an easy and affordable scheme for businesses: the Good Travel Seal (https://goodtravel.guide/good-travel-seal). The scheme operates on the same online assessment platform as Green Destinations and can be managed by a destination coordinator. It also provides a 'white label' option; allowing the scheme to be branded specifically for the destination or region. Active participation in this scheme will contribute to compliance with almost 30 criteria of the Green Destinations Standard.

As a general remark, it has been noted that although, there are many indicator initiatives and studies to quantify and characterise visitors, no further analysis has been performed for planning actions towards visitor management. It is expected that, based on the visitor pressure quantified by these indicators, explanations are given on how this data is used to plan visitor management measures, not only in time but in space too.

Monitoring is the first step for managing and it is fundamental to pay attention and analyse the monitoring results in order to detect tourism impacts on natural, cultural or social assets.

Monitoring is also important for assessing if the set goals are going to be achieved. For instance, GHG emissions should be monitored yearly in order to assess if the mid- and long-term goals will be achieved and, plan new actions or reinforce existing ones, for correcting the trend, if needed. This is also applicable for monitoring if policy or action plan targets are being achieved.

Finally, it is noted that complete and public reporting about sustainability-related actions and performance is a challenge. The Good Travel Guide is facilitating this reporting

Auditor recommendation

It is recommended to carefully read the remarks left on each of the criteria in order to address and define the lines to be followed for the next Green Destination/Quality Coast Award evaluation to be carried out in 2 years' time.

It should be noted that many criteria that have been considered compliant (green) in this evaluation, may become partially compliant (orange) if the actions requested in the remarks are not carried out. In the same way, partially compliant criteria may become non-compliant (red) if no changes are detected within two years. These changes will result in a decrease of the overall assessment score and may result in a lower award level than this year.

As a summary, it is recommended to focus the next efforts especially in:

- Carry out an **analysis of the impacts of tourism** on nature, culture and society in Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit. Identifying these impacts will be the basis for future management (it is recommended to use the template provided by GD).
- **Monitor progress** of indicators and goals for all themes. In depth analysis of indicators over time is fundamental for proper management planning.
- Update information on **sustainable mobility** criteria.
- Use the **Inventory & Tourism Impact Assessment template**
- Use the **Action Plan tool** provided in the GD platform to create an action plan that includes the measures that will have to be developed during the next two years.

More detailed information has been provided on each of the criteria.

Signature

The report was electronically signed within the Green Destinations online system.

Josep Capella, Sustainability coordinator, signed on 04 October, 2021

-, Green Destinations auditor, signed on 01 October, 2021