

## “CST”, A TRADEMARK WITH BACKING AND CREDIBILITY

The National Accreditation Commission of the “CST”, made up of members from the academic sector, private enterprise, public sector, and two international organizations, is the unit responsible for awarding the “CST” honor and for ensuring that the enterprises certified with the logotype fulfill the established requirements in such a way that both the tourist, as well as the wholesale agents, are certain that the enterprises certified with the “CST” effectively follow business management procedures that consider aspects relating to social responsibility, corporate business responsibility, or even more so, sustainability.

The National Accreditation Commission is made up of representatives from the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, Environment and Energy Ministry, National Biodiversity Institute, University of Costa Rica (UCR), Central American Business Administration Institute, National Tourism Chamber, and World Union for Nature Conservation.

## RECOGNITIONS RECEIVED BY THE “CST”

The “CST” has been recognized by the World Tourism Organization as “one of the programs that is changing the way tourism is conducted”, 2000.

In the Puebla Panama Plan, 2000, “CST” was considered as a line of action for going beyond the environmental protection or ecological tourism certification.

*“CST, 100% responsible tourism now and in the future.”*

“We are convinced that joint effort, far from fears of competition, unites and expands any effort, and more so when we talk about actions to consolidate the tourism product under real criteria related to what we should understand as sustainability. This effort will exalt Costa Rica, because every day we will be more, and we will be stronger by defining ourselves as a sustainable tourism destination.”

Ana Báez, *Tour Agencies Representative*

“...We are pleased to have obtained another ‘ecological leaf’ of Level 2, which repays us for our constant efforts to put into practice the directives and recommendations given to us in the past, with the purpose of being more friendly to the social and ecological environment in which we work as a tourism enterprise...”

Rolando Soto J., *Legal Representative for Hotel Casa Camarona*

*“Sustainable tourism is not only the response to the demand, but also an indispensable condition for competing successfully now and in the future.”*



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# A Symbol of Sustainable Tourism



Every time you see the trademark “CST” (Sustainable Tourism Certification) in a lodging establishment or tour agency, you will know that:

-  The enterprise avoids producing emissions, damage, and pollution.
-  It carries out conservation and natural risk management activities.
-  It adequately manages the waste that it produces.
-  It consumes natural, biodegradable products and recycles.
-  It has a program for saving water and electricity.
-  It encourages to get to know the country's natural wealth, protect it and take care of it.
-  It restricts the size of groups and promotes the principle of sustainability among its clients, wholesalers, and suppliers.
-  It offers its clients the opportunity to participate in conservation and community development initiatives.
-  It constantly trains its staff in quality and sustainable tourism topics.
-  It complies with regulations governing the tourism industry, specifically those regarding the environment, wildlife, archeological heritage, and social safety.

It promotes the country's traditions and customs, consumption of typical foods, and local handicrafts.

*“The ‘CST’ promotes actions which benefit us and help the country.”*

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CERTIFICATION (“CST”)

Sustainable tourism development is the balanced interaction between the appropriate use of our natural and cultural resources, improvement in the quality of life of local communities, and the economic success of this activity, which also contributes to our national development. This is possible in Costa Rica thanks to the SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CERTIFICATION (“CST”).

The “CST” trademark was developed by the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) for the purpose of turning the concept of sustainable tourism into something real and the only way to compete in this century. History has shown us that a quality destination is created not only by improving the condition of the industry's more visible factors, such as hotels, cuisine, and promotion, but also security, attractions, the environment, local communities, and training, among others. In this way, integral strengthening of the sector will permit healthy and balanced tourism in economic, social, and environmental areas, opening up new opportunities for gaining a competitive advantage that will allow the country to position itself among the direct agents: the tourists.

### WHAT IS THE “CST”?

It is a program that aims to classify and certify tourism enterprises according to the degree to which their operation conforms to a model of sustainability. The following basic areas are evaluated for this purpose:

#### **Physical-biological environment:**

Evaluates the interaction between the enterprise and the surrounding natural environment, especially with regard to the implementation of sustainability and environmental protection policies and programs, among others.

#### **Public services plant – Lodging Establishments:**

Aspects relating to the enterprise's systems and internal procedures regarding waste management and the use of technologies for saving electricity and water.

#### **Administration of the service – Tour Agencies:**

Includes the process through which the enterprise, taking into consideration all of the external and internal elements, designs a tourism product in accordance with market tendencies and the country's own characteristics, as well as those of the areas in which the product will be put into operation.

#### **Client:**

The actions carried out by the enterprise's management to encourage the client to participate in the implementation of its sustainability policies are evaluated.

#### **Socioeconomic environment:**

The establishment's identification and interaction with adjoining communities is evaluated, analyzing, for example, the degree to which the tourism enterprises respond to the growth and development of the region, through the generation of employment or the achievement of benefits in favor of the community as a whole.

### LEVELS OF SUSTAINABILITY

“CST” norms evaluate the enterprises under a system structured by defined levels on a scale from 1 to 5. The process of integration and sustainability that the enterprises face in each of the levels, results in a role model company in terms of sustainability.