

WTTC launches Hotel Sustainability Basics verification scheme

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has launched the Hotel Sustainability Basics (Basics). Announced at ITB Berlin, which takes place from 7 March to 9 March 2023, Basics will enable tourist accommodation providers from around the world, regardless of their size, to begin their sustainability journey.



Source: davidlee770924 via [Pixabay](#)

Basics, an industry-backed scheme, is a globally recognised set of criteria that all hotels should implement as a minimum to drive responsible and sustainable travel and tourism.

Basics emerged as a result of a clear demand from a group of influential global hotel brands and whilst there a great number of sustainability initiatives, Basics focuses on an achievable starting point.

It will encourage all accommodation providers to begin their sustainability journeys and meet the fundamental standards required of our sector.

Made up of 12 key criteria, the Basics is accessible to all hotels to implement. It serves as a stepping-stone to more complex sustainability schemes and achieves greater sustainability across the industry.

Basics have also been recognised by the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance as the starting point for a net-positive industry, which announced the latest version of the Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality.

Verification scheme

In order to ensure the validity of the programme, WTTC partnered with Green Key and SGS to develop a simple online verification system to allow hotels to provide evidence and ensure they are following the Basics.

The verification scheme enables hotels and other tourist accommodations to be officially verified for meeting eight of the 12 criteria in the first year and demonstrate their commitment to working toward all 12 of the criteria by year three.

Together, the criteria ensure the sector is eco-resilient and adaptive to the changing needs of the planet.

Hotel partners

Six major international hotel groups, collectively representing tens of thousands of sites from around the world have now joined Basics as inaugural partners. The first hotel groups include well-known brands such as Accor, Jin Jiang International, Louvre Hotels Group, Meliá Hotels International, Meininger, and Radisson Hotel Group.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, says: "We are incredibly proud to launch our Hotel Sustainability Basics and its verification scheme. The initiative is a response to the sector's need for a baseline for hotels and other tourist lodgings to introduce the exacting sustainability standards.

"Our research shows that most business owners are aware of their responsibility to the environment but need a step-by-step guide that is scientifically verifiable.

"It is a testament to the need for such a scheme that already thousands of hotel properties from around the world have committed to implement Basics, and from today can begin the verification process."

Inge Huijbrechts, global senior vice president of sustainability, security and corporate communications at Radisson Hotel Group says: "Hotel Sustainability Basics is filling a new and unanswered demand in the hotel industry: to provide a solid, trusted, and clear label for essential hotel sustainability. It's important we define responsible travel to preserve the planet and protect communities.

"With Hotel Sustainability Basics we offer the traveller a clear sustainable stay option for all types of hotels around the world.

"Radisson Hotel Group commits to implement Hotel Sustainability Basics in all its 1,100 hotels by 2025. We do this together with our shareholder Jin Jiang International, their affiliate Louvre Hotel Group and other major hotel groups and destinations around the world."

Green Lodgings Trend Report

WTTC carried out an extensive international benchmarking exercise through the Green Lodgings Trends Report, learning from 27,000 accommodation providers on how they are currently fairing against the 12 criteria.

Crucially, this benchmark will allow WTTC to track the progress of Basics over time.

Almost 100% of accommodation providers implement at least one initiative to reduce inequality and 96% have adopted linen

reuse programmes.

The report also showed many hoteliers are establishing sustainable practices but there is still a way to go for these to become common across the sector.

Two-thirds of those surveyed have already begun to eliminate the use of certain single-use plastics such as straws and implement other waste reduction initiatives.

Emerging practices were also highlighted in the report.

Almost half of the respondents have replaced small plastic toiletry bottles with bulk dispensers and a third now provide vegetarian options for every course in their food and beverage provision.

Sector partners

In addition to the Alliance, WTTC collaborated with other key leading sector figures including representatives from Greenview, WTTC's hotel members, Expedia, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and Trip.com Group, as well as the certification bodies SGS and Green Key.

Glenn Mandziuk, CEO of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance says: "We are incredibly proud to work alongside the World Travel & Tourism Council to launch the Hotel Sustainability Basics. Basics is a key part of the Alliance's Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality which sets ambitious targets to create a prosperous and responsible global hospitality sector that gives back to the destination more than it takes.

"Net Positive Hospitality is a tremendous objective for us to achieve. Going beyond net zero and actually being contributory to the world's future is a bold ambition but one I believe that the sector can achieve."

Randy Durband, CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) says: "Hotels throughout the world need to march towards sustainability quickly but the first step can be the hardest.

"The WTTC Hotel Sustainability Basics provide an excellent way to understand and take the first steps. With 12 clear actions that map to the eight of the GSTC Industry Criteria, the Basics are indeed an essential part of the journey."

Jane Sun, Group CEO of Trip.com Group says: "Sustainability is a collective goal. As demand for sustainable options increases, Trip.com Group will deepen cooperation with our partners, including WTTC, and empower hotels globally to adopt the best sustainability practices."

Destination partners

A number of global tourism destinations have already recognised the strength of Hotel Sustainability Basics and demonstrated their commitment to ensuring their hotels implement the Basics.

Azerbaijan was the first destination partner to support the Basics, followed by other supporters such as Belize, Colombia, and Mauritius.

Florian Sengstschmid, CEO of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board says: "The Basics are an important add-on to Azerbaijan's sustainable tourism development strategy. We are committed to prioritising sustainability throughout the entire value chain and customer journey.

"We take pride in being a country partner of this initiative and pledge to continue our efforts in promoting responsible tourism practices. Our mission is to care for the country's intangible and tangible resources for future generations to enjoy, and a tourism industry, that benefits both visitors and hosts alike."

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