

# COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES

A brief report on sustainable  
tourism practices

# TOURISME

AWARENESS  
AND BEHAVIOURAL  
CHANGES

Improving Sustainability of Tourism SMEs  
Through Knowledge Transfer, International  
Cooperation and Multi-Stakeholder



Co-funded by the COSME programme  
of the European Union



Sant'Anna



# INTRO DUCTION

Supported by the COSME programme of the European Union, this project revolves around the symbolics of windows. Not only they are associated with cars, trains and planes as well as also hotel rooms, but after all they represent opportunities, visions and inspirations- exactly what the TouriSME project wants to bring to SMEs operating in the field of tourism.



# AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES



There are several technical measures that tourism organizations, particularly hotels and similar accommodations, may undertake for energy conservation, water conservation, waste management, and so on. However, technical measures alone are insufficient to achieve these objectives at the maximum level. Put differently, technical solutions alone cannot develop sustainable tourism since psychological and behavioral traits often undermine the viability of technical solutions. In short, both the technical solutions and pro-environmental human behavior are essential for developing sustainable tourism.



# AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES



Several studies show that despite their declared positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism, only a few tourists act accordingly by buying responsible tourism products, choosing environmentally friendly transportation, or behaving responsibly towards destination communities. Hence, it is important for tourism organizations, particularly hotels and similar accommodations, to also pay attention

to how to raise sustainability awareness among tourists and/or how to positively influence the behavior of their guests.

Encouraging guests to explore attractions by public transport/ foot  
p. 5

Reuse of towels and bed linen  
p. 7

Training employees on sustainability practices  
p. 9

Encouraging guests to take away their leftover food  
p. 11



Encouraging guests to explore attractions by public transport/foot

Tourism sector activities:



Hotels and similar accommodations



Holiday and other short-stay accommodation



## Description of the initiative:

Sustainable mobility has become very important not only for residents but also for tourists to promote sustainable tourism. Hotels and travel agencies may contribute to the sustainable tourism agenda in several ways. For instance, hotels and travel agencies may encourage and guide guests on how to explore the city through public transport or bicycle or on foot.

Hotel GSH in Bornholm (Denmark) is building an extension which they claim will be the first carbon-negative building of Denmark. Carbon-negative buildings are designed to absorb more carbon than they consume during their lifetime. The structure was designed by architecture studio 3XN and its sister studio GXN. The new wing includes 24 rooms, a conference center, and a rooftop spa.

To achieve a carbon negative structure, the extension would be built using a cross-laminated timber structure, insulated with wood fibers and clad in wooden panels. The building will use a passive design to provide ventilation – the skylight windows and open areas will eliminate the need for mechanical cooling. The building components are also designed for reuse with reversible joints, to reduce waste. Waste will also be reduced by building furniture from the wood offcuts of construction and debris from local granite quarries. Solar energy will provide heating for the water, and renewable energy.

### More info:

[Yök Casa Cultura](#)

[Yök Casa Cultura  
Manifesto](#)





Reuse of towels and bed linen

Tourism sector activities:



Hotels and similar accommodations



Holiday and other short-stay accommodation

**Description  
of the  
initiative:**

Bedding and towel laundry lead to significant energy and water consumption. A typical room with 4 kg of laundry requires up to 60 liters of water. Beddings and towels are normally changed every day for guests staying several days. However, such a practice could be reduced to only 1 to 2 times a week or at guests' request.

Pro-environmental appeals to encourage guests to reuse towels and bed linen is often effective to limit their indirect water consumption. Literature shows that comprehensive message designs can increase towel reuse by 6.8% and bed linen reuse by 1.2%, compared to existing in-room messages. It is also noted that when encouraged, 70% of guests adhere positively to this approach.

There are many approaches to promote the reuse of towels and bed linen to guests in a way that excites them and motivates them to take part. The three most common techniques are providing facts that emphasise the reduced environmental impact you desire for the hotel, indicating the hotel's policy that guests must

comply with and telling guests everyone else is doing it, so they should too!

The reuse of towels and bed linen leads to water and energy savings, as well as reduces chemical use. If guests are convinced to use their towels and bed linen for two days rather than one day, resource use can be reduced by 50% in such hotels, representing a considerable potential to align environmental and economic benefits. Even though the laundry of bedding and towels only accounts for a small share of water use in hotels, laundry is also energy-intensive and requires the use of detergent, while towel and bed linen replacement is time-intensive. Both aspects represent additional cost factors, i.e. energy and detergent costs as well as staff working time. Empirical assessments show that the daily cost associated with providing fresh towels is estimated to be about \$1.50 per hotel room. Hotels can conserve water and save energy with guests' towel reuse activities while decreasing their detergent consumption and labor costs. It is also worth noting that 1 in 3 people globally does not have access to safe drinking water. This simple practice can conserve water for future generations.

**More info:**

[Yök Casa Cultura](#)

[Science Direct](#)

[Green Ideas for  
Tourism](#)







# Training employees on sustainability practices



Holiday and other short-stay accommodation

Tourism sector activities:



Hotels and similar accommodations



Travel agencies and tour operators

**Description  
of the  
initiative:**

Employees' efforts are key to the successful implementation of green practices. Therefore, hotels that are looking to implement sustainable or green practices should consider the knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and behavior of their employee. Attempting to implement new policies with employees who are unwilling to change their behavior could increase staff turnover and reduce the success of the programme. Selecting the right employees and providing in-depth training on environmental issues are thus important strategies for ecologically conscious hotels.

Although some employees appreciate and derive greater job satisfaction from working for environmentally-conscious organizations, there is concern among hotel managers that the introduction of environmental policies can "result in resistance from employees" who are unwilling to change their routines. They emphasize that this resistance to change is normal, as most people prefer to stick to what they call "habitual behavior".

Training employees on sustainability issues do not necessarily need to give ecological or chemical knowledge

about substances and liquids used in a hotel. Indeed, the hospitality industry does not recycle used materials, but rather participates in the process of preparation for recycling and cleaning, or in reducing the negative effects which appear in a hotel's daily operations. In this regard, it would be more important to elaborate a proper approach towards nature, that would eventually grow into a holistic attitude and become part of the hotel's corporate culture. Such training by default should include knowledge of the dangers and risks, inherent to any activity, combined with proactive behavior to avoid or minimize the negative impacts on all concerned parties – the hotel, the guests, nature, the destination, and other stakeholders.

**More info:**

[eHotelier](#)

[Next Tourism  
Generation](#)



Tourism sector activities:



Hotels and similar accommodations



Holiday and other short-stay accommodation

Encouraging guests to take away their leftover food



## Description of the initiative:

According to the UN, if food waste was its own country, it would be the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gas in the world, after the USA and China. On the other hand, 1 in every 7 people in the world goes to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children under the age of 5 die daily from hunger. Hence, food waste is a critical issue at the global level.

There are always times when guests are not able to finish all the food that they have ordered, and yet, more often than not, they perceived that it might be awkward asking the staff to pack up uneaten food, and indeed many luxury hotels do not even do so. In contrast, in developing countries such as India and Pakistan, it is a normal practice that guests may take home their leftover food.

Maison De Sushi and Yee Hwa in Qatar have adopted a stricter approach to tackle food waste. For every piece of food left after the meal is finished, guests may have to pay fines of \$1.40.

Fine Hotels & Suites in the Netherlands encourage guests to take food for their lunch from the breakfast buffet to decrease food waste.

### More info:

[Fine Hotels and Suites](#)

[Hotelier Middle East](#)



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This Compendium was based on a much more extensive one, with 100+ examples of good practices coming from across the world, existing in many different sectors and targeting various aspects of environmental management. The detailed Compendium publication can be found [here](#).

*The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Executive Agency for Small and*



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