

# MINI-GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE BEST PRACTICES

IN THE TOURIST ACCOMMODATION SECTOR



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The mini-guide to sustainable best practices in the tourism accomodation sector is offered by the Sector Dialogue on Tourism for Sustainable Development. It is a collection of best practices from a joint project implemented by the Sector Dialogue and the GIZ project 'Promotion of Sustainable Tourism in Tunisia'.

It serves to inform tourism businesses on how to implement sustainable resource management, improve waste recycling, as well as how to communicate this and rise awareness on both sides – staff and guests.



**Sector Dialogue Tourism**  
for Sustainable Development

For the increasing numbers of tourists who are eco-aware, sustainability and environmental responsibility have become a decisive factor when making travel choices. This is why there is now a growing preference for sustainable destinations.

It is therefore crucial for Tunisia's tourism sector to adopt a sustainable and environmentally responsible approach and to promote a distinct new image of the country as much more than a traditional sun, sea and sand destination. This requires the implementation of a series of measures, with those needed in the tourist accommodation industry being among the most important.

As part of the project Sector Dialogue on Tourism for Sustainable Development in Tunisia, we have collaborated with various partners in the industry, including 29 hotels, guest houses and table d'hôte establishments, to develop affordable sustainability solutions that are easy to implement.

Our aim in preparing this mini-guide is to leverage lessons learned from the initiative and capitalise on the experience gained. To this end, the mini-guide makes examples of best practices available to all those offering tourist accommodation so that, together, we can all work to achieve sustainable, environmentally responsible, high value added tourism.

José Fröhling

Head of Project

Promotion of Sustainable Tourism in Tunisia – GIZ

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SECTOR DIALOGUE  
ON TOURISM FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN  
TUNISIA

The Sector Dialogue on Tourism for Sustainable Development is a **multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP)** set up by representatives of the German and European tourism industry. Our mission is to harness the power of tourism to promote sustainable development in developing countries and emerging economies and in this way help to achieve the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the targets of the **Paris Agreement**.

Our members are representatives of the private sector, the civil society and the academic community – for example, travel companies, tourism associations, foundations and universities.

The Sector Dialogue participants chose Tunisia as one of the pilot countries for the design and implementation of innovative activities to promote sustainability. It is an important partner country in German cooperation and a popular destination for the German tourism market.

The aim of the project is to support Tunisia's tourist accommodation industry in strengthening its capacities to implement sustainability measures, with a view to positioning the country, in the long term, as a sustainable tourist destination meeting international standards.

Since December 2021, the project has been collaborating with 16 hotels and 13 small-scale alternative tourist accommodation providers. Training and practical workshops were organised on sustainability in specific areas (e.g. food wastage, the circular economy, and social norms). Various online discussion sessions were also held between Sector Dialogue participants and German tourism industry representatives from, among others, TUI and the German Travel Association (DRV).

The participating hotels and accommodation providers were able to identify their own micro-projects for improving sustainability, including composting, reducing food wastage, sorting waste, saving water and energy, using typical local products, and promoting community and environmental engagement. They received assistance for the practical implementation of these measures, including technical support and a total of EUR 60,000 in items purchased for the initiatives.

**SUSTAINABLE  
RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT**





# SAVING ENERGY

## Did you know?

# 8%

of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the tourism sector.

Source: Nature Climate Change

The rational use of energy in the tourist accommodation sector is a prerequisite for ensuring the transition to a sustainable and economically viable form of tourism.

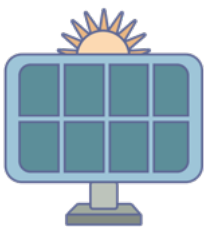
Taking into account global energy issues and public awareness, the tourism industry must adapt and devise measures for the responsible use of energy.

'We have just installed new LED lights to save energy. We plan to step up our efforts and involve our guests to continue this sustainability drive.'

Patrick Bourseaux  
Owner  
Auberge de Tamezret

## Best practices

- Invest in renewable energy by installing photovoltaic panels.



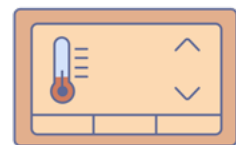
- Install motion sensors to limit the time that lights are on.

- Use lighting dimmers.

- Check that electrical equipment and devices (energy-saving switch, TV, refrigerator, etc.) are working properly.



- Fit room thermostats so that guests can adjust room temperature.



- Change the type of bedding used according to the season to avoid the systematic and excessive use of air conditioning.



# SAVING WATER

## Did you know?

**400** litres per day

This is the average amount of water used by a tourist in a hotel in Tunisia.

Source: Tourism and water use: Supply, demand, and security – An international review

Water consumption costs account for a significant proportion of a tourist accommodation establishment's water bill.

Water is an increasingly scarce resource in many countries and regions around the world, including Tunisia.

All tourist accommodation establishments must therefore take measures to ensure that water is used more efficiently and sustainably.

.....  
'Controlling water usage has become a priority for our establishment. To save water, we have fitted flow restrictors to taps in the rooms and in the kitchens, and we have introduced a process to monitor water usage.'  
.....

Wejden Ben Khalifa  
Hygienist  
Hôtel COOEE Président, Hammamet

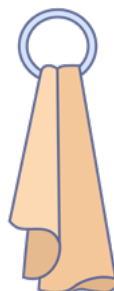
## Best practices

- When refurbishing, replace bathtubs with showers.



- Ensure flow restrictors and push-button taps are working properly.

- .....
- Give guests the option of reusing towels and sheets.



- Harvest rainwater that can be used for certain purposes, such as watering green areas.



- .....
- Monitor water usage in all departments (laundry, kitchens, green areas, etc.).
- .....

- .....
- Fit taps with low-flow aerators/jet regulators.
- .....



# REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE AND SINGLE-USE PLASTIC ITEMS

## Did you know?

**150** million tonnes per year

This is the amount of single-use plastic waste generated by the hotel industry worldwide.

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The use of plastics and single-use items is not yet regulated in the hotel industry worldwide. Nevertheless, some chains and establishments are already working to combat this type of waste by gradually adopting innovative measures to bring

about the transition to a more responsible and less costly waste management model, their ultimate aim being to achieve zero-waste operations.

## Best practices

- Place water dispensers in common areas and offer carafes of water in rooms.



- Stop using plastic cutlery, straws and cups.

- Develop formal partnerships with plastic recycling and waste management companies.

- Use locally sourced bathroom amenities made from natural materials.

- Preferably buy food products in bulk to avoid plastic packaging.

- Replace single-use toiletries with refillable soap, shower gel and shampoo dispensers.



- Provide non-essential guest amenities on request (shower cap, shaving kit, vanity set, etc.).

# WASTE RECYCLING



Did you know?

68%

of hotel waste is organic and comes mainly from catering operations.

Source: Tunisian National Agency for Energy Efficiency (ANME)

# REDUCING FOOD WASTE

Food wastage in the hotel industry is the result of food spoilage and edible food loss.

It is a significant cost burden and a critical problem for the sector’s sustainable development.

It can occur at any point along the food management chain, from supply to consumption.

‘Thanks to the weighing scales and the new monitoring process, we’ve seen a 23% reduction in the amount of food waste and savings of around 40,000 dinars [TND] in just two months.’

Aicha Laarif  
Head of Quality  
Sentido Bellevue Park, Sousse

## Best practices

- Preferably buy local, in-season produce.

- Put in place a system to monitor food supply, storage and use.

- Ascertain which dishes are less popular and take them off the menu.

- Calculate the cost of waste per kilogram per meal service (breakfast, lunch and dinner).

- Place waste separation bins in kitchens and dining areas.

- Reduce buffet replenishment in the last half hour.

- Weigh bread waste.










- Reduce the size of the plates used for buffets.

- Calculate the ratio of leftovers to the number of meals served.

# FOOD WASTE MONITORING TABLE

Record of dining room/restaurant food waste

Midday meal/evening meal

Day	Menu	Weight of waste bread (kg) (a)	Weight of plate waste (kg) (b)	Weight of leftovers (kg) (c)	Number of meals served (d)	Food waste in g per plate $[a+b+c] * 1000 / (d)$ TND
						



# COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING GREEN WASTE

## Did you know?

**3,7** million tonnes

of fermentable organic waste were generated in Tunisia in 2019.

Source: Tunisian National Waste Management Agency (ANGED)

More and more tourist accommodation establishments are adopting composting as a way to cut the cost of organic waste management.

Using this method, which is 100% natural and easy to implement, tourist establishments can create their own food and green waste management system.

Composting is one of the most efficient ways of managing organic waste from both an economic and environmental point of view.

## Best practices

- Provide special composting bins.



- Prepare a suitable site with the right conditions for producing compost.

- Identify the types of waste that are compostable and those that are not.

- Train staff in how to produce good-quality compost.

- Test the compost regularly and check its progress.



**COMMUNICATION  
AND AWARENESS**



# ENGAGING STAFF AND RAISING GUEST AWARENESS



## ENGAGING STAFF

Familiarise staff with the concept of sustainable tourism and encourage buy-in for the transition initiative.

Adopt a cross-cutting approach to raise awareness across all posts.

Turn employees into veritable ambassadors of the sustainability approach in their dealings with guests.

Train staff in how to use monitoring tools to track food waste throughout the chain.

Raise the awareness of housekeeping, maintenance and laundry staff about measures to save water and energy.

Provide on-the-job and continuous training for employee capacity development and reduced turnover.

Set up a fund for employees into which are paid the proceeds from the sale of waste oil, for example.



## RAISING GUEST AWARENESS

Opt for an entertaining approach to raising awareness using prompts in the form of games, quizzes, etc.

Listen to what guests have to say in order to take informed decisions.

Use digital communication tools: online booking, social networks, QR codes, virtual tours, etc.

Establish a smart reward system in which guests receive benefits or gifts for sustainable practices.

Display messages about best practices on screens in common areas.

Communicate specific messages about sustainability relevant to each area: saving water and energy in rooms, avoiding food waste in restaurants, etc.

Display automatic welcome messages on guest-room television screens that introduce the establishment's sustainability policy.



## CONCLUSION

The project Sector Dialogue on Tourism for Sustainable Development in Tunisia has supported its 29 participating tourist accommodation establishments in implementing effective, sustainable and affordable measures, thus demonstrating to other establishments in the sector that it is possible to set such a transition in motion without having to make heavy investments.

The Tunisian tourist accommodation sector has everything to gain from proposing sustainable solutions and reducing the use of resources. This initiative enables tourist accommodation establishments not only to make savings, freeing up funds that can be invested in other measures, but also to strengthen the circular economy and play an active part in development and in creating value and jobs at the local and regional level.

By embracing a culture of sustainability and proposing new and alternative tourism offerings, Tunisia will become a competitive tourist destination and attract tourists who are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainable and environmentally responsible development.

