

# Minimum standards for hotels



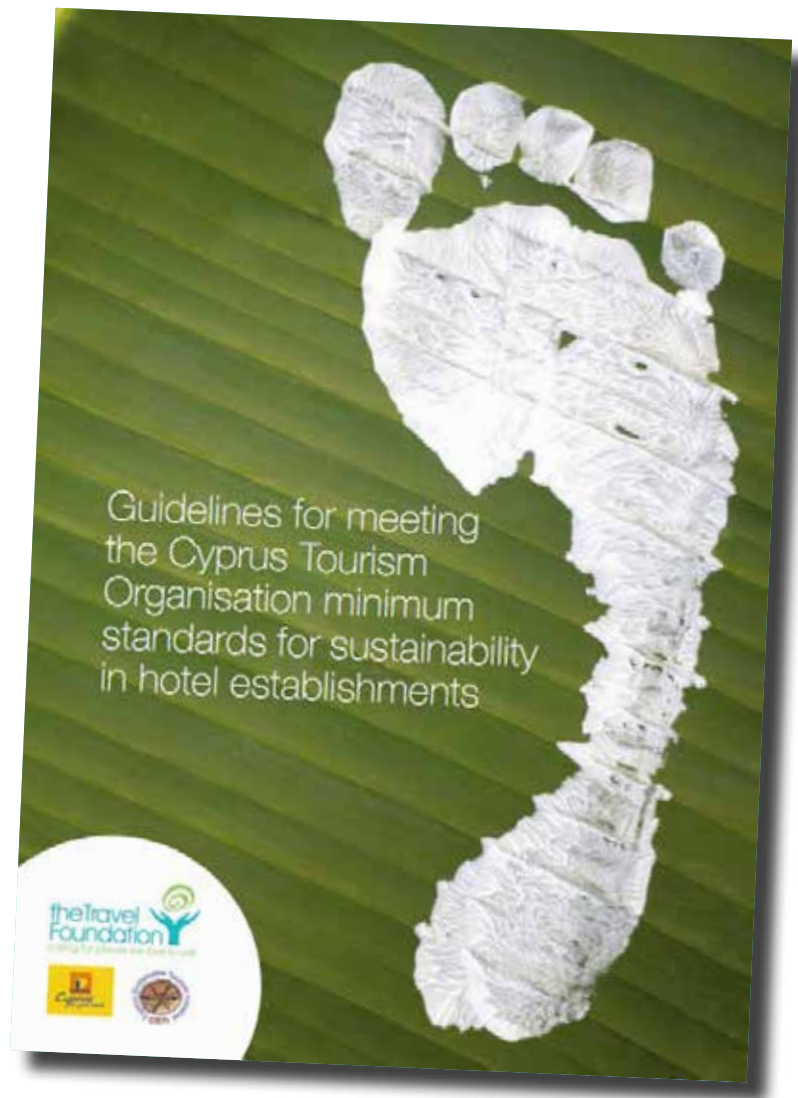
# We introduced mandatory sustainability standards into the quality criteria for Cyprus hotels

Tourism is vital to Cyprus, contributing over 10% to the country's GDP and providing tens of thousands of jobs. To support and develop its unique tourism product, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation entered into a partnership with the Travel Foundation in 2010.

Amongst a range of initiatives designed to support local communities and protect the environment through tourism, the partnership created an ambitious project to introduce minimum standards for sustainability into quality criteria for hotels.

In June 2014, the standards were officially incorporated as a mandatory requirement - a global first.

The new rules apply to all hotels at 3 star or above, plus 'A' class hotel apartments and tourist villages. The bed capacity of these hotels represents 76% of the total licensed bed capacity of the country.







## Our Approach

### Working with local organisations

Key to the successful adoption of the criteria was the involvement from the outset of the range of stakeholders who would benefit.

This included tour operators, hotel associations, the CTO, hotel inspectors, hotel managers and staff.

Importantly, through our links with international tour operators, we were able to raise awareness with hotel associations and hotels of the benefits of getting involved. This enabled us to incorporate the criteria into the existing quality standards.

**“Incorporating these minimum standards as a mandatory requirement is a first for any destination and is certainly putting Cyprus on the map as a destination taking sustainability seriously.”**

Declaration from Sunvil, ABTA, Cosmos, Thomas Cook and TUI



## Working in collaboration

The Travel Foundation developed partnerships between several public and private sector organisations including:

**Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO)**

**Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)**

**TUI UK and Ireland**

**Thomas Cook**

**Sunvil**

**Cosmos**

**ABTA**

“Our five-year strategic partnership with the Travel Foundation has brought real benefits enabling us to become a leader in the field of sustainable tourism, benefiting our communities and environment and developing our unique tourism offer. Notably the 2014 introduction of minimum sustainability standards into the quality criteria for hotels was a very significant achievement, not just for Cyprus, but potentially also for the travel and tourism industry internationally.”

Annita Demetriades, Acting Director General  
Cyprus Tourism Organisation

# What we did

## Research

Our initial research included reviewing other destinations to find out what standards currently exist elsewhere in the world and what works. Finding no other destination that had mandatory standards, we then conducted a study of a selection of hotels, speaking to hotel managers and staff. This highlighted a range of levels of understanding and practical application of sustainability. However, we found that there was a strong appetite for new sustainability standards, as long as support was provided to the hotels. It was clear from our research that the standards needed to be simple, easy to apply and very practical.

## Creating the standards

We identified fifteen minimum standards, covering five areas:

- the integration of sustainability into business planning
- systems for measuring and minimising environmental impacts
- protecting human capital
- supporting local communities
- communicating sustainability to customers.

## Training

We created a new guide to help hoteliers comply with the standards and to support inspectors in the assessment process. The guide clearly set out what both hotels and inspectors were expected to do, and was distributed widely to hotels by the Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative and the CTO.

We then designed a training programme for staff and managers in hotels on how to meet the new standards, and delivered this to 118 hotels across Cyprus. We also trained 35 inspectors to enable them to regulate the scheme.



**“By implementing simple initiatives from the Minimum Sustainable Standards guidelines we have saved money, reduced energy and waste consumption, and enhanced our guests’ experience. We are really proud to announce that we have achieved 13.14% reductions in electricity consumption since our baseline year 2010. Sustainability is more than just looking after our natural environment. It is about considering the social and economic impact of what we do.”**

Vassos Kilanis, General Manager, Mediterranean Beach Hotel





## The Benefits

The creation of these new standards has enabled Cyprus to demonstrate clear leadership in sustainable tourism, and to reaffirm not just the ethical case, but also the business case for responsible tourism. These efforts have been recognised by the Responsible Tourism Awards 2015.

As a result of the training, hotels are now able to operate more sustainably, which will help them to reduce costs and meet customer expectations.

These standards will also enable hotels to meet the criteria for certification schemes such as Travelife, which is supported by UK tour operators.

The mandatory standards are a first step towards sustainability for the hotel industry in Cyprus.

We have recommended that the Cyprus Tourism Organisation now continue to raise awareness of the standards and measure their impact. For example, how they are helping hotels to reduce costs, the economic benefits to the local community from increased local-procurement and the benefit to the environment in reduced water-use and carbon emissions.

## In Numbers

15

MINIMUM STANDARDS



APPLIES TO ALL HOTELS OF 3  
STARS AND ABOVE

118

TRAINING PROGRAMME DELIVERED TO 118  
HOTELS ACROSS CYPRUS

76%

THE NEW STANDARDS  
APPLY TO 76% OF THE  
**TOTAL LICENSED BED  
CAPACITY OF CYPRUS**

35

INSPECTORS TRAINED

13%

REDUCTION IN ELECTRICITY  
CONSUMPTION ACHIEVED  
BY MEDITERRANEAN  
BEACH HOTEL



To find out how the Travel Foundation can help you develop tourism that is better for local people and the environment, contact us at

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