

Unit 204: Awareness of sustainability in the hospitality industry

Handout 1: Principles of sustainability in the hospitality industry

Sustainability means that natural ecosystems can continue to support life and provide resources to meet the needs of the present and future generations.



The hospitality industry is faced with a number of concerns when it comes to managing their waste, which can result in high costs and most of their materials being sent to landfill.

Waste reduction – as a guest-facing sector, the hospitality industry provides excellent opportunities to generate engagement with guests and support the reduction of waste. One of the most significant steps that can be taken is minimising waste by eliminating the use of single-use items, such as using paper rather than plastic straws for drinks.

Waste reuse/recycle – providing recycling bins in easily accessible places will allow guests to recycle. Other simple steps include asking guests to re-use towels in hotels.

Energy efficiency can be improved a number of ways:

- **Heat and air conditioning:** Implementing a building management system (BEMS) to control and monitor heating, ventilation and air conditioning.
- **Lights:** The installation of lights which are only active when a room card is inserted and using low wattage and LED lights.

Water reduction

- Many establishments (e.g. hotels) have a lot of water waste from guest showers, swimming pools and laundry. In restaurants, water is used for washing dishes and cleaning. Often, the machines used are not efficient at saving water.
- Many hotels have removed baths and only have showers with low-flow showerheads, or heat-recovery shower systems capturing and reusing energy via the boilers. In some large hotels, in-house water treatment facilities are used to

treat waste water and turn it back into clean water. Chemicals can also be used to treat water systems and clean facilities.

Food commodities sourcing

- This can be achieved by sourcing from sustainable initiatives within the supply chain such as **fair trade**. This means that the producer receives a guaranteed and fair price for their product, regardless of the price on the world market. The outcome is improved quality of life for producers, as well as long-term prospects for workers.

Environmentally friendly activities/operations

Sustainable initiatives include laws about not over-fishing certain fish species and sourcing farmed fish rather than wild. Others are purchasing seasonal products that are local, are fair trade, have recyclable packaging and reduce the impact of transporting them.

The supply of a sustainable food is affected by many different issues. The most common concern is the **carbon footprint** (emissions). These may include:

- Transporting food and other resources around and storing it, e.g. by using planes, vehicles and refrigerators. However, this activity also has the potential to make the food industry more efficient and cost-effective by providing food where and when it is required.
- The costs involved in shipping produce to meet consumer expectations of year-round supply.
- Consumer pressure to provide locally produced food supply reduce 'food miles'.
- Weather and changes in farming methods – changes in weather patterns has increased the number of droughts and flooding worldwide. This leads to farms having to generate a large proportion of the emissions from food production as a result of processes including deforestation, fertiliser production and use, and livestock management.

There are many ways in which hospitality organisations can reduce their carbon footprint such as:

- sourcing local produced commodities
- practicing sustainable purchasing
- effective waste management
- training and educating staff and guests
- monitoring energy consumption.