

The Sustainable Hotel Handbook

*With practical insights, tools and resources
for you and your team*



Planet

Your handbook for creating a green hotel.

MAp

THE SUSTAINABLE HOTEL

#04

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Planet
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*For everyone on the journey
to making this Planet a more purposeful
and hospitable place.*



FOREWORD

Pursuing the path to sustainability – together

Welcome to The Sustainable Hotel – and thank you for joining us on the journey to a better future!

We carefully and passionately crafted *The Sustainable Hotel Handbook: Planet* in order to MAP out the way for hoteliers to develop more sustainable hotels. Sustainable hotels that make a positive impact on People and Planet, while delivering sustainable success for you. Whether you've long been on the path to sustainability or are just starting out, this handbook is intended to empower you and get you going in the right direction.

Before we begin, we'd like to introduce ourselves. We are MAP, a creative-led hotel branding and marketing consultancy. We turn Purpose into performance, creating sustainable hotels and standout brands that do good, look good and sell well. As a Certified B Corporation based in Zurich, we work internationally, MApping out a better future for hotels, People and Planet.

Through our experience, we know that hoteliers such as yourself have the power to create real impact in this world and leave it better off for future generations. But, we also know that sustainability can be daunting – especially when it comes to hospitality. With so much information out there, where do you start? With such a complex

topic, what's the correct route for your hotel? With so much marketing noise, how do you avoid the trap of greenwashing?

In this handbook, we show you how to decrease your hotel's environmental footprint in order to improve the health of our Planet. To support you with this, we've filled it with practical guidance, tools and resources. If you haven't done so already, we recommend reading the separate Introduction handbook in order to get better acquainted with the handbook structure and important elements that will guide you to action.

As we embark on this journey together, it's important to always remember that, when it comes to sustainability, you should strive for progress not perfection. Achieving 100% sustainability, while an admirable goal, is simply not realistic and as the needs of our world change, the way we tackle those needs changes, too. What's most important is that you simply start the journey, and continue to learn, grow and improve along the way.

"Progress not perfection" was our guiding mantra when creating this handbook, knowing that it will never be perfect or finished. We knew it was needed for the hospitality industry, and we approached it with the goal to serve and empower hoteliers as well as do our part

for People and Planet. We too will continue to provide updated guidance and tackle new challenges and critical topics for the betterment of the industry and the world. That's our commitment.

It is our hope that you too will approach this journey with a deep commitment to learning, serving and making a real difference now and in the future.

Once again, thank you for joining us on the journey to impact! Let's build a more hospitable and purposeful Planet – together.

**#onwards
Your MAP team**



VISIT THE SUSTAINABLE HOTEL NOW

P.S.: We'd love to hear from you along the way! Please feel free to share your feedback, insights and comments with us at onwards@MAP-consultancy.com.

4.

PLANET



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“Sooner or later, we will have to recognise that the Earth has rights, too, to live without pollution. What mankind must know is that human beings cannot live without Mother Earth, but the planet can live without humans.”

EVO MORALES
(as cited in The Guardian, 2010)



4.1.

INTRODUCTION *to Planet*



**ACTING NOW IS THE
ONLY WAY TO HAVE A
FUTURE AT ALL.**

In this handbook, we address the 3rd P of sustainability: Planet, or environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is responsibly interacting with the Planet to maintain natural resources and avoid jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (UNEP, 2022).

Thinking of future generations, and even the normalcy of our own lives in the future, let's be frank: we have to get our sh*t together. The reality we face today is that we're consuming more of the Earth's resources than the Planet can regenerate. And after so many years of humans negatively impacting the earth's ecosystem, the consequences of human action are being noticed.

Therefore, addressing environmental sustainability is a critical and moral imperative – for all, but especially if your Purpose centres on protecting our Planet in any way.

As we learned in the People handbook, your hotel is a business from and for the People. And the truth is that People nowadays demand environmental action! Including

your guests. Most guests are aware that travelling hurts our Planet, that things need to change and that their choices have power.

Thus, they are increasingly on the hunt for eco hotels. With the rise of eco-focused OTAs, Google integrating eco-certified badges for profiles, and organisations like Prince Harry's [Travalyst](#) entering the market, you can proudly wave your sustainable flag at them and capture more of this conscious-consumer market. In addition to attracting more guests, you'll also profit from increased cost savings (oh, we will dive into that later!)

The benefits of environmental sustainability are significant. But let us emphasise once again: we all have to start taking care of our Planet NOW – not only because it's good for future Profit, but because that's the only way to have a future at all.

**So together, let's move
#stepbystep into a better future!**



“We are living on this planet as if we had another one to go to.”

TERRY SWEARINGEN
(as cited in ecobnb, n.d.)

DEFINITION

Planet Mapped out

From our consultancy work, we know that many hoteliers are aware of how closely connected their hotels are to their surrounding environments.

On one hand, every hospitality business depends on resources like energy, water, raw materials, etc. And when considering the scale of the hospitality industry, it's astounding to think about just how many resources are consumed in hotels all over the world – all at the same time!

On the other hand, often it's the Planet and its incredible nature that drives People to go on holiday in the first place: to relax on a pristine beach, hike in the tranquil mountains, discover unspoiled landscapes or gaze at the natural wonders of the world.

But while deeply interconnected and complex, this relationship between hotels and Planet is not a healthy one. After all, hotels create enormous negative impacts on the environment all along their lifecycles. As Legrand et al. (2016) argue, such lifecycle impacts include:

- Planning and building of the hotel
- Manufacturing of furniture and fixtures
- Sourcing, transport and use of fossil fuels for operating purposes
- Production and shipping of food
- Water use by employees and guests
- Transport of employees and guests to and from hotel
- Waste produced from operations
- Waste from destruction of the hotel at end of life cycle

Therefore, the ultimate goal of environmental sustainability is to minimise your hotel's environmental impact on the region and the Planet at large.

And how, you ask? By addressing the following key elements:

- Energy
- Waste
- Food
- Water

By tackling these elements holistically, hotels are able to limit their environmental impact and achieve carbon neutrality. But, there are more opportunities to be realised too.

For example, a significant amount of energy used by hotel operations is wasted, and wherever inefficiencies happen, we know underperformance does too. This leaves ample room for intelligent measures of energy efficiency and conservation through innovations and technologies.

And in the end, such upgrades lead to cost savings that not only pay for their initial implementation, but increase overall hotel profitability!

In other words, besides the fact that there's no Plan(et) B, there is even a strong business case for implementing environmentally-sustainable hotel management practices.