

A guide to sustainable hotel and venue certifications

Making sustainable business travel choices

As sustainability becomes an increasingly important part of corporate travel programmes, many hotels and venues are demonstrating their commitment through recognised environmental and social certifications. These accreditations provide independent assurance that a property is actively working to reduce its environmental impact, support local communities and operate responsibly.

With so many different certifications available, it can be difficult to understand what each one represents and which are most relevant when booking business travel.

This guide provides an overview of the most recognised sustainability certifications used across the UK hospitality industry, helping travellers and travel bookers make more informed decisions when selecting hotels and meeting venues.



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Why choose an accredited hotel or venue?

Choosing a hotel or venue with a recognised sustainability certification can help your organisation:

- Reduce environmental impacts of business travel

- Support suppliers with robust ESG policies and responsible business practices
- Encourage energy efficiency, waste reduction and water conservation
- Promote local communities and ethical supply chains
- Contribute towards wider organisational sustainability and Net Zero goals

While no single accreditation guarantees that a property is the "most sustainable", independent certifications provide confidence that environmental and social performance has been assessed against recognised standards.

The following explains some of the most common certifications you'll see when booking hotels and venues across the UK and internationally.

Sustainability certifications to look out for

ECOsmart

Best for: Hotels, meeting venues and serviced apartments



ECOsmart is a sustainability certification for hotels and meeting venues that assesses environmental and social performance across five key areas, resource optimisation, employee well-being & ethics, community & social impact, ethical supply chain, and industry-specific sustainability. Independently assessed and awarded at bronze, silver or gold level, ECOsmart helps businesses identify venues that are committed to responsible and sustainable operations.

Green Tourism

Best for: UK hotels, conference venues and visitor attractions



Green Tourism is one of the UK's most widely recognised sustainability certifications for the hospitality sector. It assesses organisations across environmental management, biodiversity, local community support, carbon reduction and responsible business practices. Businesses are awarded bronze, silver or gold status based on their performance and commitment to continuous improvement.

Green Key

Best for: Hotels, conference venues and tourism businesses



Green Key is an internationally recognised eco-label awarded to hotels and venues that meet strict environmental standards. Certified properties demonstrate best practice in areas such as energy and water conservation, waste management and sustainable operations, helping guests make more environmentally responsible travel choices with confidence.

B Corp Certified

Best for: Businesses demonstrating strong environmental and social responsibility



B Corp Certification recognises companies that meet high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability. Rather than focusing solely on environmental initiatives, B Corp assesses the overall impact a business has on its employees, customers, communities and the planet. As a certified B Corp business ourselves, we understand the importance of using business as a force for good and supporting suppliers that share these values.

ISO 14001

Best for: Organisations with robust environmental management systems



ISO 14001 is an internationally recognised standard for environmental management. It demonstrates that an organisation has processes in place to identify, manage and continually improve its environmental impact, including areas such as energy use, waste management and resource efficiency.

ISO 20121

Best for: Sustainable meetings and events



ISO 20121 is the international standard for sustainable event management. It helps venues and event organisers reduce environmental impact while considering social and economic factors, making it particularly relevant for conferences, meetings and large corporate events.

EcoVadis

Best for: Supplier sustainability and procurement



EcoVadis is a globally recognised sustainability ratings platform that assesses businesses across environmental performance, labour and human rights, ethics and sustainable procurement. Many organisations use EcoVadis ratings as part of their supplier selection and ESG due diligence processes.

EarthCheck

Best for: International hotels and tourism businesses



EarthCheck is a leading global certification programme for the travel and tourism industry. It independently verifies businesses against internationally recognised sustainability standards, covering areas such as carbon emissions, energy use, water conservation and community engagement, providing confidence that certified properties are committed to continual environmental improvement.



Contact us

If you have any questions about any of our accreditations or you would like to find out more, please reach out to our ESG Executive.

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