THE URGENCY OF CLIMATE ACTION

Awareness about the urgency of climate action is growing fast, both inside and outside the tourism and leisure sector. Many DMOs and businesses already prioritize climate action in their sustainability policies, but climate action is also an economic imperative. Cooling and heating are the main drivers of the rapidly rising gas and electricity bills, which are becoming a big concern. These bills are expected to go up rather than down in the near future.

OFFSETTING OR CLIMATE ACTION?

Certifications exist recognizing carbon neutrality (net zero). This is largely based on compensation of CO2-emissions through offsetting projects, which are considered too little – too late by many climate experts. Paying somebody else the real cost to offset your emissions (with no guarantee of success) will result in more cost, reducing your capacity to take the first climate action steps that will help you to tackle the fundamental issues.

We are starting a pilot project to help GTS-hotels with cost and footprint monitoring, to improve performance re: energy, and to save cost. Let us know when you are interested!

Progress and good performance can be measured, recognized, and certified with our Climate Action Standard.
The Climate Action Standard is built around four themes from the Good Travel Seal that are strongly related to climate change:

- **ENERGY & CLIMATE:** It is key to consider what energy is depending on fossil fuels, and how that is reduced and replaced by renewables. There is special attention to reaching a “climate neutral” situation (mitigation) and to measures to increase climate resilience (adaptation).

- **PURCHASING, SALES, F&B:** Energy efficiency is connected to local sourcing of products, vegetarian & vegan food, and reducing meat.

- **WASTE:** Creating, importing and disposing food and disposables costs energy; it will be important to always consider avoidance of single-use plastics and food waste.

- **POLLUTION:** Virtually any kind of air & light pollution is connected to energy use, which should be reduced where possible.

The Climate Action Standard consists of two main parts:

- **Assessment and Certification** on the basis of the Standard criteria;
- **Cost & Footprint Monitoring,** which will be developed in a number of local pilots until December 2022.
ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

STEP BY STEP

1. REPORTING
You will be invited to fill out the reporting for each criterion on our online platform and submit supporting documents. This will indicate to what extent your business implements measures for sustainable and responsible tourism.

2. ASSESSMENT
The information on the platform will then be assessed by a team of experts, who will evaluate whether the criteria were achieved by your business. You will also receive feedback on how to improve.

3. AUDIT
If over 70% compliance is reached, an independent auditor will verify your reporting by checking your business. The audit can be done online (via video call) or on-site.

4. CERTIFICATION
The findings of the audit are used to make a final certification decision. If the result is sufficient, you will be awarded the certificate and scorecard.
COST & FOOTPRINT MONITORING

One of the most important concerns for hotels is how to reduce the energy bills. This financial objective goes hand in hand with the objective of reducing the carbon footprint. A pilot project will run until early 2023, in the framework of the "Green Destinations Lab".

The aim of the first pilot is to develop an operational monitoring tool, which should be helpful for hotels to analyse their carbon footprint and their cost as well as to identify actions to make improvements. Relevant aspects of this first pilot will be:

- Analyse your energy use and carbon footprint (HCMI tool)
- Financial monitoring & projections towards 2025
- Options for energy reduction
- Options for renewable energy generation.

A limited number of medium sized and larger hotels in selected countries will be invited to participate in a survey on the above indicators. Green Destinations will process the results of the survey and provide participating businesses with a findings report, comparing participants. When requested, potentially relevant green solution providers will be identified and involved in advising participating businesses. On-site inspection will be possible in combination with an on-site certification audit for the Good Travel Scan or Seal, or the Climate Action Standard.

When a hotel chain or collection participates, all hotels will receive a report comparing their performance and opportunities with each other. Participating businesses will be anonymized to prevent any disclosure of sensitive information. Green Destinations will not publish any information related to any specific business unless with the explicit approval of the business.
PROGRAM BENEFITS

FOR ALL BUSINESS TYPES
The Climate Action Assessment & Certification is available to all businesses, also beyond leisure & tourism.

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR GTS AND GTS+ MEMBERS
Performance can be assessed for all businesses participating in GTS and GTS+, without an extra audit.

RECEIVE A CLIMATE PERFORMANCE CHART AND A CERTIFICATION
Participation in the Climate Action Standard provides a Climate Action Performance Chart and a certificate,

FIRST STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT
Can be used as the 1st step of engaging into the Good Travel Seal, the Good Planet Seal or GTS+, because almost all criteria of the Climate Action Standard are included in the Good Travel Seal Standard.