



# TIPS FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDUSTRY

## Purpose and Scope

The aim of these tips is to support tourism establishments in their quest for higher sustainability. These might also help in improving one's ESG credentials through:

- Leveraging on available incentives
- Reducing operational costs through improved resource efficiency
- Supporting Malta's tourism sector competitiveness through sustainability
- Creating competitive advantages through sustainable operations

## Target Audience

- Hotel and accommodation operators in Malta
- Restaurant and food service establishments
- Tour operators and activity providers
- Tourism facility managers
- Property developers in the tourism sector



# 1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

## 1.1 Smart HVAC Systems

### Actions:

- **Install programmable thermostats with occupancy sensors**
- **Implement zone-based climate control for different areas**
- **Regular maintenance and filter cleaning/replacement (monthly)**
- **Use variable speed drives on HVAC motors**

### Benefits:

- **Reduction in energy consumption**
- **Annual savings**
- **Improved guest comfort through consistent temperature control**
- **Extended equipment lifespan**

## 1.2 LED Lighting Systems



### Actions:

- **Replace all fluorescent bulbs with LED alternatives**
- **Install motion sensors in corridors, storage areas, and bathrooms**
- **Use daylight sensors for automatic dimming**
- **Implement timer controls for outdoor lighting**

### Benefits:

- **Reduction in lighting energy consumption**
- **Annual savings**
- **Reduced heat generation and cooling loads**

### 1.3 Renewable Energy Integration

#### Actions:

- **Install solar panels for hot water heating**
- **Consider solar photovoltaic systems for electricity generation**
- **Implement battery storage for peak demand management**
- **Apply for any available funding/schemes**

- **Benefits:**
- **Potential to offset annual electricity use, depending on system size.**
- **Solar water heating can reduce hot water energy demand**
- **Combined, these systems can lead to reduction in energy bills**
- **Enhanced brand reputation and marketing value**

### 1.4 Guest Room Energy Controls

#### Actions:

- **Install key card power systems that shut off non-essential power when guests leave**
- **Provide energy-efficient mini-fridges and appliances**
- **Use blackout curtains and thermal insulation**
- **Incentivise guests on energy-saving practices**

#### Benefits:

- **Reduction in guest room energy consumption**
- **Automatic energy savings without compromising guest experience**
- **Annual savings**

## 1.5 Building Insulation and Thermal Efficiency

### Actions:

- Insulate roofs, walls, floors, and windows comprehensively
- Seal gaps and cracks around windows and doors with draught strips
- Install door closers on internal doors to maintain temperature zones
- Consider air curtains or heat locks at main entrances
- Insulate pipes and fittings to prevent heat loss

### Benefits:

- Reduction in heating and cooling energy requirements
- Improved guest comfort through stable temperatures
- Reduced strain on HVAC systems extending equipment life
- Lower operational costs year-round

## 1.6 Equipment Maintenance and Optimization

### Actions:

- Implement annual professional inspection and maintenance schedules
- Upgrade old electric motors (eg. Use class IE5 with frequency regulation and/or inverter driven motors)
- Configure unused equipment to automatically switch to standby mode
- Introduce weather compensation control to optimise air-conditioning operations based on outdoor temperature
- Regular cleaning and maintenance of all equipment (eg. condensers, evaporators, oven, thermostats)

### Benefits:

- Improvement in equipment efficiency through proper maintenance
- Extended equipment lifespan reducing replacement costs
- Early detection of efficiency issues preventing major breakdowns
- Optimal energy consumption through smart equipment management

## 2. WATER MANAGEMENT

### 2.1 Low-Flow Fixtures and Fittings

#### Actions:

- Install low-flow showerheads
- Replace taps with aerators and flow restrictors
- Upgrade to dual-flush or low-flow flushing system
- Install pressure-reducing valves where water pressure exceeds 3 bar

#### Benefits:

- Reduction in water consumption
- Lower hot water heating costs
- Annual water bill reduction
- Maintained guest comfort with modern low-flow technology



### 2.2 Leak Detection and Prevention

#### Actions:

- Implement regular leak inspection schedules
- Install water sub-meters for different zones to identify usage patterns and detect anomalies
- Train staff and engage guests, to identify and report leaks immediately (e.g. continuous toilet flushing, dripping taps)
- Use smart water monitoring systems for real-time leak alerts and trend analysis where feasible

#### **Benefits:**

- **Prevention of water waste from undetected leaks**
- **Avoid costly water damage repairs (e.g. ceiling stains, dampness, mould)**
- **Immediate cost savings from fixing issues early (often with minimal parts and labour)**
- **Builds a culture of proactive maintenance and accountability among staff**

### **2.3 Greywater Reuse Systems**

#### **Actions:**

- **Install greywater collection from sinks and showers**
- **Use treated greywater for toilet flushing and irrigation**
- **Implement simple filtration systems for basic treatment**

#### **Benefits:**

- **Reduction in freshwater consumption**
- **Lower wastewater discharge volumes**
- **Reduced water costs**
- **Enhanced environmental credentials**

### **2.4 Irrigation Efficiency**

#### **Actions:**

- **Install drip irrigation systems for gardens and landscaping**
- **Use native and drought-resistant plant species**
- **Implement timer-controlled irrigation during cooler hours**
- **Collect rainwater for landscape irrigation**

#### **Benefits:**

- **Reduction in irrigation water use**
- **Once established, native and drought-resistant plant species need less water**
- **Lower landscape maintenance costs**
- **Improved plant health and appearance**
- **Reduced water dependency**

### **2.5 Water Storage and Risk Management**

#### **Actions:**

- **Install water storage systems for emergency supply**
- **Monitor water storage levels regularly**
- **Implement water risk assessment procedures**

## **3. WASTE REDUCTION**

### **3.1 Composting Programs**

#### **Actions:**

- **Establish on-site composting for food waste**
- **Train kitchen staff on proper food waste separation**

#### **Benefits:**

- **Food waste diverted from landfill through effective sorting and composting**
- **Reduced bin overflow, odour issues, and collection frequency**
- **Free compost for landscaping and edible gardens**
- **Improved sustainability credentials for eco-labels and guest-facing marketing**

### 3.2 Reusable Alternatives

#### Actions:

- **Replace single-use items with reusable alternatives**
- **Provide water stations instead of bottled water**
- **Use cloth napkins and towels instead of paper**
- **Implement reusable amenity dispensers**



#### Benefits:

- **Reduction in single-use plastic waste per room**
- **Cost savings on disposable items**
- **Enhanced guest experience with quality alternatives**
- **Positive environmental messaging**

### 3.3 Digital Transformation

#### Actions:

- **Implement digital menus and information displays**
- **Use mobile apps for guest services and information**
- **Digitize administrative processes and record-keeping**
- **Provide digital receipts and invoices**

#### Benefits:

- **Elimination of paper waste from menus and printed materials**
- **Enhanced guest experience with interactive content**
- **Improved operational efficiency**
- **Real-time update capability**

### 3.4 Comprehensive Waste Management

#### Actions:

- **Implement waste separation systems**
- **Track all waste streams by type and disposal method**

#### Benefits:

- **Reduction in waste disposal**
- **Enhanced sustainability reputation**

### 3.5 Waste Diversion Programs

#### Actions:

- **Implement preparation for reuse programs**
- **Establish recycling protocols**
- **Explore other recovery operations**
- **Track waste diverted from disposal**

### 3.6 Sustainable Materials and Circular Economy

#### Actions:

- **Source materials with renewable input content**
- **Implement circular economy principles**



## 4. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION AND DELIVERY

### Actions:

- Where possible, transition to electric vehicles for short-distance deliveries and transfers
- Provide electric scooter rentals for guests where possible
- Partner with suppliers who use electric delivery vehicles
- Install electric vehicle charging stations for guests and staff

### Benefits:

- Reduction in transport-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Lower fuel costs
- Enhanced guest experience with modern transportation options

## 5. CERTIFICATION AND EXTERNAL VALIDATION

### Actions:

- Pursue relevant sustainability certifications (e.g., GSTC, Green Key, and the EU Eco label) <https://mta.com.mt/eco-certification/>
- Engage third-party verification for sustainability claims
- Participate in sustainability rating systems
- Submit applications for sustainability awards and recognition

### Benefits:

- Independent validation of sustainability efforts
- Enhanced marketing value and differentiation
- Access to certification-specific benefits and networks
- Improved credibility with stakeholders

Success in implementing these tips requires commitment from management, engagement from staff, and communication with guests and stakeholders. However, the combination of cost savings, environmental benefits, and enhanced reputation makes this investment both financially and environmentally rewarding.

These tips may contribute towards the improvement of the ESG credentials of an enterprise. More information about ESGs in Malta can be found at: <https://esgplatform.gov.mt/>

Search for any available incentives through the website: [Opportunities – ESG https://esgplatform.gov.mt/opportunities/](https://esgplatform.gov.mt/opportunities/)



An interregional cooperation project for improving energy efficiency policies