

# WTTC: Sustainable Development and Hospitality

Making Travel & Tourism work for everyone requires the active engagement of all stakeholders – governments, businesses, local communities and the travelling public.



While governments have begun to understand the contribution that the industry can make to sustainable development, their record in adopting appropriate policies to encourage sustainable, economically viable tourism is mixed. For progress to be made, the Travel & Tourism private sector must play a central role.

Many Travel & Tourism companies have integrated environmental protection into their operations, mitigating their impact on fragile eco-systems and scarce resources.

Some companies are also addressing their economic, social and cultural impact on host communities, for example: working with public authorities to ensure that plans for tourism growth are compatible with development goals; actively promoting locally based tourism related businesses; training local people for employment in management positions; educating visitors about local conservation issues; and promoting culturally-sensitive tourism activities.

A wide variety of cross-industry programmes – such as global funds and foundations, eco-labels and certification schemes, codes of conduct, and awards – have been set up to further encourage sustainable Travel & Tourism company practices.

But, while these are important steps, they are not enough. The response of the Travel & Tourism industry is still piecemeal and change is relatively slow. One reason for this is the highly fragmented nature of the industry, the great majority of which consists of independent small and medium sized businesses scattered across the globe, often running on fragile operating margins.

The real challenge is to move beyond the current ad hoc approach, to evolve new patterns of Travel & Tourism business that integrate social, economic and environmental sustainability and to encourage a vast and fragmented industry to follow suit. In short, what is required is a greater leadership in corporate social responsibility within the Travel & Tourism industry.

The following companies are some of the major players in the field of corporate social responsibility within the hospitality industry.

## **ACCOR**

Accor is one of the world's largest travel, tourism and corporate services groups, with 147,000 associates operating in 140 countries.



As a global tourism company, Accor believes it has a responsibility to care for the local environment where it operates. To fulfill this commitment, Accor has integrated environmental stewardship into its corporate governance and reporting structure. An Environmental Charter and a senior-level Committee on Sustainable Development, headed by a member of the Management Board, guide environmental activities worldwide. Accor created a new position of manager for sustainable development to coordinate actions and programmes. Local initiatives are identified and carried out by the staff of individual operations, who are familiar with local issues – more than 800 projects have been initiated, in various fields, primarily humanitarian aid and protection of environmental and cultural heritage. Examples include the A Tree for a Child programme in Indonesia, aimed at helping to alleviate poverty while protecting the environment, and the restoration of the Red Chapel at Karnak in Egypt. The success of each project is measured using indicators developed by outside special agencies. Assessment has shown the projects to be effective and economically viable. Accor believes that these actions, together with its overall commitment to sustainable development, have both enhanced the global reputation of the group and increased customer demand for its brands.

## **MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL**

Marriott International is a leading worldwide hospitality company with operations in the U.S.A and 65 other countries.

Marriott actively supports communities around the world through its wide-ranging outreach programme, 'Spirit To Serve Our Communities'. Through this programme, Marriott encourages its hotels and employees to give resources, time and energy to activities that help solve critical needs. Staff involvement is central to all activities, and each year employees give tens of thousands of hours, and millions of dollars in cash and in-kind support, to help sick children, build houses, mentor students, assist in disaster recovery and clean up the environment. Activities are conducted in cooperation with

non-profit partners such as the International Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, Habitat for Humanity International and Children's Miracle Network. An annual day of global service called Spirit To Serve Our Communities Day is set aside to help employees get involved. Marriott is also committed to addressing environmental issues. All operating units employ methods of waste removal, recycling, and energy and water consumption that preserve natural surroundings and resources. And all Marriott hotels are encouraged to adopt eco-friendly practices, using a framework established by the company's Environmentally Conscious Hospitality Operations (ECHO) programme.

## **MÖVENPICK**

Mövenpick is one of the world's leading chains of hotels and resorts for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Mövenpick is dedicated to the development of local people, including employees, wherever it operates. For example, at the Mövenpick Resort Petra and the Mövenpick Nabatean Castle Hotel in Petra, Jordan, local people are encouraged to follow careers at the hotel. Four local employees are selected each year for a one-year management training programme. The hotel's Executive Assistant Manager, in charge of operations, is a local employee who began as a front office clerk, and the hotel is working with the community to employ local women. In addition, hotel executives volunteer to regularly conduct lessons at local schools in basic hotel and other business practices, broadening the perspectives of both the executives and local students. These programmes have received praise both from members of the local community and from guests. They have also resulted in a high standard of service that has enhanced the hotel's market performance and revenues.



## **RADISSON SAS HOTELS & RESORTS**

Radisson SAS is one of the fastest growing first class hotel groups in Europe, with over 150 hotels in 38 countries.

Radisson SAS has a long-standing commitment to environmental protection and by 1997 most of its hotels had fully adopted practices laid out in its Environmental Standards Manual. However, understanding that a hotel's impact is as much social as environmental, in 2001 Radisson SAS launched a company-wide Responsible Business programme – a systematic, integrated framework for addressing both social and environmental issues at all of its hotels in operation in Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Indicators were developed to measure performance and improvements against concrete objectives, on which hotels are required to report annually. Each hotel has a part-time Responsible Business Co-ordinator who assists hotel General Managers with implementation, under the supervision of the corporate Environmental and Social Affairs Director. A Responsible Business Handbook provides a step-by-step guide for implementation and improving performance. The programme includes: A Responsible Business training programme for all employees, educating them about environment and social issues in the hotel business and how they can make a difference; Community involvement, particularly assistance for children in need; A rigid health and safety programme to protect guests, staff and operations; Procedures for reducing environmental impact through energy efficiency, use of renewable sources and waste management based on the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle.

## **SIX CONTINENTS**

Six Continents is one of the leading global hospitality groups with some of the most recognized hotel brands in the world – as well as restaurants, pubs and bars.

Six Continents has implemented a series of strategically focused, continuously developing environmental initiatives designed to conserve energy while delivering tangible benefits to the bottom line. Across the Group, the use of external benchmarking of consumption is promoted with a view to managing energy and water use and waste controls in a more proactive way. With regard to social contributions, Six Continents uses external benchmarks – including FTSE4GOOD, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and Business in the Community's PerCent Club guidelines – to measure achievements, identify shortcomings and take appropriate corrective action. In addition, a 'Code of Business Conduct' guides all employees, to ensure that they act with integrity. In 2001£1.5 million was contributed to charity, including contributions to partnerships with UNICEF and Victim Support, as part of a long-term commitment to return a percentage of profits back to the communities where they operate.

(Excerpt from WTTC's report "Corporate Social Leadership in Travel & Tourism")

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