

Green Lodging Certification Program Comparison

Not sure if certification is right for you? Check out this article from Lodging Magazine and compare selected programs below:

Program Name	Program Summary	Certification Structure	Program Areas	Verification System	Costs (US dollars; current 3/17/2010)	Reach	Key Members	Existing Standards Basis
AH&LA Green Guidelines	AH&LA's Green Task Force has developed comprehensive sustainable greening guidelines designed expressly for the hotel industry. These guidelines provide hotel owners and operators with a variety of options with which to create an environmental-friendly and sustainable hotel.	Three-tiered green, greener, greenest structure with nearly 70 guidelines that focus on energy and water conservation and waste management. Certification covers a minimum of 11 key guidelines that have been culled from major hotel-specific and state certification or rating systems, including ENERGY STAR, Green Seal, Green Globe, Green Key, and LEED.	Basic 11 guidelines focus on energy and water conservation, and waste management. An additional 58 guidelines address energy, waste, heating, cooling, design and construction, materials and resources, chemicals and cleaning, and indoor air quality.	Self-certification with online tools that help each property track progress.	No program fees, exclusive of overall AH&LA and state association membership fees.	National	Marriott International, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts	The AH&LA Minimum Environmental Guidelines are based on existing certification programs, including Green Seal, Green Globe, Green Key, LEED, and various state programs.
Green Key Eco-Rating Program	The Green Key Eco-Rating Program is a graduated rating system designed to recognize hotels, motels, and resorts that are committed to improving their environmental and fiscal performance.	Based on the results of a comprehensive environmental audit, hoteliers are awarded a 1-5 Green Key rating.	The program assesses the five main operational areas of a property as Corporate Environmental Management, Housekeeping, Food & Beverage Operations, Conference & Meeting Facilities, and Engineering. It covers nine areas of sustainable practices: energy and water conservation, solid and hazardous waste management, indoor air quality, community outreach, building infrastructure, land use, and environmental management.	Upon online registration and completion of the online program audit, hotels are awarded their Green Key Rating. An on-site inspection may be conducted to confirm the rating.	Membership in the Green Key Program is \$600/year for US properties and must be renewed on an annual basis in order to maintain status as a rated property. Companies wishing to register 10 or more properties may be eligible for a discount.	US and Canada	Motel 6, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Hilton Hotels, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, Ramada, Howard Johnson, Sheraton, Four Seasons	N/A
Green Globes	Green Globe Certification is a web-based worldwide certification label for sustainable management and operations.	A total of 248 standards can be applied to reach certification. Certification standards are available for a variety of business types, including those specific to hotels and resorts.	Certification standards categories include Air Quality, Cleaning, Communication, Community, Corporate Social Responsibility, Conservation, Cultural, Education, Emissions, Energy, Facility, Hazard, Policy, Purchasing, Recycle, Reduce, Reuse, Waste, and Water.	Verified and audited by accredited third-party auditors. Certified businesses need to be re-certified on an annual basis as additional requirements need to be met and as international standards are updated.	Tiered annual membership rate structure based on size of property: 5-19 rooms: \$750 20-59 rooms: \$1,450 60-99 rooms: \$2,500 100-249 rooms: \$3,800 250 rooms and up: \$5,000 Consulting and third-party auditor fees not included.	International	Doubletree, Marriott, Campton Place Hotel, Crowne Plaza	*Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism Criteria (STC Partnership) *Baseline Criteria of the Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas *Agenda 21 and principles for Sustainable Development endorsed by 182 Governments at the United Nations Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 *The Mohonk Agreement *ISO 9001 / 14001 (International Standard Organization)
Green Seal™ Environmental Standard for Lodging Properties - GS-33	Establishes environmental requirements for lodging properties.	Three levels - Bronze, Silver, Gold - under which a lodging property may apply for certification. Lodging Property Services receiving Bronze certification will have one year from the date of Bronze certification to progress to Silver. Failure to progress to Silver in the timeframe specified will result in loss of certification.	Waste minimization, water and energy efficiency, hazardous substances handling, and environmentally responsible purchasing.	Certification requires an initial evaluation by Green Seal, including an on-site audit of the property, and annual monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance.	Evaluation, monitoring, and marketing fees are based on the number of rooms. For example, fees for properties initially applying for bronze certification: Tier I (300 rooms or more): Evaluation Fee: \$1,950 Monitoring Fee: \$1,950 Tier II (75 - 299 rooms) Evaluation Fee: \$1,750 Monitoring Fee: \$1,750 Tier III (fewer than 75 rooms) Evaluation Fee: \$1,450 Monitoring Fee: \$1,450	US	Hilton, Hotel Monaco, Great Wolf Lodge, Hyatt, Marriott, Sheraton, Westin, Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, Fairmont	N/A
Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program™ (STEP)	Offered by a non-profit organization and aligned with the minimum baseline Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and impending global accreditation through the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council.	Five tiered rating system including Self-assessed, Eco-assessed, or 3-5 star Eco-certified.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Management and Reduction; Solid Waste Management, Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling; Freshwater Consumption Reduction; Wastewater Management; Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Management; Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation; and Air Quality Protection and Noise Reduction.	Applicants who wish to receive 1 to 2 stars and a "Self-Assessment Completed" eco-label must provide Sustainable Travel International with specific evidence to demonstrate or verify that they comply with all of the "Required" criteria. Those that wish to receive 3 to 5 stars and a "Professionally Audited" eco-label require an on-site audit, which verifies that they comply with a predetermined percentage of the available points.	Application fee: \$150; Processing fee is based on number of rooms: 1-4 rooms: \$300 5-19 rooms: \$450 20-59 rooms: \$600 60-99 rooms: \$900 100-149 rooms: \$1200 150-249 rooms: \$2400 250 or more rooms: \$3600 The on-site audit fee is \$800 per diem for hotels that have less than 10-19 full-time employees or 20-59 rooms, and is \$1200 per diem for larger hotels.	International	RockResorts, Hamilton Park Hotel & Conference Center, Strawmanor, the Eco-Friendly Lodge, The Bentwood Inn, Jackson Hole	Aligned with the minimum baseline Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) and impending global accreditation through the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC).
U.S. Green Building Council LEED Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance	A set of voluntary performance standards for the sustainable ongoing operations of buildings not undergoing major renovations. Helps building owners and operators measure operations, improvements, and maintenance on a consistent scale, with the goal of maximizing operational efficiency while minimizing environmental impacts. There is not currently a program specific to the hospitality industry.	One level of certification, though the rating system is updated regularly.	Energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.	LEED points are awarded on a 100-point scale and credits are weighted to reflect their potential environmental impacts. Additionally, 10 bonus credits are available, four of which address regionally specific environmental issues. A project must satisfy all prerequisites and earn a minimum number of points to be certified. The Green Building Certification Institute assumes administration of LEED certification for all commercial and institutional projects registered under any LEED Rating System.	There are fees associated with registration, design and construction review (based on square footage), appeal processes, and program materials. Example fees for a LEED EB project under 50,000 sq ft, current USGBC member: Project Registration Fees: \$900; Initial Certification Review: \$1500; Recertification Review: \$750.	International	Orchard Hotel	N/A

State Certification Programs

There are currently 23 states with green lodging programs. They range from a simple list of 24 sustainability guidelines to a more comprehensive program such as California or Florida. Most state programs are self assessments, and not formally verified by a third party.

Program Name	Program Summary	Certification Structure	Program Areas	Verification System	Costs (US dollars; current 3/17/2010)	Reach	Key Members	Existing Standards Basis
California Green Lodging Program	The California Green Lodging Program provides recognition for state lodging facilities that minimize their waste and conserve energy and natural resources.	Facilities that qualify for the program will be rated at one of two levels, Participation Level or Leadership Level.	Commitment to Environmental Practices, Recycling and Reuse, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Lighting, Water Efficiency and Conservation, Landscape, Pest Management, Hazardous and Toxic Substances, Transportation, and Purchasing.	The California Department of General Services (DGS) oversees verification. Properties fill out and mail in registration, conduct a field survey with an DGS employee, and are then given an overall evaluation score.	No associated fees	Statewide	Over 200 properties state wide, including Embassy Suites, Marriott, Hilton, Hotel Monaco, Hyatt, Ritz-Carlton, Doubletree, Holiday Inn, and many others.	N/A
Florida Green Lodging Program	The Florida Green Lodging Program is a voluntary initiative of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that designates and recognizes lodging facilities that make a commitment to conserve and protect Florida's natural resources.	Single designation based on meeting minimum requirements.	Communication and Education (Customers, Employees, Public), Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling, Water Conservation, Energy Efficiency, Indoor Air Quality.	Florida (DEP) designates and recognizes lodging through an online self certification process.	No associated fees	Statewide	As of 2/2010, there are 621 participating properties throughout the state, including Best Western, Marriott, Doubletree, Hampton Inn, Hilton, Holiday Inn, and many others.	N/A

Green Meetings and Events Certification

APEX-ASTM Due out June 2010	New green event and meeting standards set and developed by ASTM International and the Convention Industry Council's Accepted Practices Exchange in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Green Meeting Industry Council.	Single designation based on meeting minimum requirements.	Includes the following categories: staff management policy, communication policy, solid waste disposal, energy efficiency measures, air quality, water conservation, procurement, community partners, environmental management systems, the use of alternative materials and technologies, and community impact across nine key categories: Accommodations, Audio Visual, Communication, Exhibits, Food and Beverage, On-site Office, Destinations, Meeting Venue and Transportation.	The Green Meeting Industry Council in partnership with the Convention Industry Council are developing training and certification programs around the standards. Specific information will be announced in the second quarter of 2010.	Fee structures are still under development. There will be a fee to access the standards, along with additional training and certification fees.	International	N/A	N/A
ISO 20121 Due out in time for the Olympics 2012	Management systems approach requiring identification of key sustainability issues like venue selection, operating procedures, supply chain management, procurement, communications, transport, and others.	While certification for the ISO 20121 standard is not currently available, the British Standard 8901 certification which the ISO standard is based on is available for certification. You can either self assess - no certification given, or be certified by a third party.	Under Development	Under Development	Under Development	International	N/A	British Standard 8901

While not a green lodging program, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which is an international protocol for corporations to report on their sustainability practices, policies and commitments, should be noted here.

The GRI has developed a Sector Supplement for Sustainable Meetings that will be launched in 2011. This sector supplement will be another element of reporting by organizations that use GRI reporting.