



Green Key

An Eco-Certification for the Hospitality Industry

Green Key is an international, voluntary eco-label owned and managed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), developed specifically for the hospitality sector. It is recognised and supported by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Green Key criteria are recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is the National Operator for Green Key in Northern Ireland. As an environmental charity, our vision is to inspire everyone to take responsibility for creating cleaner, greener and more sustainable communities. We do so by setting environmental standards through our certification programmes and through engagement with communities and volunteers.

Green Key is currently awarded to over 2700 certified establishments in 57 countries across the globe.

Benefits

Improve your business operations

- Independently assess your environmental impact
- Identify ways to improve internal management processes
- Shift towards the use of cost saving, sustainable technologies and practices
- Gain a competitive advantage through improving efficiencies and reducing operating costs

Be a better employer

- Educate, develop and empower your staff on environmental matters
- Create a sense of ownership and pride among your employees
- Retain staff by demonstrating good corporate citizenship
- Become an aspirational place to work for and be able to hire the best

Be a better host

- Satisfy corporate customers who are increasingly requesting information about their suppliers environmental initiatives
- Increase guest satisfaction through demonstrating that sustainability equals quality
- Educate your guests and empower them to become part of the environmental movement

Become the number one choice

- Increase sales by appealing to environmentally conscious customers
- Improve your marketing potential associated with the certification
- Retain customers and increase repeat visitors



- Inform consumer choice
- Carry a seal of approval

Become a game changer

- Stimulate market development through supply and demand for more environmentally friendly products
- Demonstrate environmental leadership within the sector
- Encourage continuous improvement of the hospitality sector towards more sustainable practices
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability
- Strengthen the voluntary standards movement vis-à-vis more government regulation

Why Green Key?

There are a plethora of eco-certifications available in the tourism and hospitality industry and it can seem daunting to navigate this maze and choose the right label that works for you. The International Tourism Partnership estimates there to be approximately 140 green certification available in the sector. However, we have identified nine eco-labels that are applicable to our geographical location (these include global, EU and UK & Ireland-wide labels).

We consider three key principles for choosing the best environmental certification, namely governance, relevance and environmental quality assurance.

Green Key scores highly on all these, making it the most favourable eco-certification for the hospitality industry in Northern Ireland.

Governance: Green Key is owned by an independent charity – the Foundation for Environmental Education – who set the direction, criteria and overall governance of Green Key. Locally, Green Key is operated by us – another independent charity. Our National Jury comprises experts within hospitality and tourism from different sectors (private, public, academia, media, and education).

Relevance: Green Key is an internationally recognised eco-label, operating in 56 countries across the world. Being Green Key certified means joining a vast, global network of green champions in hospitality. It is the largest eco-label worldwide with 2,700 certified establishments.

Environmental Quality Assurance: Green Key certifications comprises a set of criteria that is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. Criteria and environmental quality assurance are reviewed by the global Green Key annual National Operator Meeting. Green Key assessors, who conduct site visits, are trained in environmental management systems.



The Process

Register your interest

- KNIB will provide you with the set of criteria, application form and other relevant information

Conduct a **Self-Assessment**

- Assess your current position against the Green Key criteria and submit your findings to KNIB

Submit your **application**

- Once confident that you meet the certification criteria, submit your complete application form and associated documents to KNIB

Off-site **Audit**

- KNIB will process your application together with any further relevant information and confirm that you are ready for the next stage

On-site **Audit**

- A trained auditor for Green Key will visit the property and carry out a guided visual assessment of the premises and record keeping

Jury deliberation

- The national jury will review your application and audit reports and decide whether it meets the minimum requirements for Green Key certification

Certification

- You will receive notification from KNIB whether your application was successful
- Feedback and information on how to maximise the benefits from your certification will be provided

Green Key **Award**

- You will receive a Green Key plaque. KNIB will organise a photo call and publicise your award through its communication channels

The Green Key certification is awarded on an annual basis. Green Key certified establishments must re-apply every year. On-site audits will take place during year one and two and then every three years.



Criteria

Green Key criteria is available for;

- Hotels and hostels
- Campsites and holiday parks
- Small accommodations (B&Bs, self-catering)
- Conference centres
- Attractions
- Restaurants

A set of criteria can be downloaded via the following link:

<http://www.greenkey.global/criteria/>

Contact

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Useful Information

www.greenkey-ni.org

www.greenkey.global

<http://www.greenkey.global/application-process/>

<http://www.greenkey.global/criteria/>