

## 1. What is the scope of Eco-certification?

Eco-certification aims to improve the environmental performance of hotels in the Maltese Islands. There are several focus areas including energy efficiency, reducing water consumption, waste management and green procurement. The scheme also aims to increase environmental awareness amongst employees as well as hotel guests.

## 2. What are the requirements for Eco-certification?

The Eco-certification criteria are composed of 38 compulsory criteria and 62 non-compulsory criteria. In order to obtain Eco-certification, hotels must satisfy all the compulsory criteria as well as 65% of the total criteria. Click [here](#) for the criteria list.

## 3. Are hotels that exceed the minimum requirements differentiated from those which just make the threshold?

No, the Eco-certification scheme offers only one level of recognition.

## 4. What is the process for a hotel to become Eco-certified?

A call for applications is issued periodically by the Malta Tourism Authority. The application fee is 350 Euros and covers a two-year certification period. All applicant hotels will be audited by independent environmental auditors whose recommendation will need to be approved by the 'Green Committee'. This committee, whose role is mainly one of monitoring, is chaired by the Malta Tourism Authority and comprises representatives of various tourism and environment-related entities. These are the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), Wasteserv, the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA) and the Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents (FATTA).

As a first step, however, the Malta Tourism Authority recommends that hotels conduct a self-assessment to establish any areas of non-compliance, such that these can be addressed prior to the actual hotel audit. This task should be coordinated by the project leader, or 'Eco-coordinator'.

## 5. What does the Eco-certification audit consist of?

Eco-certification audits are always held at the hotel premises. The audit will commence with an opening meeting between the auditors and the Eco-coordinator. Other members of management are welcome to attend. During this meeting, the Eco-coordinator will generally give an overview of hotel operations in terms of environmental performance, following which the auditors will go through the scheme criteria in detail. Any relevant documentation will need to be presented.

The above is followed by the actual viewing of the hotel's front-of-house and back-of-house areas including: a guest bedroom and bathroom, any outdoor/garden areas, the kitchen, storage areas, garbage room and boiler room.

A closing meeting is then held to conclude the audit whereby the auditors will present their preliminary findings to the Eco-coordinator and any other members of management present.

## **6. What happens if a hotel fails to meet the minimum requirements during the audit?**

Any deficiencies will be recorded in the audit report and an action plan to address these areas, inclusive of time-frames, will be suggested by the auditors. The hotel will need to agree to this action plan.

Once the hotel implements the action plan, a shorter second audit may need to take place for verification purposes. This is conducted at no extra cost to the hotel.

## **7. Will small businesses find difficulty in reaching the requirements?**

Many of the scheme criteria require little or no investment at all, such as the creation of a sustainability policy, setting environmental goals, appointing an Eco-coordinator, attending training seminars, informing guests about the hotel's environmental management programme, etc.

Although some of the criteria may require investment, such as introducing low consumption light bulbs or water saving devices, in the long run this will result in significant cost savings for the hotel.

## **8. What are the benefits of Eco-certification?**

'Green' operations will result in higher profitability for the hotel thanks to lower energy and water consumption, waste reduction, reduction of purchasing costs, etc.

The hotel will also benefit from increased customer satisfaction, given that the environmental awareness of travellers is increasing. Research conducted by the Malta Tourism Authority (2009) shows that almost one person out of every two tourists interviewed expressed high levels of importance to environmental issues when booking accommodation, while almost 57% would be willing to pay an average of 8% more for a 'green' hotel.

## **9. When was Eco-certification introduced?**

The Eco-certification scheme was launched in 2002. The requirements of the scheme were revised in 2008 due to some of the criteria becoming legislation as well as due to innovation and new knowledge in the environmental field.

## **10. How do I recognise an Eco-certified hotel?**

Eco-certified hotels are awarded a certificate and glass plaque carrying the Eco-certification logo (right). These are usually displayed prominently in the hotel lobby. Hotels may also use the Eco-certification logo in their printed and electronic material, especially the hotel website.



Eco-certified hotels are also differentiated by the MTA in its [online Accommodation Directory](#) through the Eco-certification logo.

## **11. Where can I find a list of Eco-certified hotels?**

Click [here](#) for an updated list of Eco-certified hotels.