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About the Author

As a guidebook writer, Bradley Weiss has written for Rough Guides and Fodor's, covering regions in Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Mexico. He recently completed a Master's Degree in Tourism Administration at The George Washington University, concentrating in Sustainable Destination Management and is working at the World Tourism Organization in Madrid.

Contact Us

We would like interested travel journalists to help field test this manual. We welcome your feedback. Which indicators work? Which don't? Are there better ones that fit within a travel journalist's work patterns? How easy or difficult is it to work any of this information into your copy? What should be deleted from the manual and what added? Would an online forum be helpful?

Send your comments to *traveler_tourism@ngs.org*. (Please indicate "writer's manual" in the subject box of your e-mail.)

Additional Information

For a directory of helpful websites with additional information, see National Geographic's Sustainable Tourism Resource Center at www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/.



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The Untold Travel Story

A Travel Writer's Guide to Sustainable Tourism and Destination Stewardship

By **Bradley Weiss**

EDITION 1.2

Foreword

IN TERMS OF EARNINGS, TRAVEL AND TOURISM now constitute one of the largest industries on Earth. The tourism industry does not merely make use of the destinations on which it depends; it interacts with them. It can sustain them. It can ruin them. Sometimes, it can save them. Tourism can support entire national economies (a risky condition, as terrorism and economic downturns have demonstrated). Influxes of tourist resorts and second homes are transforming entire shorelines and mountainsides into suburb-like landscapes. If carefully managed, though, tourism can **alleviate poverty** and provide a financial incentive for **wildlife conservation, historic preservation, and cultural enrichment**.

With tourism having grown into such a potent force in only two or three decades, it's time for travel journalism to catch up. Travel writing has traditionally been seen as soft journalism, a light, upbeat genre with reporting issues limited to consumer-service matters like noting menu prices. Research by *National Geographic Traveler* magazine and the Travel Industries Association of America has shown, however, that in the U.S. many consumers care about the sustainability of the travel experience. What's more, they tend to be the travelers with the most economic clout, as well as the ones most likely to read guidebooks and travel articles. These **geotourists** want to support, or at least not harm, their destination's geographical character—its environment, culture, heritage, and aesthetics. They can do that through the power of their wallets, simply by patronizing responsible businesses. Travel reporting that helps them do so is a consumer service.

No one knows better than travel writers how thoughtless, venal decision-making can spoil a resort or a country. The first step toward prevention is to do what journalism has always done: Shine a light on practices both good and bad. It's not practical, of course, for most travel writers to turn themselves

Conclusion

This manual on sustainability is a first pass at what to look for and what to ask about when at a destination. The “look for” part is relatively easy. The “ask about” part often is not; it's difficult to ask probing and potentially sensitive questions of those on whom we rely to complete our assignments, although this third-party checklist might help. But what's one more challenge for a group that regularly has to deal with red-eye flights, culture shock, language barriers, and improbable deadlines?

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Community Interaction

Communities should be involved in and benefit from sustainable tourism, so as to establish a “virtuous circle,” whereby the benefits of tourism provide an incentive to protect and enhance the attributes of the region, which in turn generate better tourism.

Indicators to Look For:

- Tourism taxes or entrance fees used for local tourism assets and services
- Provision of places for local craftspeople to produce and sell items
- Inexpensive access for locals to tourism attractions
- Discussion of stewardship issues in local media

Indicators to Ask About:

- Does the community play a role in tourism planning?
- Are locals well aware of tourism benefits, both direct and indirect?
- Can local entrepreneurs get technical assistance and business loans?
- Are there tourism training programs that create a more qualified local workforce?
- Does the tourism industry support local businesses?

Examples

»**THE SHAW NEIGHBORHOOD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.** enlisted the help of hundreds of residents to promote its rich African-American history to city visitors. Volunteers have helped to clean the neighborhood, plan several special events, and design walking tours. Enthusiastic residents often come out of their homes to tell the tour groups stories of growing up in the neighborhood.

»**BOUMA NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK, FIJI** has used proceeds from ecotourism to provide educational funds for residents of all four of its villages, to hire and train park guides, and to protect 15,000 hectares of forest and reef within the park. Representatives from each village help manage the program.



Famous, unique sites like Machu Picchu and its region attract high visitation and therefore need careful destination management.

into investigative reporters. We need only add one more service element in our travel reporting: to make note, however briefly, of both constructive and destructive practices in destination stewardship, and let consumers make their choices accordingly. The tips and indicators that Bradley Weiss has assembled for this manual are in no way absolutes. They are intended to launch an ongoing dialog among travel journalists worldwide on how we can best raise awareness about protecting the quality of places everywhere. Our readers, and our professions, depend on it.

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PART I

Sustainability and Stewardship

AS A TRAVEL GUIDEBOOK WRITER, I once envisioned myself as a passive observer, just trying to capture a mental snapshot of the destination. It never really occurred to me that I was playing a role in how the place developed. But I've since come to realize that if members of the travel press cover issues of sustainability and stewardship, then tourism organizations have an additional incentive for offering products that help the local environment and community.

I have spoken with numerous company or destination representatives who proclaimed they were committed to sustainable tourism. Yet I often sensed that their practices fell short of the image they portrayed. But I had no tools for making a judgment. This short manual is intended to provide just that: a concise set of guidelines and indicators that can help travel journalists determine whether companies and destinations are really promoting sustainable practices. The intent is not just to expose destinations and companies that fall short of their claims, but also to help educate and encourage them to embrace truly constructive practices.

Part 1 of the manual introduces some basics of sustainable tourism: what it means, why it is needed, and what's been done to promote its practice. **Part 2** contains a checklist for assessing whether tourism companies are truly practicing sustainable tourism. **Part 3** does the same for tourism destinations.

Defining Sustainable Tourism

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), "sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all

Tourism Management

As destinations grow in popularity, they must choose what type of tourism to encourage and how to manage tourism-related development so that it does not spoil the attractiveness of the region. At sensitive natural or cultural attractions, the art of managing crowds can be critical for protecting the site.

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ Official tourism information that promotes authentic local culture—music, dance, art, crafts, cuisine
- ___ Hotels in high-volume resort areas that are clustered or otherwise managed to permit open spaces and avoid landscape-consuming sprawl
- ___ Peaceful cross-cultural relations: Tourist behavior that does not offend residents; resident behavior that does not harass tourists
- ___ Tip sheets for foreign visitors on local customs and etiquette
- ___ Methods for limiting crowds at sensitive sites—quotas, admission fees, limited reservations, etc.

Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ Do local leaders measure tourism "success" by mere *quantity* of tourists or by *quality* of tourists, in terms of compatibility and revenue generated?
- ___ Are there controls on commercial tourism development, second-home construction, and road building?

Examples

»**THE MONTE VERDE CLOUD FOREST** in Costa Rica sets a first-come, first-serve quota for numbers of visitors each day.

»**IN THE BEACH RESORT/FISHING VILLAGE** of Praia do Forte, Bahia, Brazil, new buildings may not rise more than two stories and traditional residents' houses cannot be sold, only inherited, to stabilize the community against rising real-estate prices. A nature preserve prevents sprawl.

Interpretation

Both tourists and residents should have easy access to knowledge about local heritage and the natural environment. Deeper engagement with the character of a place can become an incentive for protecting it.

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ Interpretive signs that provide background on a particular site or area
- ___ Visitor centers with informative brochures (not just advertising), clear advice on obtaining reliable, trained guides, etc.
- ___ Signage that explains why restrictions are needed on fishing, hunting, firewood collecting, wildlife feeding, etc.

Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ Can local people find guide-training courses?
- ___ Do local media disseminate information on the location's natural and human heritage?

Examples

» **THROUGH FREE TOURS AND BROCHURES**, U.S. and Canadian national parks provide extensive interpretive information for visitors.

» **THE WETLAND CENTRE**, in the heart of London, promotes wetland conservation with interactive displays, guided tours, and volunteer programs.



A local guide leads an ecotour on Maui. As residents, well-trained guides can interest the community in protecting its own natural and cultural heritage.

JONATHAN B. TOURTELLOTT © NGS



JODI COBB © NGS

An incongruous meeting of cultures in a Thai bar raises twin questions: What kind of tourism harms host societies? What kind of tourism fosters cross-cultural understanding?

resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.”

A related, proactive concept is **geotourism**, which the National Geographic Society and the Travel Industry Association of America define as:

Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.

Geotourism is an umbrella concept that encompasses all place-dependent tourism, whether ecotourism, heritage tourism, or simple sightseeing. Successful geotourism must benefit local residents in such a way that they see a benefit in protecting what tourists are coming for: wildlife, historic towns, great scenery, distinctive food and drink, local customs and way of life.

As you have no doubt seen, tourism can provide numerous positive impacts on destinations, such as generation of jobs and revenue, improved facilities and services, and an incentive to protect the natural and built environment. Yet if tourism is developed irresponsibly, these benefits can be outweighed by a host of negative impacts that include degradation of the environment, reduction in locals' access to resources and amenities, loss of local culture, and in some cases, destruction of the very characteristics that appealed to tourists in the first place.

Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism

Some leaders in the travel and tourism industry have started to take action to lessen tourism's negative impacts. Much of their inspiration came from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, when 182 governments reached a groundbreaking consensus on Agenda 21, a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development. In 1996, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), WTO, and Earth Council adapted Agenda 21 principles and guidelines for the travel and tourism industry, laying out a plan of action (reaffirmed at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002) for both national tourism administrations and individual tourism companies.

Certification Programs

In recent years numerous programs have come into being that strive to certify companies and destinations as sustainable, at least in the environmental sense. In your travels, you have likely run across sites and companies with some kind of eco-labeling certification. It is also possible that you have traveled extensively and never found the same eco-label twice. The lack of universal standards and a recognizable brand are two of the largest challenges facing certification programs worldwide. Some programs have been attacked as little more than environmental window-dressing. Still, some of these programs have rigorous standards and can help travel writers tell how seriously a company or locale takes its stewardship responsibilities.

Environment

Poorly planned resort strips and vacation housing subdivisions can have enormous negative impacts on the environment, from loss of habitat to water pollution from runoff. Economies based on well-managed ecotourism, by contrast, can preserve wildlife habitat and support parks and antipoaching efforts.

Indicators to Look For:

- Easily accessible and affordable public transport that mitigates the need for cars
- Recycling programs with high participation rates
- Certification or rating systems for sustainable practices
- Coral-reef restoration programs
- Protection for endangered species, such as muted oceanfront lighting in sea-turtle nesting areas
- Awareness campaigns about invasive species like the songbird-destroying brown tree snake in the Pacific

Indicators to Ask About:

- How good is the local sewage treatment, if any? Where does it go?
- Does the government offer energy-saving incentives for tourist facilities?
- Are there water pollution and waste management standards? Are they enforced?
- Does the community support initiatives to conserve nature?

Examples

»**NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK, U.K.** provides a Moorbus, a cheap and comfortable shuttle to local railway service. Toll roads and high parking fees discourage car use.

»**AKUMAL, MEXICO**, through the work of the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation, fought rapidly growing waste-water problems with an innovative ecological wetlands system based on fast-growing tropical plants and limestone gravel. The treated water is then used for irrigation.

Aesthetics

Travel posters and travel dreams depend on good-looking, distinctive destinations, yet standardized architecture, ugly signage, and cookie-cutter global franchises are neither handsome nor distinctive. They discourage high-quality tourism.

Indicators to Look For:

- Use of traditional architectural styles
- Restoration or reconstruction of historic buildings and sites
- Awareness campaigns and numerous trash receptacles to help eliminate litter
- Absence of billboards and other ugly signs
- Maintenance or creation of parks or green areas
- Scenic beautification campaigns
- No roads, cable, or other infrastructure blocking views of important sites
- Appropriate noise levels

Indicators to Ask About:

- Is the community addressing development pressures?
- Are there legal restrictions on building density, height, setbacks, etc., and effective enforcement?

Examples

» **VARIOUS COUNTRIES**, from England to Samoa, hold “prettiest village” contests, which promote an aesthetic sensibility and generate tourism revenue.

» **JAISALMER, INDIA** revitalized two landmark residential streets without harming the ancient infrastructure through a collaboration by Greaves Travel, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, and the British-registered charity Jaisalmer in Jeopardy. Efforts included restoring facades, repaving streets, upgrading sewerage systems, etc.

A WTO study in 2002 sifted through several hundred eco-certification programs and analyzed 59 of the most serious. Of these, 46% were local, 43% national, and 11% international. Most operated only in Europe (78%). A large proportion certified accommodations (68%), followed by destinations (18%), tour operators (7%), and facilities.

One of the first certification programs, Blue Flag Europe, was created in 1987 and has certified over 2,000 beaches and 700 marinas. Another high-profile program is Green Globe 21, created by the WTTC and based on Agenda 21. Since restructuring in 1999, Green Globe has certified 82 accommodations, tour operators, and destinations. Some other particularly notable programs are the Green Tourism Business Scheme, which has certified over 250 accommodations in the UK and Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turística (CST), a pioneer program in Latin America that has certified over 50 accommodations. A Tour Operators Initiative, comprising a number of international touring companies, has developed sustainability performance standards for that part of the industry. The World Heritage Convention administered by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) could also be considered a certification program in that all of its 700-plus sites were chosen through a rigorous process to ensure their commitment to site conservation.

Despite all the programs that currently exist, only 1% of the world’s tourism products are certified. More attention to certification in travel reporting might raise awareness about sustainability, reward suitable places and companies, and add rigor and financial viability to the various certification programs themselves.

PART II

Assessing Tourism Companies

BELOW I OFFER seven major areas in which sustainable tourism should be practiced. Each has a list of basic principles, along with corresponding indicators and examples of companies that have put the principles into practice. Since travel writers often must work on tight schedules, I've divided the indicators into two groups: **those you can look for** in the course of your normal reporting, and **those that you can ask about** if time and opportunity allow. There is no magic formula to determine which and how many indicators a company requires to be anointed as “sustainable.” You'll need to use your own judgment on whether a company deserves praise or criticism for its practices, but the checklist gives you a starting point. While these indicators apply most clearly to hotels and resorts, you can see that some might also pertain to restaurants, shops, attractions, and, of course, to the selections made by touring companies for their clients. It helps, too, to ask whether the company has any written policy on sustainability issues.

Design, Construction, and Landscaping

Principles

- Site new buildings to avoid ecologically sensitive areas
- Employ regional architectural style and nonendangered local materials in new constructions
- Design to avoid environmental and aesthetic nuisances
- Adapt existing structures to mitigate environmental damage or waste
- Landscape with noninvasive plants suited to local soils and climate

Indicators to Look For:

___ Use of regional style and local materials that help buildings fit into surroundings

PART III

Assessing Tourism Destinations

The same principles cited in the previous section apply to host regions as a whole. Management of a destination is a complex business involving local government, civic organizations, and private businesses, as well as significant influences from external organizations. Of the indicators listed below, concentrate on those that make the most sense for the type of destination you're visiting. It's also good to ask whether destination communities are following a management plan that promotes good stewardship and a strategy of sustainable tourism. Ideally, such a plan should be based on studies of carrying capacity and of environmental, economic, and social impacts. Ask how long ago the plan was created and how often is it monitored.



Preservation of distinctive historic structures like these in Portovenere, Italy, ensures a richer experience for tourists, as well as for travel writers and photographers.

Community Benefit and Involvement

Principles

- Support local businesses and tradespeople
- Consult with community members before making decisions that affect them
- Ensure that local people have fair access to employment in the company, with competitive wages and opportunity for advancement
- Promote pride in local natural, historic, and cultural assets
- Support conservation-oriented local initiatives

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ Many locals on staff, with some in responsible positions
- ___ Encouragement for hotel guests to patronize distinctive local businesses
- ___ Gift shops stocked with local crafts and products

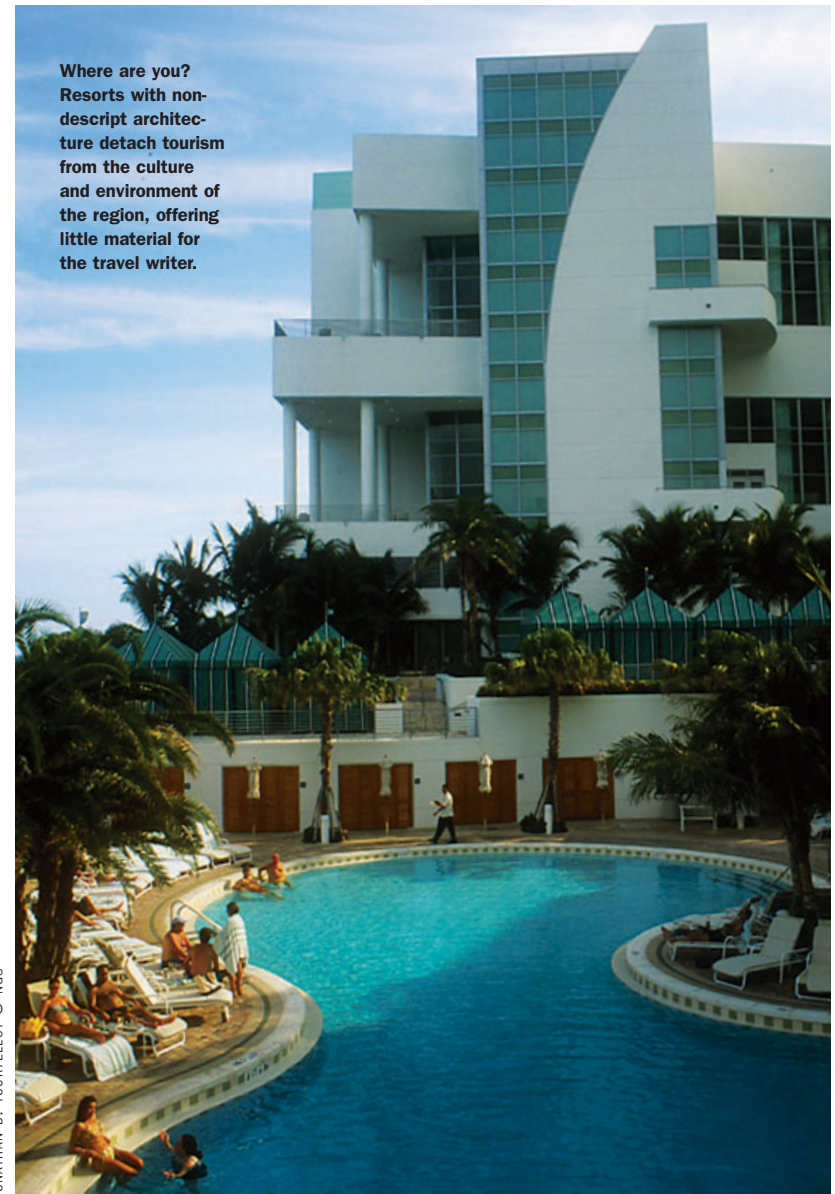
Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ What if any role does the community have in approving your development and operational plans?
- ___ Do you use local suppliers?
- ___ Does your company participate in community improvement programs, such as clean-ups?
- ___ How does the company support community schools, hospitals, resource protection, etc., if at all?

Examples

»**LAS TERRAZAS TOURISM COMPLEX, CUBA**—which consists of a hotel, plantation, research center, and hiking trails—donates about a third of its net intake to the community. Two elected community members decide how to allocate the funds. Over 85% of local residents are involved in tourism, with another 5% working on reforestation.

»**WILDERNESS SAFARIS, SOUTH AFRICA** closes its camps six weeks a year and hosts 500 underprivileged children, who learn about conservation, wildlife, nutrition, and health.



- ___ Low-profile buildings that complement the scenery rather than obscuring it (exception: high-rise construction deliberately clustered so as to preserve extensive open space nearby)
- ___ Buffer zones of trees to screen parking lots, service areas, etc.
- ___ Landscaping with native vegetation; lack of chemical fertilizers

- __ Design that minimizes noise and harsh lights
- __ Golf course design that maximizes natural habitat and minimizes water and fertilizer use
- __ Attractive, restrained signage in nonurban areas

Indicators to Ask About:

- __ Have you conducted any environmental impact studies?
- __ What is your landscaping policy, especially for golf courses? (The average U.S.A. golf course uses as much water as an American town of 8,000.)
- __ Do you do anything to support local conservation?

Examples

»**SCANDIC ENVIRONMENTAL ROOMS**, for Swedish hotels, are furnished in local materials that can be reused effectively. In the average room, 97% of the contents are either recyclable or biodegradable. The company estimates that for every 1,000 rooms refitted according to this design, 10 tons of metal and 60 tons of plastics are saved.

»**LUSOTOUR SA, PORTUGAL** set up an Environmental Action Program to monitor and control its environmental and social impacts. Applied to a 850-hectare addition to the Vilamoura resort, the program ensured that buildings rose no more than three stories and held density to less than half that of the original resort, with over 90% of land area retained as green space.



Interpretation / Tourist Education

Principles

- Inform visitors about local culture, history, and nature so as to promote respectful exchanges and conservation efforts
- Engage local people in the process, to build pride and provide income
- Provide information in a clear, comprehensible format
- Use well-qualified, knowledgeable local guides

Indicators to Look For:

- __ Easy availability of high-quality, engaging, and honest information about the host region, nonpromotional in tone and source
- __ Foreign language information where needed
- __ Clear, full explanation of the benefits of the company’s environmental and energy-saving measures, such as linen re-use
- __ Convenient availability of local guides who are intimately familiar with their subjects
- __ Routine interpretive presentations or informational theater; nature or history trails with informational signs; other interpretive devices

Indicators to Ask About:

- __ Any plans or programs to improve interpretation, especially by involving local people?

Examples

»**LINDBLAD SPECIAL EXPEDITIONS**, an international tour operator, offers films, slide shows, and lectures by naturalists and other experts. Tourists also receive printed materials before visiting a site. Ships have an onboard library.

»**CC AFRICA**, an ecotourism operator with 25 lodges and camps in five African countries, gives all guests an orientation about the resort and its charitable foundation for community projects.

Staff Training

Principles

- Train staff in skills needed for steady advancement
- Hire locally whenever conditions permit
- Train staff in local environmental and cultural conservation, both for their own practice and for educating tourists

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ Staff knowledgeable about the locale
- ___ Local people in management or other leadership positions
- ___ High staff morale
- ___ Staff members who know foreign languages where needed

Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ Are schools or training programs available for staff?
- ___ Do staffers have reasonable upward mobility?
- ___ Do staffers follow good environmental practices at home?
- ___ Is there a recognition program for staffers who initiate new or improved sustainable practices?

Examples

»**FAIRMONT HOTELS IN CANADA** reward employees for ideas in better environmental management, with the result that the chain cut by half the solid waste it sends to landfills.

»**THE IBEROTEL SARIGERME PARK, TURKEY** has successfully encouraged staff to follow environmentally sound practices not just at work, but also at home in their local villages, with commensurate cost savings for their households.

Conserving Energy

Principles

- Use energy-saving techniques
- Use alternative sources of energy
- Contribute to local energy conservation efforts

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ In cold climates: insulated roofs and heating pipes, double-glazed windows
- ___ Rooms with compact fluorescent lights—the warm, twisted-tube type, which use only one-fifth the electricity of normal bulbs and last far longer
- ___ Energy-saving devices such as programmable thermostats, room-keycard operated light switches, etc.
- ___ Minimized use of cars on site
- ___ Well-maintained, energy-efficient company vehicles
- ___ Where possible, facilitated access by public transport for guests and employees; if not, car-pool, cycle, or walk-to-work schemes for employees

Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ Do you make any use of wind, solar, or biomass power?
- ___ Is the staff trained to shut off lights and heating/cooling systems in unoccupied rooms?

Examples

»**INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTEL NAIROBI, KENYA** uses twin speed motors in air-conditioning so that when cooling demand falls, the motor operates at a lower speed.

»**GRECOTELS, GREECE** use solar-heated water in showers, energy-saving lightbulbs, and keycard systems that turn off electricity after guests leave their rooms.

This hotel in Kennebunkport, Maine, U.S.A., displays an appropriate New England architectural style. Each room is equipped with tasteful recycling containers.

Using Water

Principles

- Conserve water, especially in dry climates
- Work with customers to reduce water demand
- Reuse water when possible
- Use vegetation that needs limited amounts of water
- Minimize use of waterway-polluting fertilizers

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ Low-flow or dual-flush toilets and waterless urinals
- ___ Low-flow showerheads
- ___ Optional towel and linen re-use programs
- ___ Minimal lawn area in dry climates
- ___ Garden-watering at cooler times of the day; drip irrigation rather than sprinklers
- ___ Mulch that reduces evaporation and runoff

Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ Are washing machines and dishwashers water-efficient?
- ___ Do you use rainwater cisterns or gray water from sinks and showers for cleaning and landscaping?
- ___ Have you favored drought-resistant species in landscaped areas?

Examples

»**CHUMBE ISLAND CORAL PARK, ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA** collects rainwater through a special device on each bungalow's roof. The rainwater passes through a filtration system and is stored in underground cisterns. The water is then hand-pumped through a solar-powered heating system into hot and cold-water containers for the shower and wash basin.

»**GROOTBOS NATURE RESERVE, SOUTH AFRICA** uses gray water from its laundry to water the horse paddock in front of its lodge, saving some 700,000 liters of water a year. The three-hectare garden at Grootbos has been designed using water-wise indigenous plants and buffalo grass lawns to minimize the need for irrigation.

Minimizing and Managing Waste

Principles

- Reuse or recycle products whenever possible
- Dispose of wastes responsibly
- Use waste water facilities that ensure that water is properly treated
- Avoid use of potentially hazardous substances

Indicators to Look For:

- ___ Recycling programs where feasible, with clearly labeled bins

Indicators to Ask About:

- ___ Especially in nonurban areas near water, check the sewage processing; septic tanks, if any, should be located away from reservoirs, groundwater, rivers, or the shoreline
- ___ Are contents of recycling bins truly recycled?
- ___ Do you order bulk purchases in returnable packaging?
- ___ Is food waste composted and used as fertilizer?
- ___ Do you need and use catchment ponds so that harmful waste doesn't enter the water system through runoff?
- ___ Organic, rather than chemical pesticides?
- ___ Is the staff trained on how to dispose of hazardous waste?

Examples

»**HOTEL FUERTE CONIL, SPAIN** uses eco-friendly varnish and paint for wood and wall surfaces, avoids furniture with mineral oil substances, and treats pool water with salt minerals instead of chlorine.

»**HALF MOON GOLF, TENNIS & BEACH CLUB, JAMAICA** composts fruit and vegetable scraps for fertilizer, sells used cooking oil to chicken farmers for feed, and collects part-used soap bars and presoaks the linens with them.

»**ON MOUNTAIN TOURS, IBEX EXPEDITIONS, INDIA** buries biodegradable food at lower elevations, employs extra porters to bring rubbish down from base camps, and gives waste paper to groups that make paper-mâché products.