

## TIPS FOR “GOING GREEN” IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

There are a number of reasons for the tourism sector to improve its environmental performance, including that it will contribute towards a more responsible and sustainable economy. There are environmental benefits due to decreased resource consumption and the associated financial savings because of decreased expenditure on these resources and it can provide a marketing angle that will differentiate a business and increase environmental awareness in consumers.

### THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS “GREENING” YOUR BUSINESS, INCLUDE:

1. Identify a designated environmental champion : some-one who will take responsibility for the environmental programme
2. Complete a baseline assessment of your current environmental performance : including your energy, water and waste profiles and a review of procurement system to determine what can be changed to a more environmental friendly alternative
3. Develop an Environmental Policy / Mission Statement : this defines what you are aiming for in the day-to-day operations of your business to improve your environmental performance
4. Develop a green procurement statement / strategy : with this you change what you purchase and bring into your business and through this you can start reducing your environmental by purchasing environmental friendly, low packaging or local alternatives
5. Set targets, goals and objectives for your business : these should be based on the baseline assessment to help direct your environmental improvements and should be specific to the needs and requirements of your business in terms of scope of your operation, financial and human resources available to implement changes
6. Starting implementing the low hanging fruits (the easy to implement, limited cost with short payback period options), including
  - Change cleaning products to environmentally friendly alternatives where possible (visit [www.greenstuff.co.za](http://www.greenstuff.co.za) for more information on “green” products for the hospitality industry)
  - Reduce laundry costs by changing bedding and towels for long-stay guests less frequently or on request only (this reduces water, energy and cleaning chemicals consumption by the business)
  - Minimise packaging waste by setting up a packaging return system with your suppliers, including 5ℓ juice bottles for fruit juice, plastic crates for dairy products, bread and fruit and vegetables
  - Where possible purchase drinks bottles (e.g. soda’s, beers etc) that can be returned for a deposit or that can be recycled
  - Implement an on-site waste separation system where recyclables are separated from general waste and identify drop-off points or companies that can collect the recyclables
  - Replace normal incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient alternatives – it is recommended that if you are doing a large-scale lighting retrofit to test the different options available to determine which one will be most appropriate for your needs
  - Insulate your hot water pipes (especially if these are more than 3m from the geyser to the shower / tap) to reduce heat loss

- Install efficient shower heads that not only reduce water consumption, but also reduce energy consumption as they use less hot water
- Practice responsible garden irrigation, by not watering between 10am and 4pm, as most water is lost through evaporation or on windy days where most of the water will be blown away.
- Implement responsible practices in your administrative areas, by not making hard copies of documents unless necessary, printing on both sides of the page and reusing paper for notes or scrap internally before recycling.

For more information of these interventions and other interventions that can help improve your environmental performance, visit <http://www.greenstaysa.org.za/ag3nt/system/standards.html> or contact Lize Jennings at [info@greenstaysa.org.za](mailto:info@greenstaysa.org.za) for more information.