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Organisation

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Accommodation Classification

RESOURCE KIT

DRAFT FINAL

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INTRODUCTION

SPTO

The South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) is the mandated intergovernmental body for the tourism sector in the South Pacific. The SPTO members consist of twelve National Tourism Offices from the South Pacific Island Countries, together with members of the private sector. Current full government member countries include Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Private sector members include many of the major operators and accommodation providers in the region.

THE RESOURCE KIT

This Resource Kit is one of the key outputs of SPTO Regional Accommodation Classification Scheme Project funded through the European Union Pacific Regional Integration Programme (PACREIP). Project No. 9 ACP RPA-006.

The project was set up in order to help establish regional guidelines and cooperation in the area of accommodation classification and grading, and by so doing, assist with the raising of quality standards in the accommodation sector.

The Resource Kit provides SPTO-recommended guidelines on the process of accommodation classification and grading. It includes a review of lessons learned from accommodation classification elsewhere in the world, a set of four quality assurance building blocks, and ready-to-use resources for the classification and grading of accommodation across the region.

Conscious of the different stages of development of SPTO member countries and their respective accommodation sectors, this Resource Kit provides a range of options for classification from minimum

standards to international star-rating techniques. It adopts a simple, user-friendly interface with an aim to 'demystify' what can be a highly technical and complex area.

The Kit divides the task of accommodation classification into four 'Building Blocks' designed to provide something for everyone. These are interspersed with handy hints and supported by an Annex of sample check-lists and questionnaires. In addition, the Kit provides information about setting up, developing and implementing classification systems. It discusses assessor training and reviews an extensive list of 'what-ifs scenarios', provides information about designing check-lists, preparing reports and rating systems along with some standard definitions for lodging categories.

HINT

The document is designed as an active learning tool for NTOs across the region. It's your Handbook - read it, share it, write on it, correct it and add to it.

THE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Resource Kit are as follows:

- To provide a ready source of information for NTOs interested in quality assurance in the accommodation sector.
- To provide the resources necessary for NTOs to decide what type of Accommodation Classification is right for their country.
- To supply guidelines on a range of different options for accommodation classification suitable for SPTO member countries
- To include all the information and basic resources necessary for NTOs to implement minimum standards, accreditation or a star-rating scheme.

THE METHOD

The report was researched, compiled and written by Dr Louise Twining-Ward of Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC) Ltd., New Zealand. TRC are specialists in the South Pacific with over 30 years experience with international donor agencies,

central and local government, private companies, NGOs, indigenous and other community groups in the area of sustainable tourism development planning, monitoring and analysis.

Louise was commissioned as the Industry Association and Standards Expert for the project, charged with the collection of secondary resource, consultation with stakeholders, running of a regional workshop and writing up the results in a project report and this Resource Kit. The Resource Kit was developed through the following five stages:

- 1) Research and analysis of existing resources in the area of accommodation classification;
- 2) Stakeholder consultations throughout the region to identify levels of awareness, needs and viewpoints on accommodation classification;
- 3) Drafting of the building blocks for the regional system;
- 4) Organisation of a regional workshop to raise awareness, understanding and provide feedback on the building blocks; and
- 5) Writing of the Project Report and draft Resource Kit for further stakeholder input, prior to finalisation and printing.

CONTENTS AND HOW TO USE THEM

The Resource Kit can be read in its entirety or in parts or used simply as a reference document. The resources it provides can form the basis of accommodation check-lists, assessor training programmes, hotel manuals and other activities. It is not meant as a hard and fast set of rules to follow but as a common set of guidelines from which to kick-start the improvement of accommodation standards. There are 5 different sections to the Kit.

Section 1: Introduction

Introduces the Kit, its purpose, contents, development and use.

Section 2: Concepts

Explains the nature and process of accommodation classification, provides examples from elsewhere in the world and includes key considerations in the development of a regional system.

Section 3: Building Blocks

Discusses 4 key building blocks; the code, minimum standards, accreditation and star rating systems.

Section 4: Administrative Mechanisms

Highlights the administrative processes involved in accommodation classification from the initial setup to the implementation.

Section 5. Supplementary Resources

Provides a range of technical resources designed to assist NTOs implement the building blocks including criteria, checklists, case studies, a glossary and list of additional references.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the support, enthusiasm and assistance of numerous people around the region. In particular thanks to the Lisiate 'Akolo, Ross Hopkins, Helen Polouva'ati and Shoma Prasad at SPTO; Dave Bamford, Ross Corbett, Leanne Harrison and Achim Munz of TRC, and consultants Michael Pusinelli and Martine Bakker. Many thanks also to Robert Skews, Linda Kalpoi, Warren Daniels, Lucy Tia, Lailani Viti Kotobalavu, Rupina Morrissey, George Kum Kee, Anthony Cocker, Melepone Isara, Christina Leala, Shinn Ete, Paulo Pemitia, Lauao Leavai, Nynette Sass, Tapa Suaesi, Drummond Tupe, Felix Tuariki, Risasi Tuariki, Peter Terawasi, Dylon Viviani and Normon Simeon for valuable comment, feedback and enthusiasm before, during and after the Accommodation Classification and Grading Workshop.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Automobile Association
AAA	Automobile Association of Australia/America
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CITC	Cook Islands Tourism Corporation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GG21	Green Globe 21
HOTREC	Confederation of Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes in Europe
IH&RA	International Hotel & Restaurant Association
IHEI	International Hotels Environment Initiative
ISO	International Standards Association
NTO	National Tourism Office/Organisation
SD	Sustainable Development
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
STA	Samoan Tourism Authority
TRC	Tourism Resource Consultants
TVB	Tonga Visitors Bureau
TVB	Tonga Visitors Bureau
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

SECTION 1: CONCEPTS

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Accommodation classification and grading is one of the most widely debated and disputed topics in the hospitality industry. It is popular misconception that an 'international standard' for star ratings actually exists. There are in fact many different stars, diamonds, ticks and crown ratings have been adapted to different contexts and situations worldwide as a means of differentiating quality, providing consumer information and raising standards across the accommodation sector. But despite the fact that there is no 'official' international rating scheme, in the mind of the consumers different star grades provide different expectations that need to be met to avoid disappointment. In the SPTO scheme we have tried to balance demand orientated expectations with our concerns about quality assurance in broad terms.

WHAT IS ACCOMMODATION CLASSIFICATION?

Accommodation classification is the process by which accommodation establishments are broken down into categories, classes or grades according to their common physical and/or service characteristics. It involves the identification of accommodation types and the setting of standards and criterion for each type of accommodation. It also involves the process by which these standards are verified, certification is provided and a decal is awarded and used to communicate information on standards to consumers and other stakeholders.

Experience to date

After more than 100 years of trial and error experience from around the globe, much can be learned from studying existing approaches to accommodation classification and grading, examining their pros and cons, scope, management and criterion.

Accommodation classification was developed first in UK in 1880s as Cycle Touring Clubs wanted to know the standards of wayside inns and identify places where specific amenities were provided. Later, with the development of automobile associations, ratings provided motorists with a sense of security in the selection of their inn or hotel and encouraged hoteliers and innkeepers to upgrade the standard of lodging they provided.

By 1970 six National Tourism Organisations had their own classification systems and by 1980, 60 countries worldwide had an accommodation classification scheme in place. As the number of bodies involved in hotel classification increased, their role expanded from one of consumer protection to consumer information, raising standards and providing marketing opportunities for accredited establishments. By 1995 there were over 100 classification systems operating worldwide all using different definitions, criterion and systems of operation.

Despite numerous attempts at international integration and cooperation led by the World Tourism Organisation, to date there has been little progress in terms of developing an 'international standard' for accommodation classification and grading. This has led WTO to recognize that instead of seeking uniformity and standardization there may be more wisdom in consolidating diversity, using a systematic approach to take cultural differences into consideration, not seek uniformity. This is also recommended as the approach to use in the context of the South Pacific.

QUOTE

To be sustainable, tourism must be able to consolidate diversity, not seek uniformity. (WTO, 2004b:30)

What are the benefits of accommodation classification?

Accommodation has become so popular because of its many benefits. Here are the most relevant:

- Can raise quality standards in the accommodation sector by defining the standards
- Helps customers find a hotel which is of a standard they require
- Gives visitors unfamiliar with the hotel selection, a sense of confidence about the standard of hotel they choose
- Helps managers target upgrading projects to areas where customers are likely to benefit the most.
- Helps raise the marketing profile and credibility of independent hotels

- Helps tourist officers monitor hotel inventory, accommodation standards in the sector and better target training activities
- Helps support loan applications and demonstrate commitment to quality
- Helps travel agents understand the product and match supply and demand
- Provides a graphic indication of standards useful for computerised booking systems.

Why is Quality so important?

The recognition of the need for quality assurance is a major emerging trend in the tourism industry world-wide. Two main drivers behind this trend are the increasingly competitive nature of the international tourism marketplace and rising levels of consumer rights awareness. However, in more recent times, a third factor has emerged, one that is particularly relevant to the Pacific Islands, and that is the issue of sustainability - in other words, the environment.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Consumer demand has grown exponentially as airfares have become more affordable in real terms, disposable incomes have grown and people have generally become better informed and more aware of the myriad of destinations available for them to explore. As some of the oldest established major tourism destinations including the European countries (e.g. Spain, Britain and France) have become more crowded and polluted, (and arguably, less safe) people are increasingly turning to more exotic destinations, like Africa, Asia, South America and, most significantly for us, Asia/Pacific.

More and more their tastes are turning to the exploration of indigenous cultural and environmental experiences, and every day more new and remote destinations are being added to their itineraries. For countries relatively devoid of conventional natural resources like minerals, timber, oil or gas, tourism offers one of the greatest opportunities to generate foreign exchange and employment, in the process providing the where-withal to fund much-needed infrastructure and social development.

For the Pacific Islands, tourism offers huge potential, but it has to be carefully managed to ensure that we do not ruin the very resources that make our islands such an attractive destination. It also has to compete with a large number of other destinations all vying for tourist dollars. To compete successfully, we have to identify and promote our points of difference. All the studies I have ever seen on this tell us that those points of difference are our people, our cultures and the unspoilt environments in which we live. Unfortunately, those very same points of difference are the ones that would be most at risk if we were to open up our islands to mass tourism. In the fragile eco-systems of the Pacific island nations, with small population bases and, in many cases, small land masses with limited natural resources, mass volume tourism, (other than perhaps by cruise ship), is generally considered to be unsustainable.

If we are to obtain the benefits that tourism can bring to us, we have to go for quality rather than quantity, and if we can raise our tourism standards and have the quality of our tourism product internationally recognised, we can then compete on quality rather than cost. In areas where it is expensive to do business, and where the actual volume of available business is quite small, this is the only way in which we are going to be able to develop and maintain profitable tourism industries, while at the same time protecting our own environments. And profitability is essential, as it is the life-blood of the industry.

The objective therefore - to compete on quality, not cost! So what are the ingredients of a quality destination? Good facilities + good service + sound

environmental management = a quality destination! Remember - one of the most powerful marketing tools today is word of mouth. A guest who has a great experience may go home and tell one or two friends, but a guest who has a bad experience will probably tell twenty friends. You can't afford to take that risk. In today's tourism industry, you need a good quality assurance programme to ensure you provide a good quality destination.

Source: Adapted from Pusinelli & Associates 2005

How is Classification linked to the process of quality assurance?

Accommodation classification encompasses a suite of tools used to provide quality assurance in the tourism industry.

Pusinelli (2005) noted quality is how well a given product or service consistently meets the expectations of those who purchase it. He said it is measured by assessing the difference between the expectation and the delivery.

Put another way, quality is consistent delivery in conformance to standards. Those standards are required or expected levels of performance. In the tourism industry, we say that quality is the sum total of a myriad of small tasks all done to perfection. Assurance is the system used to maintain consistent delivery of standards - a guarantee to the consumer that a degree of quality is being provided. Quality assurance therefore is the processes that are used to encourage and maintain quality standards in products and services in the tourism (Pusinelli & Associates, 2005).

HINT

Whatever it is, one thing we need to remember - quality is a journey without end.

Who is involved?

There are many different bodies involved in accommodation classification from the private, public and non-profit sectors each with their own perspectives and approaches to the challenge.

Govt/local and regional Authorities

The vast majority of accommodation classification schemes are run by Public Sector bodies; ministries of tourism, tourist information centres and local authorities. These organisations are generally enthusiastic about

classification as it is regarded as helping to improve and monitor standards, collect statistics and provide consumer protection. Government run systems are often linked to business licensing and focus on minimum standards for different types of accommodation. A good example of this approach is being used in Tonga.

Tonga Minimum Standards

Minimum standards were developed in Tonga in 2001 as a result of an EU Report and WTO request for increased consumer protection due to the large number of tourist complaints that were received. A check-list was developed by the Tonga Visitors Bureau (TVB) and sent out to the industry for comment. This is a combined system focuses on standards and addressing serious problem areas, keeping checks on operators and having regular contact with the industry. The inspection is a mandatory part of the process of business license renewals. The standards developed for Tonga pay particular attention to hygiene, cleanliness and quality service through training. There are four categories of accommodation; budget, apartment, motel and hotel. All accommodation and restaurants are inspected by a group of five assessors; fire, public health and two from TVB. Checks are conducted on an annual basis on which the renewal of business licenses depends.

Further information on the Tonga Scheme is provided in Section 4.

Private rating companies

Although it has proved difficult to run accommodation rating systems profitably, many countries like the United States do not have any government involvement in accommodation classification. Instead, private sector organizations have taken on this role often linked to a marketing tool such as a motoring Guidebook. Examples include the AAA system in America and Australia and Michelin in Europe. These tend to be focused on marketing opportunities and consumer information rather than the raising of standards or monitoring.

AAA American Diamonds

There are several different American rating systems with AAA being the largest, followed by Official Hotel Guide (OHG) and Mobil. All are customer-information focused, most involving little feedback to managers. The AAA American Diamond rating was established in 1977. Currently 65 inspectors rate 30,000 establishments annually. AAA's focus is on serving the needs of AA users, with information provided in the guide which currently sells 38 million copies. They adopt an inventory based system where 1-5 diamonds are awarded (budget/basic/comprehensive/upscale/ultimatel uxury). All lodgings are categorised at 3 levels: style of operation (b&b, cabin, Inn, condo, motel, ranch, small

hotel, large hotel, vacation home (resort, casino, classic, historic); the type of management (independent, chain); and by service level (full, moderate, limited service). Further specialist categories include resort, casino, and classic.

Further information on the AAA Scheme is provided in Section 4.

Hoteliers and Hotel Associations

Hoteliers and hotel associations are generally skeptical of any form of government intervention in accommodation standards and classification. However, they may become involved in order to avoid the imposition of government-run schemes or influence the criterion and rating processes.

Public-private sector partnerships have also become a popular means of operating accommodation classification such as used by Qualmark in New Zealand and also in Quebec, Canada. It is these mixed approaches led by the public sector but with strong private sector involvement such as used in Canada and New Zealand, that appear to be most appropriate in a Pacific context.

Qualmark System - New Zealand

Qualmark is New Zealand's official quality mark for tourism. It is a government-private sector partnership between Tourism NZ and NZ Automobile Association run as a not-for-profit service. Developed from the former Quality Tourism Standards established in 2001, the criteria were the subject of extensive discussion, consultation, trials and a formal pilot programme during 2002, prior to the launch of the endorsement system. The system awards 1-5 star ratings (acceptable, good, very good, excellent, exceptional) to properties agreeing to abide by the Qualmark 12-point code of ethics, with different requirements for each of 6 different types of accommodation (backpackers, guest and hosted, holiday park, hotel, self-contained, exclusive). For those properties falling in between stars a 'plus' is awarded. The process involves application and fee, pre-assessment pack completed by operator, on-site assessment by one of 6 Qualmark assessors and a report sent to operator. Time is spent with the operator to discuss performance as a capacity building exercise.

Further information on Qualmark is available in Section 4.

Travel agents/ tour operators

Tour operators and travel agencies often rate properties they advertise in order help customers choose the right type of accommodation and help match supply and demand. Many of the larger operators have established their own inspection and rating systems based on their consumers preferences. However these are often resented by hoteliers as they are seen as subjective and conflicting with national ratings. The key difference is that tour operators don't necessarily have to be scientific or objective about their rating systems - properties are rated in their customers' interest which may not be the same as the properties' interest. Note the quote in the following box. Two examples of tour operator rating systems are highlighted in Section 4,

Creative holidays in Australia, and Island Hopper Vacations in the Cook Islands.

Island Hopper Vacations

Island Hopper Vacations started up their own rating system in 1991, just one year after the firm first opened. Conscious that there were many differing standards for rating around the region already, they tried to provide something that was simple and useable while reflecting Island Hopper standards as compared to those in Fiji and Tahiti. The purpose of the system is to give wholesalers a guide by which they can gauge similar properties in the Cook Islands and also relate these to the rest of the region. The system provides wholesalers offshore with a range of alternatives which they can book with confidence, knowing that the standards and facilities have been verified by Islands Hopper. Robert Skews, Managing Director of Island Hopper made the following comment, which really sums up the tour operator approach to rating "Guess what we do is seat of the pants stuff but accurate and reflects our knowledge of the product."

Further information on Island Hopper Rating is available in Section 4.

Travel consumers

Tourists are rarely consulted in terms of hotel classification or rating systems despite their obvious stake in the process. Reasons for this include the cost of large scale consumer surveys and the lack of continuous review of systems. On the whole, private sector rating companies have been better than most at considering consumers but there is room for considerable improvement in this area (see monitoring and review at the end of Section 3).

What assessment approaches are used?

Although there are numerous different way to approach accommodation classification, they are all based to various degrees on evaluation techniques known as summative and formative. Whereas summative techniques focus on the end product and often adopt an inventory-like approach to inspections, the formative approach is more focused on quality and adopts a nurturing-approach based upon a series of continuing assessments often with extensive feedback.

Summative approach

The summative or inventory approach is the traditional means of rating hotels adopted by most mature tourism destinations such as the UK, US and parts of Europe. It is based on the presence or absence of particular facilities, checked by an inspector who may arrive unannounced and provide little or no follow-up report to his or her visit apart from the

notification of grading results. The focus is on assessing whether particular needs of the consumer in terms of facilities and amenities are met in the establishment, and to what level.

These approaches tend to be cheap to operate and relatively objective, based on established criterion. They work well for larger hotels and those providing many different facilities and usually have good marketing potential using star ratings and focusing on consumer exposure. However, they can also be overly rigid and unresponsive to the pace of industry change. Consequently they may actually result in a decline in standards as inspectors become little more than hotel police and hoteliers become suspicious of them.

Formative approach

The formative or quality approach to evaluations involves far greater communication between the assessor and hotelier, whereby the hotelier is provided with advice on how to reach the standards and may be visited on a number of occasions to assess progress. This provides a one-on-one training-environment for the hotelier and can be an effective way of improving standards in the long term. The focus here is on not just what level the hotel is at but how it can improve and better meet consumer needs.

These quality-based schemes often award accreditation (pass/fail) as opposed to grading and this can work well for smaller hotels, less developed destinations and those with a less extensive selection of accommodation. However, it does require large amounts of time, resources and more experienced assessors than for the summative approach.

Combination Approach

In addition to these two extremes, there are also an increasing number of classification schemes that try to find some mid-point between summative and formative evaluation processes. These provide slightly less nurturing than the true formative approach but still support operators. They provide a variety of tools to enable them to improve services often over an extended period of time. The emphasis is either on achieving particular minimum standards, which may be a mandatory process linked to business licensing, or being accredited at a particular level. It is this **combination approach** which is encouraged in a South Pacific context, where the purpose is to raise standards but NTOs do not have the resources to run extensive formative approaches.

LESSONS LEARNED

Much can be learned from the accommodation classification schemes already in existence both internationally and around the region. In the Resources Section of this Kit you will find case studies of thirteen different schemes from around the world; eight from the South Pacific, two from North America, one from Central America and one from the Middle East (based on the European model) and one from South Asia.

These provide a wide cross section of classification approaches and experiences from which to learn as well as an indication of where to go for more information. When considering what level of scheme is right for your country, it is worth reviewing these in order to get an idea of what is going on in terms of classification in your source markets. Review of these case studies will help identify important issues a South Pacific scheme needs to take into consideration. We have summarized these for you below.

Scope

Classification systems can be developed and managed at a variety of scales from province to regions but the majority are national schemes. It clearly would be easier if the same system was used worldwide but the diversity of destinations, products, quality levels, cultural differences and vast array of stakeholders involved makes this almost impossible to achieve despite repeated efforts by the WTO.

Similar problems exist with regional schemes, particularly in places where national classification schemes are already in place. However, in regions without too many conflicting systems running, there has been some success in terms of regional cooperation. The Danish system is now being adopted in Sweden and Norway (with a few modifications). These three countries are now working towards the establishment of a Nordic classification system. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has also begun consideration of a common hotel classification scheme as have 15 countries in Africa that are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

This experience suggests a South Pacific scheme could work on a regional basis, providing a common foundation and resource kit, whilst allowing national interpretation.

Systems for Accommodation Classification

The simplest systems of accommodation classification involve the identification and assessment of **minimum standards** those facilities or services that absolutely must be in place for an accommodation establishment to in operation such as safe building structure, clean bathrooms, hygienic kitchen and drainage and adequate fire safety. In many SPTO member countries there is a very real concern about health, hygiene and safety standards in tourist accommodation. A regional system needs to stress the importance of regular health and safety checks including the importance of fire and building standards along with maintenance. These standards tend to be the same for all establishments and their assessment can involve a simple tick/cross assessment often by tourism, health and fire officers. The focus of a minimum standards scheme is on identifying facilities that don't make the minimum and ensure that these properties either upgrade or have their license revoked. Consequently this system only works where legal processes allow for mandatory assessment.

One step up from a Minimum Standards scheme is an **Accreditation Programme**. This involves adding quality and comfort items to the list of minimum assessment criterion. Assessment may be outsourced or conducted by a public-private sector partnership. The focus is on enhancing the overall standard of accommodation in the destination on a voluntary basis. In order to increase participation in the scheme, normally accreditation is linked to a number of incentives such as marketing through the NTO and use of a quality logo. Check lists are normally simple tick-cross systems with provide separate criterion for different types of accommodation. Integral to this system therefore, is the need to agree on categories of accommodation and the division of the accommodation plant into these categories.

In destinations where most properties are accredited or there is a very well developed and diverse accommodation plant, the final step of **star rating** may be sought after. Rating systems differentiate accommodation in terms of facilities and amenities and in so doing help tourists and travel agents find a hotel that suits their preference and budget, and provide a marketing tool for the hotelier with proof of their standard of establishment. The process of star rating is far more complicated than accreditation as it involves a larger number of criterion as well as the allocation of points for different types of accommodation. Accordingly, there is a tendency for star rating schemes to become plan 'inventory' checks rather than the more nurturing quality assessments.

Common to all these approaches is the need to identify standards of quality. One technique for doing this that has become increasingly popular as a means of moving the tourism industry voluntarily towards greater sustainability is the use of **Codes of Practice**. The SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice makes up our first building block.

HINT

Each of these types of systems is useful in different contexts so rather than adopting just one for regional use - **a set of building blocks** is recommended so that destinations can select the process that best suits their circumstances.

Decals

The decals and symbols used help identify those properties that are members of particular schemes and show their level of achievement. Whilst the star is by far the most widely used symbol in terms of hotel classification there also exist diamonds, crowns and an assortment of letters. The tick symbol is mostly used in relation to accreditation and quality assurance.

The misuse of accreditation and grading symbols is a serious problem with many classification systems leading some organizations to provide strict rules on the use of the logo. It is also important that symbols include the date of assessment and category of lodging.

Whilst there would be marketing advantages in the use of a regional logo this implies common assessment and criterion which SPTO does not currently have the resources to undertake. However there may be scope for the development of a common theme or branding to the schemes that would help give a sense of regional credibility to them. See Section 3 for further discussion of decals.

Categories

Nearly all of the classification schemes reviewed have a number of different categories of accommodation (e.g. resort, hotel, guesthouse) with separate sets of criteria for each. This means that prior to establishing a system there needs to be agreement on how these categories are defined and which accommodation falls into which category for assessment purposes. This will also help avoid misinformation to the consumer on what is to be expected when booking a resort, hotel, motel, guesthouse etc.

At the same time many SPTO member countries have their own unique form of traditional or informal accommodation whether these be beach fale, bure, bungalows or other local dwellings. In many cases it is this type of accommodation that is most in need of standards. The regional system needs to make allowance for these 'limited service' establishments where the experience is often based more around the 'authentic atmosphere' and location than the range of amenities provided. SPTO recommend four categories of accommodation defined in Section 3; hotel & resorts, self-catering and motels, guesthouses, inns and backpackers and traditional informal accommodation. Definitions are provided in Table 2 of this Kit.

Criterion

Most conventional accommodation classification schemes are focused on the standard and extent of facilities and amenities offered by the facility. Newer schemes tend to include elements related to the operation of facilities such as business practices along with environmental and sustainability concerns. Obviously, the more criterion used, the more complex and time-consuming the process becomes, but there does appear to be considerable merit in moving towards more holistic approaches to grading in a Pacific context.

The environment and culture of South Pacific destination is the key component of the tourism experience and one that is increasingly under threat from development. Adopting a more holistic, sustainability-focused system for accommodation classification would give SPTO member countries the chance to make a positive step towards sustainability in the South Pacific.

Additionally, there is a concern amongst tour operators of a lack of understanding of many essential aspects of good business practice such as consumer protection, guest surveys and maintenance of operations.

HINT

A quality-based classification system needs to integrate both business and sustainability principles in order to assist with the process of upgrading standards.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR A REGIONAL ACS

There are two main types of considerations in the design of a regional ACS system: considerations about the criteria and considerations of the process of assessment.

Something for everyone

Each SPTO country is at a different stage with regards to accommodation classification, some have a functioning system in place, some are the process of developing a system and others have no system in place at all. Whilst all countries need minimum standards, not everyone has the scope and diversity of accommodation that would make a star-rating system relevant. Any SPTO-recommended approach needs to be flexible enough so that it can provide something for everyone. A system made up of various components will give this flexibility, providing a common base but options for countries to adopt the scheme at different levels depending on their individual circumstances.

Pacific feel

There is a strong view amongst stakeholders that a South Pacific system should not just imitate international standards but have a strong South Pacific feel to it, helping to differentiate Pacific-style hospitality from that of other regions of the world. This might include elements such as use of flowers, traditional dances, local architecture, access to a beach, staff dress and traditional cuisine. In turn there may be less focus on extensive inventory items such as trouser presses, shoe-shine service, multiple phones, casinos, T.V., gyms and extensive dining opportunities and items that are not necessarily suited to all isolated Pacific island locations.

A holistic approach

We have already mentioned how important of environmental management, service standards and business operations are to quality tourism. Too many star-rating systems focus only on facilities provided - the SPTO system needs to think in more holistic and integrated terms, incorporating the three key elements of our Tourism Code: business operations - service & facilities - sustainability.

In touch with the market

Many of the accommodation systems reviewed during the course of this study list large numbers of what guests may feel are 'unnecessary' or even 'unwelcome' items. Consumer tastes and preferences change over time and also vary depending on the kind of destination they are visiting. Items that may seem essential when staying in a hotel in Europe may be viewed as unnecessary in the South Pacific.

Consequently it is important that the criterion are regionally appropriate and incorporate effective mechanisms for soliciting tourist input. This will help avoid any potential conflict between guests' expectations and rating requirements.

Active Participation

Review of international and Pacific systems suggests that those with higher levels of involvement of the private sector are more likely to be successful and supported by the industry. There are various methods of encouraging participation such as involving hoteliers in defining and reviewing rating criterion, setting up a joint public-private sector classification board, involving hoteliers in the training of assessors and communicating regularly with them on the progress and results of the scheme (see communication & marketing). Active participation of all stakeholders is considered essential to the success of accommodation classification.

Training and capacity-building

There is great diversity in accommodation standards across the region, but in general, the sector is dominated by small independently owned businesses that often lack the necessary skills and funds to upgrade. Any system will need to take this into consideration and provide support and training mechanisms to assist with upgrading.

Credibility, objectivity & transparency

Classification systems are based on credibility, objectivity and transparency. Where any of these are seen to be compromised, the system is likely to break-down and lose its relevance. The utmost care needs to be taken in this area in order to ensure both hoteliers and assessment officers are protected.

Affordability & Simplicity

Many hoteliers in the region are concerned about the possibility of having to pay a high price for government-run rating system. At the same time NTOs have so far not developed systems due to the perceived cost and complexity of the undertaking. The Resource Kit will identify a number of options for funding the scheme which can be debated and resolved at a national level.



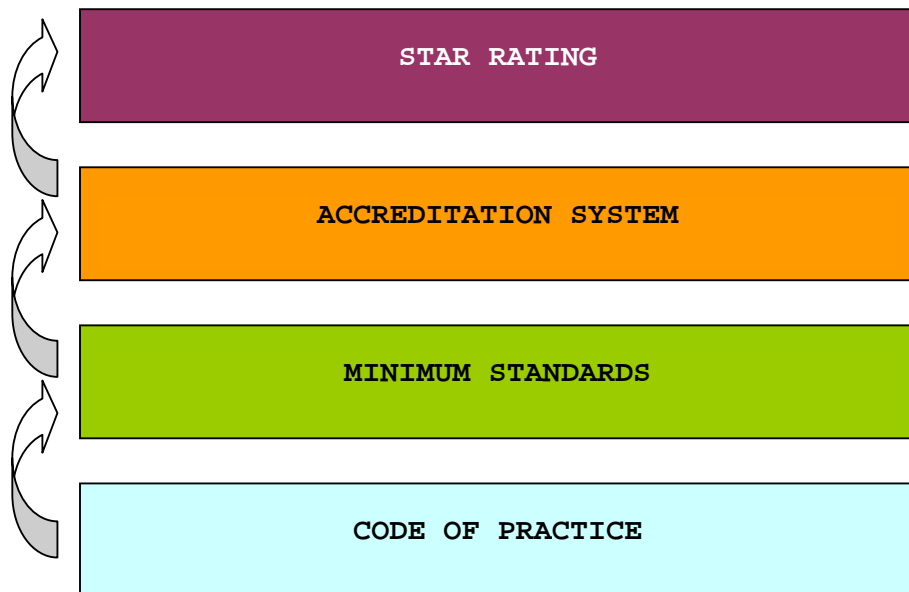
SECTION 2: BUILDING BLOCKS

SECTION 2: BUILDING BLOCKS

In order to fulfill the issues and considerations noted in Section 1, a 'building blocks' approach is suggested. This allows countries to choose which kind of Accommodation Classification Scheme they want to adopt. As one block builds on the next, a progressive approach is encouraged and enabled. The Building Blocks provide a common basis for improving standards and a common approach to classification and grading whilst at the same time being flexible enough to allow for national variation and ownership.

The four key building blocks are: the Code of Practice, Minimum Standards, Accreditation Programme and Star Rating. Each of these is explained here.

Figure 1. Accommodation Classification Building Blocks



BLOCK 1: CODE OF PRACTICE

The Pacific Tourism Industry Code of Practice (henceforth the Code) has been developed in parallel to the accommodation classification project on the request of National Tourism Organisations and the Board of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation, and as a result of an extensive consultative process across the region.

What is it?

The Code is a voluntary list of recommendations covering social, environmental, cultural, ethical and quality aspects of tourism business. Its purpose is to enhance awareness of key issues facing the development of tourism in the region and inspire action and commitment to positive change.

The Code consists of ten principles, 18 actions and commitment statement which tourism operators can sign and display in their establishments as proof of their support of the code. The principles are issues stakeholders have identified as essential to the quality of the tourism product in the region. The actions are positive things that tourism operators can do in order to improve the sustainability of their business. These are divided into three groups; service and professionalism, safety and care and sustainability. The service and professionalism section includes training, marketing, legal responsibilities and support for industry associations. The Safety and Care aspects highlight the importance of safety issues, emergency procedures, guest security, hygiene and cleanliness. Finally the sustainability section includes consideration of waste, cultural protocol and support for the local community.

The 10 principles are as follows:

- Excellence in tourism service
- Professionalism in tourism business
- Commitment to staff training
- Respect for cultural differences
- Attention to safety and security
- High standards of cleanliness and hygiene
- Care for the local ecosystem

- Reduction of waste and pollution
- Support for the local community
- Implementation and adherence to the Code

The 18 actions are listed in the following table.

Table 1. SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice Actions

Service & Professionalism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Marketing and promotional materials are accurate and truthful in the nature, price and quality of the services provided. 2) Every effort is made to monitor and exceed guest expectations in the provision of services and facilities. 3) The business complies with all local laws and regulations. 4) Staff are given proper training and instruction in their area of work, personal hygiene and grooming, and environmental and cultural policies. 5) Procedures for the prompt handling of complaints are established and maintained. 6) The work of national and regional tourism organizations and associations is encouraged and supported.
Safety & Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7) Staff and management are trained and equipped to deal with all emergencies and emergency procedures are clearly displayed. 8) High standards of cleanliness, hygiene and ventilation are observed in all buildings, and grounds are free from rubbish, unpleasant odours and unacceptable noise. 9) Appropriate security is provided for customers and their possessions, including secure storage facilities, well-maintained doors and window locks where appropriate. 10) Considerable care is taken in the operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure a safe environment for guests and staff at all times. 11) All customers and staff are treated with equal respect and consideration. 12) Clean drinking water is readily available to all customers.
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13) Tourism activities are compatible with the local ecosystem, cultural heritage and traditions. 14) Tourism businesses are respectful of local cultural protocol and tourists are well-informed about local customs, values and appropriate dress. 15) Efforts are made to increase the efficiency of resource and utility usage through appropriate policies, controlling devices and alternative energy systems. 16) Care is taken to reduce waste to a minimum, and dispose of it responsibly using appropriate policies, equipment and procedures. 17) Sewage disposal systems are well maintained, suitably located and of a size appropriate to the level of use. 18) The business networks closely with the local community and uses local labour, goods and services wherever possible.

In order to be widely used and appreciated it was considered important that the layout of the code was attractive and easy to read. The laid out version is included in Section 4 of this Kit.

How was it developed?

The Code is the result of input from stakeholders across the South Pacific region through questionnaires and face-to-face interviews along with a review of international best practice. The wording and layout of the code has been especially designed to promote and facilitate positive action. All the statements are positive and action-orientated.

The first draft was reviewed by private sector members and participants at the SPTO workshop in Apia. As a result of this input, the code was further revised and put on the SPTO website to encourage further stakeholders interest and feedback. When this process is completed in mid December the code will be redrafted and distributed. The final draft will include check-boxes as opposed to numbered actions. Some stakeholder comments are included in the quote box.

QUOTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I support the code with no further comments and we are looking forward to be part of the regional process for betterment of tourism in the South Pacific. Kiribati.- Very good, I agree to all these recommendations. I am ready to sign. Tahiti- We like the code practice and I think it will suit us just fine. Niue
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How should it be used?

There are three principle ways in which the Code can be used.

- As part of a quality assurance programme
- To raise awareness of key issues relating to quality tourism
- As the foundation of a sustainability award programme

In a quality assurance programme

The main reason for inclusion of the Code in this Resource Kit is its use as the foundation for a common approach to quality assurance across the region. Not all SPTO countries are ready to adopt a complex star rating or accreditation programme, nor can everyone be expected to agree on exactly the same criteria for these schemes. However, the consultations have shown that there does seem to be some agreement on the general principles of quality tourism in a South Pacific context. Promoting and committing to a common Code can therefore provide a common foundation and point of references for addition quality assurance programmes.

One way the Code can be made an integral part of the quality assurance programme by ensuring all operators who wish to participate in the accreditation programme first sign up to and commit to the Code. This is the case in the New Zealand Qualmark scheme, the South African Satur scheme and also the Cook Islands Accreditation Scheme. The Code should be included in all accommodation classification literature and displayed prominently in national and local tourism offices and their websites. It can also be made an integral part of joining the national tourism association, be provided to all new tourism investors and educational institutions.

A training and awareness tool

The Code of Practice can provide the starting point for training courses in business, service, safety and sustainability tourism programmes. The identification of key areas helps concentrate efforts in what otherwise can be a complex and difficult areas to address. Each of the actions listed can be the basis for group discussion, the development of indicators for monitoring, assessment frameworks and detailed action planning.

An award programme

For those countries wishing to develop a sustainability award programme the code can provide the basis from which indicators can be developed and businesses assessed for their commitment to the principles and actions.

Can the code be changed?

Whilst in all the other building blocks we encourage adaptation to national needs, in the case of the Code of

Practice, there is considerable advantage in all using the same code. The code has been already subject to extensive consultation and as a common foundation could help strengthen the unity of the SPTO movement towards greater sustainability.

In order to give a sense of continuity it is important that the general principles, structure, layout and production of the code remains the same for all countries. However, in order to be adopted as the official national code in a participatory fashion, stakeholders should be given an additional chance to discuss and endorse the code. Consequently, in some cases small changes may need to be made in order to adapt the code to the circumstances of the country. Once stakeholders are happy with the Code and feel a sense of ownership of the process, its adoption should be encouraged through the use of positive incentives such as marketing opportunities, web site coverage and the provision of posters and certificates for advertising purposes.

Recommended Implementation Process

- Officially adopt the Code
- Distribute draft code widely
- Engage industry association in the development of an action plan and incentives for use with stakeholders
- Implement plan in close partnership with industry association
- Monitor and review process on an annual basis

BLOCK 2: MINIMUM STANDARDS

The second building block uses the code as a foundation and point of reference, but adds measurable criterion, an assessment process and administrative and reporting responsibilities.

What are they?

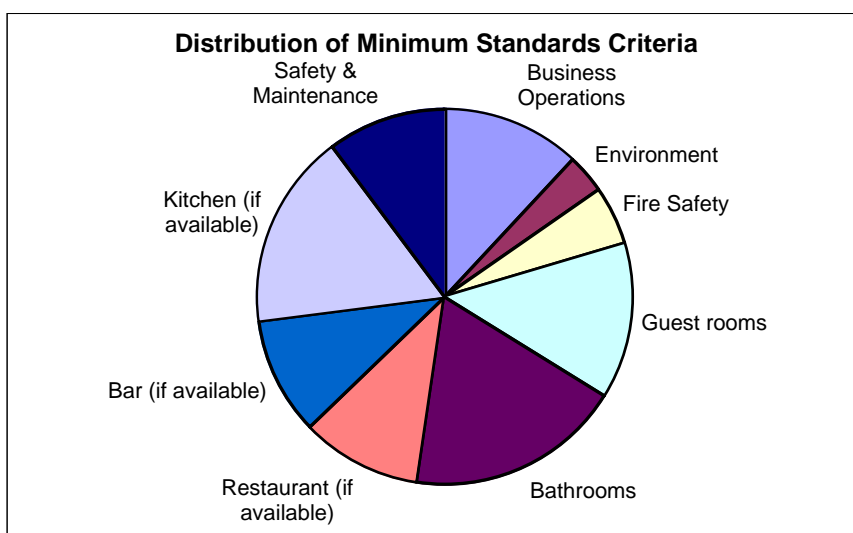
Minimum standards define those items that absolutely must be in place for an accommodation establishment to be in operation such as safe building structure, clean bathrooms, hygienic kitchen, drainage and adequate fire precautions. Minimum standards do not cover those aspects that are simply important to guest comfort and the quality of the guest experience such as the range of facilities and amenities offered, and they do not vary by accommodation type. In many cases minimum standards are regulated for and checked by a variety of Government agencies but tourism offices still need to be involved in some capacity as failure in any of these areas can have a severe negative impact on the reputation of the destination.

Table 8 in Section 4 provides the criteria of the SPTO recommended Minimum Standards, Table 9 provides a sample laid-out check-list. This includes a list of 59 items, 37 of which are compulsory for all types of accommodation (marked with a K) and the rest are compulsory for all those with restaurants, bars and kitchens. The criteria divided into nine areas: business operations, environment, fire safety, guest rooms, bathrooms, restaurant, bar, kitchen and safety and maintenance. Each criterion has an identified standard to assist assessors. At the minimum standards level the emphasis is on safety, cleanliness and staff. Assessors should focus on the following at this level:

- Business Operations standards focus on ensuring the establishment has the appropriate licenses according to national laws as well as checking that proper registration of guests is conducted and that staff are clean, tidy and knowledgeable
- Fire safety requirements should be set in discussion with the fire service. In cases where regular fire checks are conducted by the fire service it may only be necessary to ensure the certificate is in place.

- ☑ Health and hygiene issues focus on the kitchen and bathroom areas to ensure they are clean and pest-free.
- ☑ Maintenance and security issues are concerned with the safety of the building any extensions made to the building such as extra floors or balconies, any forms of transportation and danger areas.
- ☑ Required facilities include clean beds, secure guest rooms, screened windows, available drinking water and safe electric installations. Sustainability issues included are the disposal of wastes and sewage.

Figure 2. Minimum Standards Criteria by Type



How have they been developed?

The criterion above have been developed as a result of a review of various international and regional examples, consultation with experts in the different areas and a wide cross section of stakeholders in SPTO member countries. Attendees of the Apia workshop were sent copies of the final draft list for consideration any many came back with approvals and additions, which were integrated into the check lists found in section 4 of this Kit. Examples of their feedback are shown below.

Quote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree but, I would prefer the pillows and mattresses are separated from the linen. Tuvalu - We need a clock in the reception and directional signage. What about maintenance checks? Niue - We should check for flushing toilet working in bathroom, hot water working in the bathroom. Tonga - The drafts looks good to me. It puts everything more clearer than during the workshop. Solomon Islands
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Similar to the Code of Practice, the wording of the criteria is designed to be positive and action-orientated. In order to facilitate assessment the criterion does not only specify the element to be examined ie business license, but also indicates the situation that would allow the assessor to mark a tick i.e. sighted and up to date. Anything less would require the assessor to make a note in the margin of the assessment checklist (provided in the resources section). More information on what makes a "good criterion" is provided in Section 3 of the kit.

How are they to be used?

There are four main ways the minimum standards can be used:

- Safety Assurance
- Business licensing
- Training and awareness
- Information for investors

Safety Assurance

The main purpose of minimum standards is to safeguard the wellbeing of visitors and maintain and enhance the reputation of the destination. In order to fulfill this role, minimum standards need to be a mandatory part of operating tourist accommodation and penalties need to apply to those not meeting these standards. Mandatory assessments require legal procedures to be in place and this can take time to establish. In the meantime, **exclusion-based incentives** such as the risk of exclusion from brochures or website marketing, can be used in order to increase observance of the standards.

Business Licensing

Once legal procedures have been established, Minimum Standards can be linked to annual renewals of **business licenses**, meaning that establishments not meeting the minimum standards will not be recommended for renewals until they do. In the worst case this could involve the closure of establishments whilst urgently needed maintenance and improvements are undertaken. The legal implications of this will be specific to each country and need to be examined on a case by case basis with the appropriate authorities.

Training and Awareness

Discussions with tour operators and tourists reveal safety and hygiene form one of visitors' main concerns on their trips to the South Pacific. Once Minimum Standards in these areas are established, it is advisable to **develop an information sheet** and establish short training courses and presentations to accommodation providers in order to assist with the upgrading process prior to the assessments taking place. The list of minimum standards could also be made available through the website and be provided as an integral part of all tourism education programmes.

Information for Investors

Many safety issues are best addressed early on in the design and building of a property so it is important that proper advise on minimum standards for commercial accommodation is available to investors. An **investor information** sheet or brochure should be produced highlighting expected minimum standards.

Assessment Process

The Resource Kit provides a list of core criterion for the assessment of Minimum Standards and a generic checklist which can be used for the assessment process. However, the specifics of the criteria will need to be discussed and agreed on with the appropriate government departments in consultation with the local tourism industry before the checklist is used.

Forming a committee

It is recommended that a **Minimum Standards Committee** is established made up of representatives from fire, health and building standards' Departments (or appropriate other authority) along with the tourism office, Business Licensing Board (or appropriate other authority) and a representative from the Tourism Industry Association. The committee should start by reviewing and agreeing on the criterion and then focus on the development of an action plan to consider the following:

- Who will conduct the assessments?
- How regularly they will be carried out?
- How the results will be recorded?
- What to action will be taken on those who fail?

- What legal backing does the system require?

Some notes are provided in this Resource Kit to assist this process.

Conducting the assessments

It is recommended that minimum standards assessment is carried out by the national tourism office in close cooperation with health, fire and transport safety officials. Information on training assessors is provided in Section 3.

Frequency

Conditions in accommodation establishments can change rapidly. To be effective, minimum standards assessments need to be conducted on an annual basis if possible.

Administration & Reporting

Minimum standards assessments should be relatively quick to conduct and should not require large amounts of reporting. In most cases the standard requirement can be a letter notifying the hotelier of the forthcoming visit (this could be avoided by making a regular time of year for these checks or using public media announcements) and a letter confirming the results of the assessment, noting any points of possible concern.

Procedures for dealing with those properties not meeting minimum standards need to be determined depending on the legal possibilities open to the NTO. However, if there are some criteria on the list that are in such as serious condition that they may be life-threatening the necessary legal mechanisms should be put in place to immediately close the property and deal with offenders. Further discussion in Section 3.

Hint

The reputation of all can be damaged by just a few.

Review and appeals

The criterion and assessment process should be reviewed on an annual basis by the standards committee in consideration of any concerns of the assessors or submissions from accommodation providers. Further discussion in Section 3.

Recommended Implementation Process

- Distribute draft standards
- Form Minimum Standards committee
- Organise committee/stakeholder meeting to discuss the draft standards and their assessment process
- Develop an action plan for the assessment process
- Train assessors in cooperation with other government depts.
- Implement assessments in close partnership with industry association
- Monitor and review process on an annual basis.

BLOCK 3: ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME

If the minimum standards, programme is effective, after a few years most of the accommodation establishments should be passing the assessment. At this point unless it is strengthened, the minimum standards assessment will slowly cease to be an inspiration for operators do any more than maintain the minimum standards. A higher level of assessment is required which incorporates not only minimum standards but also basic quality standards. This can be provided by the development and use of an accreditation programme.

What is an accreditation programme?

An accreditation programme is one of a suite of tools used in quality assurance as a means of assessing and officially recognizing that an operation has reached the required basic quality standard. The scheme can be run as a public sector or joint public-private sector initiative. It is run in a similar manner to the minimum standards programme except that accreditation is usually a voluntary process linked to a number of incentives such as marketing and promotion benefits.

What is involved in Accreditation?

Moving from minimum standards to an accreditation programme, or taking up an accreditation programme as the initial quality assurance scheme for a destination, involves three key steps. First, unlike minimum standards, quality assurance assessment varies by type of accommodation so the first step is to define accommodation categories and determine which properties fall in which category. The second step is the development and assessment of quality-based criteria. The third step is the calculation of results.

Defining accommodation categories

As explained in the introduction, there are significant advantages in terms of consumer and travel trade information if SPTO member countries adopt the same type and definitions for accommodation categories. The larger number of categories, the more complex the process of assessment and criterion development becomes, and with most SPTO countries having a relatively small accommodation plant there is logic in adopting as small number of categories.

Based on the review of international examples and a study of accommodation types across the South Pacific, it is recommended that the SPTO regional system adopts just 4 accommodation categories for assessment purposes; Hotel and resort, Self-catering (including motels and holiday rentals), Guesthouse (including Inns, Backpackers and Bed and Breakfasts) and Traditional (including all informal accommodation). The key characteristics and definitions of these categories are included in the table below.

Table 2. Definitions of Accommodation Categories

Category	Sub-category	Key Defining Characteristics	Definition & description	Source
1. Hotel & Resort	Hotel: Business, beach, family, motel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 24 hour reception ➤ Restaurant ➤ Parking 	Establishment with reception, services and additional facilities where accommodation and in most cases meals are available.	ISO 18513
	Resort: Beach, spa, island, family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More than one restaurant ➤ Recreational activities ➤ Tours arranged 	An exclusive establishment similar to a hotel, but in addition it offers a wide selection of leisure activities, such as a spa, pool, beach, multiple restaurants.	Adapted from AAA and Samoan 5 Star
2. Self-Catering, rentals and motels	Self-catering: Apartments, holiday rentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kitchen facilities for guests ➤ Laundry facilities ➤ Parking 	Accommodation available for short and medium term stay with provision of installations and equipment for preparing, cooking and serving meals by the customer	Adapted from ISO 18513,
	Holiday rentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Private lounge, dining room and kitchen facilities 	Self-contained units, houses, bungalows, apartments or flats equipped for self-catering on a short or long-term basis	Adapted from Tonga Minimum Standards
	Motel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parking facilities close to room ➤ Some self-catering facilities 	Accommodation units with parking facilities close-by, designed to attract motorists.	Adapted AAA & ISO 18513
3. Guesthouses, inns and bed & breakfast	Backpackers and hostels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Range of room types ➤ Communal dining area ➤ Kitchen for staff or guest use ➤ Communal lounge ➤ Bag storage 	Short term accommodation providing simple facilities and sometimes meals.	Adapted AAA & ISO 18513
	Inn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restaurant and bar usually provided 	Short-term lodging where guests and visitors can procure food and drink	Samoa 5 Star
	Bed and Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Less than 10 rooms ➤ Breakfast included in price 	Private house where the price of accommodation includes breakfast	Adapted from ISO 18513,
4. Traditional & informal accommodation	Bungalows, fale, bures, village and other informal accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local food provided ➤ Cultural experience and entertainment provided 	Simple guest accommodation in traditional dwelling usually in isolated location	Adapted from Samoan 5 Star
	Ecolodge: resort, traditional, mountain, beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Efforts to reduce waste and utility use ➤ Adherence to Code of Practice ➤ Traditional architecture 	Small scale facility that blends in with its surroundings, offering visitors a close environmental or cultural experience.	Adapted from WTO

		> Interpretation of nature/culture > Outstanding location		
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Note that although ecolodges are included here under traditional and informal accommodation, their level can vary from informal to high end resort. The category under which they are assessed would need to be discussed and agreed during the application process (see Section 3). It is suggested that properties meeting the core sustainability criterion be allowed to add "ecolodge" to their category award if they wish.

The definitions provided in the table above are recommended but not compulsory. These also need to be debated and agreed on in a national context and widely then publicized rather than imposed. This will allow assessors to make the decision on what category to assess the property under, more transparent. Whilst in some cases this will be relatively clear-cut, in others it may be more problematic. Where an establishment falls between two categories and some flexibility will be needed. The category should be discussed with the owner or manager during the application process for accreditation (see Section 3).

Defining criterion

Table 10 in the Resources Section identifies 163 criteria that need to be assessed in the SPTO-recommended accreditation programme. There are three main types of criteria;

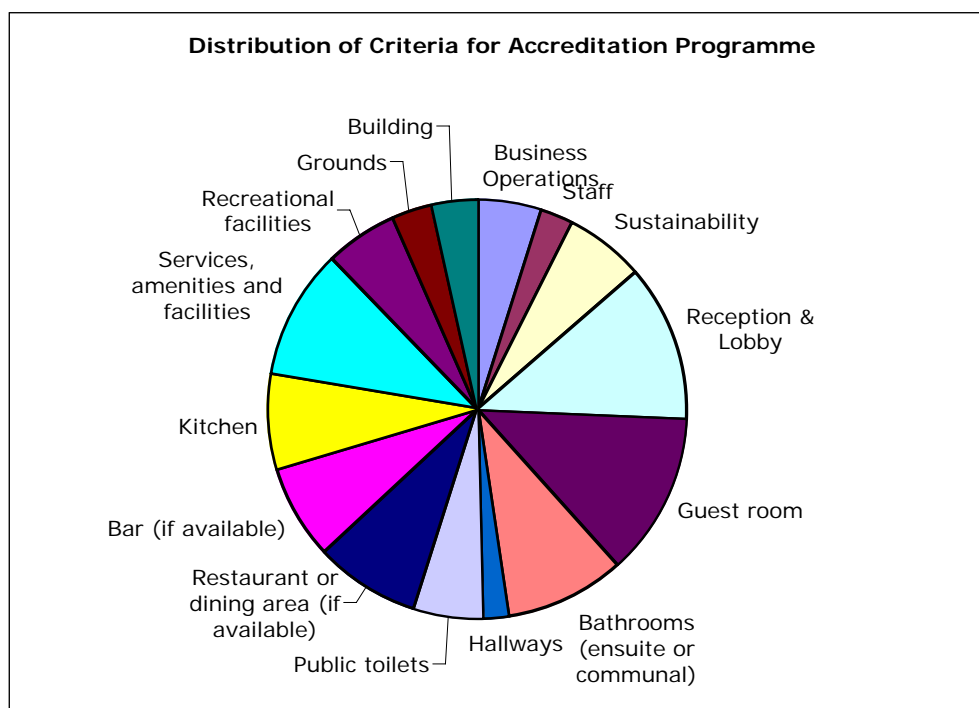
- Items marked M are compulsory for all properties want to achieve a 'listing. These correspond to the minimum standards of block 2.
- Items marked with a K or M are compulsory for all properties wanting to be formally accredited.
- Items marked with a number are compulsory for that category of accommodation and voluntary for all others
- Unmarked items are voluntary for all accommodation types

Table 10 lists the recommended criteria and also the expected standard at each level. The standards are approximately equivalent to the 1-star property level in the star-rating scheme. These can be increased if the level of accommodation quality is higher than this, using the star rating criteria for three star.

Table 11 provides the same information in the form of a checklist. In the interests of space, just one checklist has been set up. Once the criteria have been finalised however,

it may be better to have one check-list for each type of accommodation, showing which are compulsory items for this category. Similarly, in order to simplify the scheme presented here, no differences in the 'weighting' and distribution of criteria between categories of accommodation are recommended. These are both things that could be added at a later date if needed. For example, the points could be redistributed to give greater weight to aspects such as recreation activities in a resort and 'hosting' in a Guest house. Figure 3 shows the distribution of accreditation criteria.

Figure 3. Distribution of Accreditation Criteria



Although it is recommended that core criteria indicated are the same in all destinations. Some countries may decide that some of the currently voluntary criteria should be made compulsory depending on national priorities and key issues.

Award system

Most accreditation programmes provide just one level of award - accredited. Whilst this system is important to the raising of overall standards, it provides minimal motivation to exceed the accreditation standards and little assistance for those countries more worried about properties not reaching the accredited level. The SPTO-recommended system allows for three levels of accreditation:

- ☑ Listed - Those properties meeting minimum standards (M), this requires 51 points regardless of the accommodation type
- ☑ Accredited - Those properties meeting all compulsory criterion (M & K), requires between 65 points for traditional/informal accommodation and 96 points for Hotel and Resorts.
- ☑ Accredited plus - Those properties meeting all compulsory criterion and more than half of the voluntary criterion, for their accommodation type, would be eligible for the award of Accredited plus. Accreditation plus requires between 81 points for traditional/informal accommodation and 120 points for Hotel and Resorts. The formula used to calculate the accredited score plus is 25%. The formula can be adjusted to suite the country, ie if no properties achieve accredited plus it could be reduced to 15%. More information about adjusting the Master Score Table can be found in Section 3.

The Master score table below is meant as a guideline, based on the check lists provided in the Resource Section 3 of the Kit.

Table 3. Master Score Table for Accreditation

Categories / Scores	Listed	Accredited	Accredited PLUS
Hotel & resort	51-91	96-115	120-
Self Catering	51-74	79-94	99-
Guesthouse	51-71	76-90	95-
Traditional	51-60	65-76	81-

Properties that score in the 5-pt 'marginal zone' between ratings receive the higher of the two ratings. However, if they don't move out of the marginal area the following year they are down-graded. The award system is simple, the scores are totaled and matched to the master score table below in order to identify which star rating bracket the property falls into.

Figure 4. Scores Required for Accreditation by Category



The scores have developed as a result of numerous piloting activities with hotels of different types and sizes. However, the situation and benchmarking process will vary from destination to destination so it is important to fine-tune this score table before commencing implementation. This process is discussed further in Section 3.

Is there scope for national variation?

The accreditation system will not work without national ownership and private sector involvement. The SPTO standards will inevitably need to be adapted to fit the realities in the destination in consultation with key public and private sector stakeholders.

Although the Minimum and Key items are recommended for all SPTO countries, in some countries fire and health checks are carried out separately so these items can be removed from the check list and replaced with a criterion noting that these certificates have been sighted. In other cases items listed as voluntary here may need to be considered compulsory in a national context.

The voluntary items may also be added or deleted in consultation with key stakeholders. The initial development and annual review process is the opportunity for stakeholders to gain ownership of the process and mould it to fit the realities in the destination. This process is discussed further in Section 3.

HINT

Although the "plus" system is recommended here as a way of encouraging increased quality of facilities, countries may also choose to adopt the accreditation system without this.

How are they to be used?

- Assessment purposes
- Training purposes
- Investor information

The main purpose of the scheme is to accredit complying properties, but as with the minimum standards programmes, the check-lists can also be used for training and investor information.

Accreditation Process

Accreditation Committee

In order to ensure that the process is fair and credible, an accreditation committee needs to be established to review the criteria and discuss the case of appeals (see Section 3 on Administration).

Conducting the assessments

An assessment team of at least 2 assessors is desirable depending on the size of the accommodation stock in the country. However, each assessment should, if possible, be conducted by just one assessment officer. This will enable the officer to gain rapport with the hoteliers. In some cases it may be suitable for a junior officer to accompany the accreditation officer for training purposes.

Frequency

The standard of facilities and services can change rapidly particularly if there is a change of management. Assessment for accreditation purposes is recommended every 12-18 months.

Decal

The assessment decal should note the category of the property, award (accredited or accredited plus) and year of assessment. See Administration Section for more information.

Administration & Reporting

Unlike minimum standards, accreditation is normally a voluntary process linked to incentives such as marketing benefits. Interested properties will need to **apply** to be accredited. It is recommended that part of this application process involves establishments committing to Code of Practice. Following application, an arrangement will be made for an assessment of the property. This will normally take 1-2 hours. After the assessment the owners need to be provided with an **evaluation** of the property. Those properties not meeting accreditation standards need to be alerted to where they need to improve. To avoid mistakes and hasty decisions, it is recommended that the evaluation is not left with the property owner but prepared in the office shortly after the assessment and sent out.

In the case of failure to meet standards, re-assessment may be arranged when these areas have been addressed and in some cases the payment of a re-assessment fee will be required (see Section 3 for further details).

Appeals

Those establishments dissatisfied with their result should be able to lodge an official complaint with the accreditation committee and where successful be allowed a free re-assessment of their property by a different assessor.

Recommended Implementation Process

- Distribute draft criterion
- Form accreditation committee
- Review accreditation criterion, adapt and finalise
- Develop action plan for assessment process
- Train assessors
- Conduct assessments, report results
- Address appeals and re-assessments where necessary
- Review criterion

BLOCK 4: STAR RATING SYSTEM

Those SPTO countries that already have an extensive stock of good quality accommodation, may find star rating rather than accreditation, the most appropriate quality assurance tool to adopt. However, star rating is a fairly complex and technical process and should not be undertaken without due consideration and expertise. Having a star rating system also exposes the destination to international comparison which may or may not be an advantage. Despite the fact that there is no 'official' international rating scheme, in the mind of the consumers there are particular expectations of different star levels that need to be met to avoid disappointment.

What is Star Rating?

Star rating is the uppermost block of the SPTO-recommended quality assurance framework. It involves assessing accommodation properties in a similar way to the accreditation programme but rather than simply ticking or crossing the presence or absence of particular facilities or services, it also involves giving a quality rating for the item.

We have heard many concerns from hoteliers about the objectivity of ratings. Assessors in turn have stated that they are often unsure what is a 'three' for a particular item and what is a 'five'. The credibility of any rating system hangs on its transparency and consistency (ability to consistently rate the same property the same way on different days using different assessors).

Consequently, as well as developing a check list of items over and above the accreditation list, we have also developed assessor/hotelier guidelines that specify the particular expectation at particular score levels for each criterion. These can act as a guide for both the assessor and the hotelier as to what is to be expected and how the scoring is undertaken.

What is involved in Star rating?

Categories

Like accreditation processes, star rating first requires the identification, definition and organization of properties into different accommodation categories. The reason for categorizing accommodation is that the requirements for a 5-star Guesthouse will not be the same as a 5 star Resort

because visitors have different expectations of these services.

The SPTO-recommended star rating uses the same accommodation categories as used for the accreditation process (see Table 2) in order to encourage greater harmony not only between countries but between the successive levels of quality assurance. Accommodation should be categorized in discussion with the owner, during the application for an assessment. See Section 3.

Criteria

Like the accreditation process, star rating requires the identification of a list of criteria for assessment purposes. In order to facilitate the graduation of destinations from accreditation to star-rating, the SPTO-recommended Star Rating system uses same base list of criteria as the accreditation, with the addition of extra voluntary facilities and service items that make the star system more in line with international expectations. For example, the star rating system rates telephone and reception staff manner and knowledge as well as assessing the quality of items such as towels, pillows and the spaciousness of rooms. An extra area has been added for business services and additional recreational facilities have been extended.

The criteria have been developed based on examples from the South Pacific and worldwide. They were screened by SPTO workshop participants and have been piloted in Samoa. The selection of the criteria has been influenced by the key issues mentioned in the Section 1, that the scheme should provide

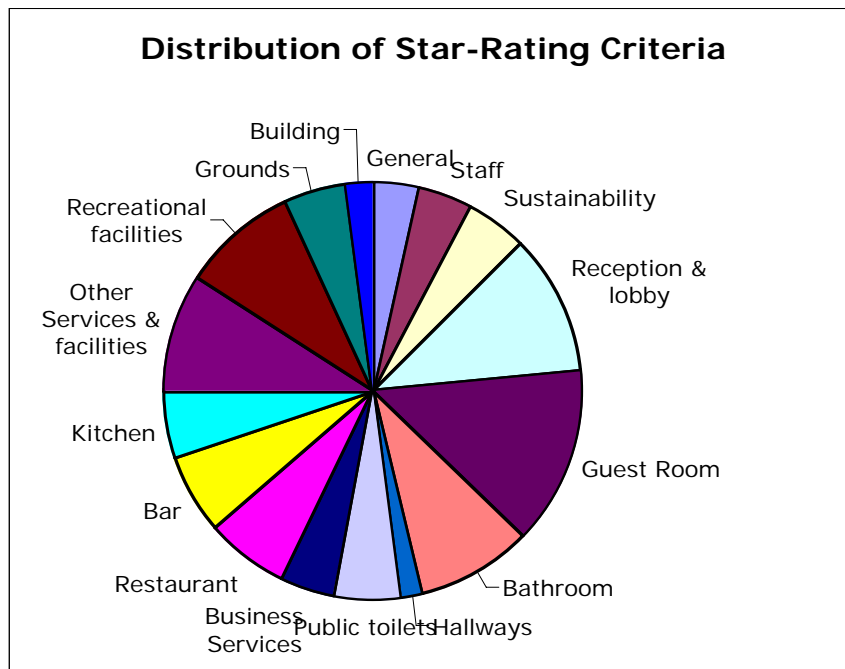
- Something for everyone
- Have a Pacific feel
- Adopt a holistic approach (business operations, service & facilities and sustainability)
- Involve active Participation
- Incorporate training and capacity-building
- Be credible, transparent and objective
- Be affordable & Simple
- Be in touch with the market

Taking these factors into consideration, and also the clear desire from stakeholders to monitor not just facilities but

also service levels, has influenced the type of criteria included. However, the emphasis is much more on quality and cleanliness than on the number and extent of facilities.

There are a total of 214 criteria in 15 different areas around the property with additional spaces left for inserting extra items. Table 12 shows the list of criteria, and Table 13 provides a generic checklist for rating properties. The following pie chart shows the distribution of star-rating criteria by area, showing the emphasis on facilities, typical with international star-rating systems but also additional elements such as sustainability and business services not usually seen.

Figure 5. Distribution of Star Rating Criteria



In order to simplify the assessment process, like with the accreditation scheme, no differences in the 'weighting' and distribution of criteria are recommended between categories. This is something that could be added at a later date if it is found to be needed. This will need to be based on solid customer expectations of different types of accommodation (see Section 3).

Scoring

Every criterion is evaluated for its quality and allocated a score on a scale of 0-5. To make the system easy to understand, the score system relates broadly to the star

ratings, 5 points meaning a 5 star-quality item. The marking system is as follows:

- 5= Excellent quality
- 4= Very good quality, over expectations
- 3= Good quality, meets expectations
- 2= Standard quality
- 1= Present and basic quality
- 0= Not present

In exceptionally worrying circumstances, we recommend the use of demerit marks.

- 1=Poor, needs work
- 2=Very poor, needs immediate work

Demerit marks should be written in red on the score sheet and act as a flag to assessors to follow up on. These marks are subtracted from the total and act to reduce the total score, making it difficult for a property performing particularly badly in a few areas to score highly overall. The Assessor guidelines help the assessor decide which score should be given, describing the expected standard at 1, 3 and 5 points. They use their own experience to award two or four points to those items falling in between these key standards.

As one of the main aims of the system was to be simple, manageable and transparent, no half stars are awarded especially as these have been found to confused customers. Instead, properties that score in the 15pt 'marginal zone' between two star ratings receive the higher of the two ratings. However, if they don't move out of the marginal area the following year they are down-graded to the lower of the two ratings. The process is simple, the scores are totaled and matched to the master score table below in order to identify which star rating bracket the property falls into.

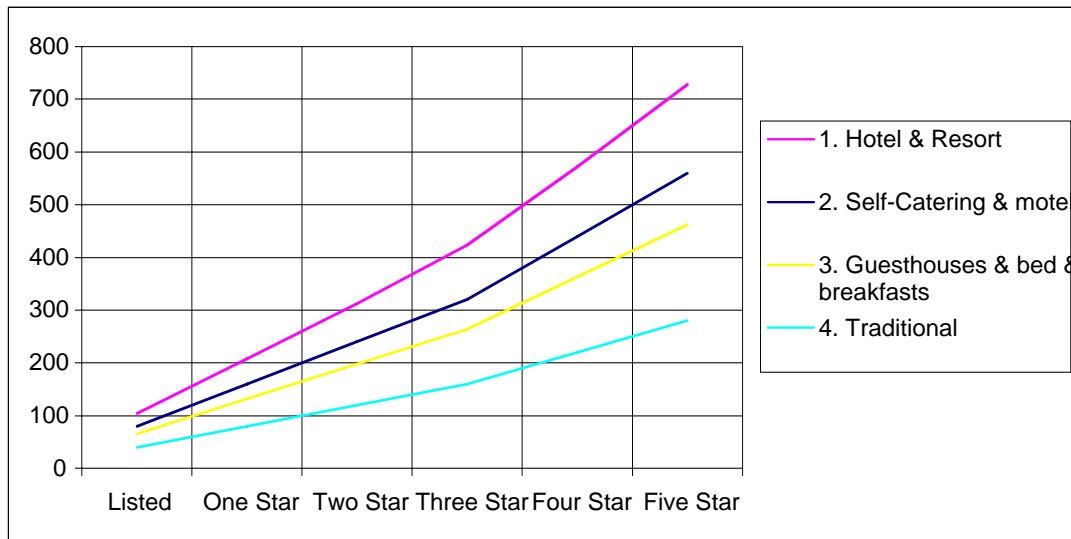
Table 4. Master Score Table for Star Rating

Category	Listed	One Star	Two Star	Three Star	Four Star	Five Star
1. Hotel & Resort	104-193	208-297	312-409	424-557	572-713	728
2. Self-Catering & motels	80-145	160-225	240-305	320-425	440-545	560
3. Guesthouses & bed & breakfasts	66-117	132-183	198-249	264-348	363-447	462

4. Traditiona l & informal	40-65	80-105	120-145	160-205	220-265	280
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Although considerable effort has been made to pilot the scores against benchmarked properties, as with other aspects of the quality assurance system, these scores are a guideline only, and will need to be further piloted and 'ground-truthed' in the context of particular destinations. This process is discussed further in the following section.

Figure 6. Graph of Scores required for Star Rating by Category



Listed

In order to be 'listed', all types of accommodation have to score at least 1 on all the key items. For traditional accommodation there are just 140 key items, whilst for hotels/resort category there are 104. This reflects the different levels of service and amenities expected by international visitors. This award corresponds roughly to minimum standards of block 2.

One Star

One star corresponds broadly to accreditation level. To get a one-star rating, traditional and informal properties need to score at least a 1 on all the key criteria and an additional 40 points on any other combination of criteria in

order to reach 82 points. The formula used to calculate the number of points needed for one star is "minimum listed score for the category X 2".

Two Star

The same principle applies for 2 Stars, which corresponds roughly to Accredited Plus'. Properties need an average of three points on all key items or any other combination that gets the property sufficient points to reach the two star total. Hotels and resorts need to score 303 points to get a two star rating. The formula for calculating the number of points for two star is "minimum listed score for the category X 3".

Three star

Similarly for 3 Stars (which is over and above the accredited plus level) properties need an average of 4 on all key items or any other combination that gets the property sufficient points. Self-catering and motels need 320 points to reach 3 star, hotels and resorts need 424 - so its easier to be a 3 star motel than a 3-star hotel. The formula is minimum listed score X 3.

Four Star

To get a four star rating is a slightly larger step up requiring not only an average of 4 or 5 on the key ratings but also, for hotels, at least 50 of the voluntary items to score 572. The formula is minimum listed score X 5.5.

Five Star

To get a five star rating is the biggest step up requiring not only an average of 5 on the key ratings but also, for hotels, at least a 2 on 75 of the voluntary items, or any other combination that allows the property to score 728 points. The formula is minimum listed score X 7.

The scores have been weighted so that it is relatively easy to get the low ratings but much more difficult to get 4 or 5 stars which are viewed as more prestigious and internationally recognised.

HINT

We have heard numerous times from tour operators that it is important not to over-rate properties. Over-rating leads to customer disappointment and reduces the reputation of the destination.

Is there scope for national variation?

Like the accreditation system, the SPTO- recommended star rating system cannot simply be transposed from this document to country situation. It will not work without national ownership and private sector involvement. The system recommended here will inevitably need to be adapted to fit the realities in the destination in consultation with key public and private sector stakeholders.

In some destinations, assessors may feel they have the time to add meal quality and service to the list, and in others, greater weight may need to be given to aspects of maintenance and housekeeping.

We would however, strongly recommend that the main 4 categories of accommodation remain the same in each country. Similarly, we recommend that the core items on the list of criteria are adhered to in each country (with the exception of fire and health checks if these are carried out separately and with variation in the traditional/informal accommodation).

How are the stars to be used?

- Standards Raising
- Marketing
- Training purposes
- Investor information

The main purpose of the SPTO star ratings is to provide properties with a clear marketing incentive to upgrade their standards, and guidelines as to how this can be most effectively undertaken to meet guest expectations.

In addition, as with the other levels of quality assurance, the guidelines provide an invaluable training tool and source of information for potential investors on what is required for a particular level of property.

Star Rating Process

Rating Committee

In order to help ensure that the process of star rating assessment is fair and credible, a star rating committee needs to be established. The role of the committee will be to review the criteria and master score tables on a regular

basis (annually) and also to meet and discuss the case of appeals (see section on Administration). The committee should be made up of a small group of highly experienced and respected members of the tourism community who are not directly working in the accommodation sector. However, it is important that hotel association (if one is present) representatives do sit on the committee in order to represent hoteliers interests and make the process more transparent.

Conducting the assessments

It is strongly recommended that the actual star rating assessment is conducted by a maximum of 2 assessors (one senior and one assistant). This will enable the assessors to gain rapport with the hoteliers. The assessors will go around the property at a mutually agreed time with their check lists and mark each criteria. The assessment should start with a 15 minute interview with the manager or owner (more Section 3 for further information).

Frequency

The standard of facilities and services can change rapidly particularly if there is a change of management. Assessment for star rating purposes is recommended every 12-18 months.

Decal

The star rating certificate or sticker should note the category of the property, the number of stars and year of assessment. See following Section.

Administration & Reporting

Like accreditation, star rating is normally a voluntary activity. It is recommended that a small fee is levied to help off-set the costs of the assessment process. The fee should be set relative to the type and size of the property but not related to the star rating received. The fee will vary depending on the amount of public sector funding but a guideline is provided in Table 5 in the following Section.

Following the assessment the property owner or manager needs to be provided with the results. To help prevent mistakes, it is recommended that the marked-up check-list for the property is not left with the manager but sent to the properties electronically or by fax over the following days after the assessment, after the total grades have been checked by the senior assessor. A cover sheet should also be provided indicating the category, rating decision, scores in

different areas and any comments on areas needing improvement.

For those properties not meeting star rating, re-assessment may be arranged when these areas have been addressed and in some cases the payment of a re-assessment fee will be required (see Administration Section for further details).

Review and appeals

Facilities and conditions can change rapidly, it is necessary to review the criterion and assessment process on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant. Those establishments dissatisfied with their result should be able to lodge an official complaint with the accreditation committee and, where successful, be allowed a free re-assessment of their property by a different assessor.

Recommended Implementation Process

- Hold public meeting to discuss the idea of star rating and suggested criteria
- Form star rating committee
- Identify assessors and begin assessor training
- Pilot rating criteria and master score card, adapt and finalise
- Develop action plan for assessment process
- Begin assessments, report results
- Address appeals and re-assessments where necessary
- Review criteria prior to second round of ratings

SECTION 3 : ADMINISTRATIVE
MECHANISMS

SECTION 3 : DEVELOPMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Theory is one thing, practice is another. Although learning by doing and adjusting the system (within reason) to suit your country's situation is probably the best approach, here we provide you with a few administrative tips that may help you move from tools to implementation.

SETTING UP YOUR PROGRAMME

After having attended the SPTO training workshop, and having read this Resource Kit, you may feel you are ready to establish your own quality assurance programme. In which case, you may have some of the following questions in mind.

- Which 'block' is right for my country?
- How do I start?
- Who should be in my committee?

We will address these briefly in this start-up section.

Which block is right for my country?

Which block you select depends on where you are now and the size and diversity of your accommodation sector and the approach your government adopts towards tourism. From what we have seen and heard during the consultation process to date we would recommend the following:

Table 5. Recommended Classification Systems for SPTO Members

SPTO Member country	Recommended Classification Approach
Cook Islands	Accreditation plus
Fiji	Star rating
French Polynesia	Star rating
Kiribati	Minimum Standards
New Caledonia	Star rating
Niue	Accreditation plus
PNG	Minimum Standards/ Accreditation plus
Samoa	Accreditation plus / Star rating
Solomon Island	Minimum Standards / Accreditation plus
Tonga	Accreditation plus
Tuvalu	Minimum Standards
Vanuatu	Accreditation-plus

However, this is not a ruling, and the NTO must make their own decision based on their experience of the accommodation

stock, views of stakeholders and preferences of the Government. Consider the following:

- Should some of the accommodation properties in your country be closed down due to dangerous and unacceptable practices? If so, minimum standards may be best for you.
- Does your government prefer the carrot or the stick approach? Accreditation is a carrot, minimum standards is the stick!
- Do you have more than 10 properties? If not, you are probably better with minimum standards as accreditation may create hostilities between property owners.
- Do you have more than 10 properties in each accommodation category? If so you may have a big enough stock to consider a star rating scheme.
- Are international tour operators buying up most of your rooms? If so, and your stock is big enough, star rating schemes are often more widely recognised than accreditation programmes.

How do I start?

The process needs to start with government commitment and public consultation. In each of the blocks it has been recommended that a committee is formed - either a minimum standards, accreditation or star rating committee.

The role of the committee should be:

- Review the criteria and master score tables on a regular basis (annually)
- Meet and discuss the case of appeals
- Review the performance of assessors and participate in the screening of new candidates.

The committee should be made up of a mix of public and private sector individuals. These should be experienced and respected members of the tourism community but NOT those that are currently working in the accommodation sector. Often the Secretary of the local Tourism or Hotel Association is a good candidate. Consider a small committee of 6-8 people. This will make it easier to reach decisions, whilst still being large enough to have most voices represented.

Here are some potential candidates:

- Head of NTO Department responsible for assessments

- Chair of tourism or hotel association
- Representative from Fire Office
- Representative from Public Health Office
- Several tour operator
- Several former hoteliers

Once you have formed the committee and decided which block you are going to adopt, you need to develop a plan of action for the development and implementation phase of your programme.

The development phase may take from six to nine months. It will involve public consultation, a review of the criteria and master score tables, the selection and training of assessors, consideration of the assessment process, investigation and resolution of any legal issues, finalising the decal and the administration and reporting procedures.

The implementation phase involves actually getting your team out to do the assessments, report the results, award grades and effectively manage the information collected. We will examine and discuss some of the activities that come under both these phases.

DEVELOPMENT PHASE

One of the first activities for your committee is to review the criteria and master score cards provided in this Kit for their applicability to your own country situation.

Reviewing Criteria

Although we have given you 214 examples to start you off, some countries may feel they need more criteria in some areas. As most of our piloting took place in Samoa where there are no holiday rentals, self-catering or apartments yet, those countries that do have a good stock of these properties may find the need to extend the criteria to better suite this type of accommodation.

You may want to first undertake a review of the existing criteria in a closed door session, and then later, when your office has a draft hold a public consultation session to debate them further. This is may take a whole day, but can be facilitated by having a warm-up meeting some days before when the whole assessment process is reviewed. Whoever is

facilitating the review, needs to make themselves familiar with the recommended terminology and format.

Criteria - the item that is being assessed

Type - what kind of criteria it is (minimum, key, voluntary)

Standard - describes the required standard for the criteria, the expectation.

What makes a good criteria?

Many schemes go wrong as they confuse the criteria with the standard. Make sure to separate these. When you develop new criteria screen them for their suitability using the following questions:

- Is this a neutral item? (No adjectives for criteria)

e.g. Extensive menu . How can you give that a 2 or a 3? Just use "menu" for the criteria and then add the description as the standard.

- Can you actually check it?

e.g. Sheets clean at all times. How can you check this? Think about how the criteria will be assessed and make a note for the assessor (Sheets cleaned every 3 days or for newly arriving guests)

- Is it in the right place in the list?

Having your check-lists in a logical order will save a lot of time. Start off with criteria you need to talk to the manager about and those that apply to all properties like guest rooms. End up with extra items and those that only apply to some properties like business facilities.

Use a pie chart such as those shown in this Kit to help you see where the emphasis of your programme falls. You can also break down the criteria into generic items such as staff or fire safety and so you can better see how your scheme is shaping up.

What makes a good standard?

Standards are the description of the desired state of the criteria. Standards range from the absolute minimum, used for minimum standards and the absolute maximum, used for a 5 star rating. The idea of providing a description is to assist the assessor make an objective and consistent decision and assist hoteliers know the difference between point allocations. Many schemes have failed or lost

credibility because they don't have standards. This comment from a South Pacific Hotelier shows why:

"If a police officer (an assessor) notes that an establishment only has one security guard instead of five security guards on the property does that merit two stars or does just having a security rep. on the premises merit a higher vote from the assessor?"

The way to handle this is to have a very clear set of standards which set the guidelines for assessors.

Screen your standards against the following questions:

- Is it a positive statement (you can't rate a negative)
e.g. No holes in mosquito nets acceptable. How can you give that a 2 or a 3?
Try: Mosquito nets in good condition (Assessors note: clean and no obvious holes)
- Does it make sense?
e.g. Unsightly plumbing fixtures neatly fixed. Can we understand this?
Try: Plumbing neatly fixed condition (Assessors note: no unsightly fixtures)
- Avoid adjectives where possible
e.g. Adequate lighting. Adequate for whom and for what?
Try: Lighting in all parts of the room with no exposed light bulbs.
- Does it fit with the grade?
e.g. Simple window drapes. This works well for minimum standards or accredited but should not be worth a 5 star rating. Be consistent in the standards under different point allocations in the star ratings other wise your assessors will have a hard job being consistent with their ratings.

HINT

Developing criteria for Star rating is slightly different from those for minimum standards and accreditation programmes. Remember, star rating standards are graduated

Reviewing Master Score Cards

The master score card helps assessors to work out the result of the assessment. The total score for a property is matched against the master score card to show which category the property falls into. For the accreditation programme there are three options; listed, accredited and accredited plus. For the Star rating programme there are 6 options listed, one, two, three, four or five star.

Benchmarking

We have developed, tested and adjusted the score cards included in this manual against 'benchmarked properties', properties we already know the approximate rating of. Benchmarking helps you ensure that the master score card is set right for your destination.

Benchmarking is easiest if you already have at least one internationally rated property in your country. If you know a particularly property is normally rated three star, it should also score three stars or close to three stars on the scheme and accredited plus on the accreditation scheme. Check that it does and if it doesn't you may need to revise the score card slightly.

If you do not have any internationally rated properties, select and assess what you consider to be the leading, middle and worst examples of accommodation standards in the various categories. These should score appropriately - ie the worst should fail or only qualify for a listing and the best should score at least three stars. If you plot these on the star-rating graph you should start to see clusters, these become your new star rating margins.

For the accreditation programme, you may want to check the "plus" ratings against a few of the best properties in your destination. If no one is anywhere near the grade, then you may have to adjust your plus ratings downwards. Similarly, if everyone easily makes the accredited plus grade it may be too easy and needs to be adjusted upwards.

There are two main ways to adjust the ratings, both require testing on at least 10 properties before adopting.

Adjusting the score card

One simple way is to just adjust the scores under different grades downwards. However make sure you do this in a logical manner. For example, instead of just taking 20 points off

each one, perhaps reduce it by a percentage of the difference between one level and the next.

For example, at the moment accredited plus properties require 25% more than accredited properties. If you find in your trial that more than half the properties qualify for accredited plus, try increasing this margin to 35 or 40%.

It is important to get the score card right before you start the implementation of your scheme as it will lose credibility if you are seen as 'manipulating' the score card to get a certain result. Ensure you have a clear process e.g. spend some time adjusting it at the beginning and then every second year.

Adjusting the standards

Another way to raise the bar is to adjust the standards upwards. This is also fairly simple although it does require some time to re-print all the check-lists. For the accreditation programme, the standards are set against the one-point rating standards. If this is too low, try using 3-point rating system instead.

Similarly, if your sector is over-performing in the star-rating system, you may need to adjust the standards so 1 point is for good quality, 3 for excellent and 5 for totally exceptional.

Reviewing the Check-lists

Once the standards have been finalized, the check-lists also need to be finalized. Models have been developed and are included in Section 4 of the Kit, showing how you can move from the list of criteria to a check list which allows for multiple room restaurant, bar and kitchen assessments. These are best used in a spreadsheet so that totals are automatically summed and averaged out for multiple rooms. Although the check-lists provided in this kit are generic (applicable to all categories of accommodation), it is a relatively simple process to move to categorized checklists based on the numbers in the 'type' column. In order to simplify this process, no differences in the 'weighting' and distribution of criteria are recommended between categories. This is something that could be added at a later date if needed.

SELECTING AND TRAINING ASSESSORS

Not everyone is assessor material. Here is an example of the concerns people have. This comment was sent to me from a Samoan Hotelier.

Stakeholder questions
1. How does one get selected to be on the accommodations standards assessors committee?
2. Who should be allowed to be an assessor?
What we are really trying to get at is - how do we know that these individuals, some whom are not in the tourism industry and know absolutely nothing about the industry, are qualified to vote as to how many stars an organization merits?

To adopt the formative approach discussed at the beginning of the Resource Kit, where the assessor acts as a hotel advisor, giving hoteliers ideas about how they can improve, requires a fairly experienced and mature individual.

However, it is quite possible to do the assessments recommended in this kit without huge amounts of hotel experience, this will come with time. The most important criteria for an assessor is that they are intelligent, systematic, honest, reliable, have good communication skills and are physically fit. Its hard work assessing hotels in a restricted period of time, many of which do not have lifts or may be physically spread out.

Your ideal assessors will have :

- Lots of common sense
- Lots of tact and discretion
- Ability to act fairly and impartially, especially when under pressure
- Good powers of observation
- Good memory
- Good communication skills
- Wide experience of different property types

What if your assessors don't fit any of these characteristics?

You may already have officers who have been assigned to the task of rating accommodation, yet seem very unsuited to the task. Give them a chance, perhaps you can mould them to fit

the profile through hard training and practice. If not, you may be on the look out for some new assessors.

HINT

The credibility of your Classification scheme depends on the quality and professionalism of your Assessors

Training

Training assessors involves more than doing pilot assessments. Here are some suggestions:

- Start with training focused on the job description and what it will entail.
- Familiarise the assessor/s with the issues of quality assurance in the broader context, so that they understand the need for it and can convey that message to the businesses they are assessing.
- Get them to read and ask questions of this resource kit.
- Develop their communication and presentational skills.
- Familiarise them with the actual accommodation types.
- Familiarise them with the assessment forms and documentation, providing background reasons for any particular requirements.
- Undertake trial assessments of test properties, comparing results with other assessors and looking for consistency of approach (one assessor, one property)
- Provide on-the-job training with an experienced assessor.
- Arrange secondment to another established assessment body for additional experience.
- Arrange for an experienced assessor to come and provide a short training course.
- Provide support and back-up when required.

Test assessments

A lot can be learned from test assessments including the details of timing most efficient pattern of assessments. Consider the following when conducting a test assessment.

- Agree date and time for visit and arrive promptly

- ☑ Deal only with the nominated representative
- ☑ Present a constructive, positive, non-threatening attitude
- ☑ Act professionally at all times. Avoid over-familiarity
- ☑ Avoid confrontational situations and conflicts of interest
- ☑ Speak softly (they know you carry a big stick!)
- ☑ Record everything in writing
- ☑ Explain fully what is involved
- ☑ Provide rapid feedback, preferably in writing
- ☑ Follow up on any undertakings promptly

HINT

DO NOT: Be heavy handed, turn-up late or ill-prepared, adopt a behind-the-back approaches to staff or customers, fail to fully investigate before taking action, resort prematurely to legal or other sanctions, be overly familiar with the business operator or pay attention to industry gossip. Never ask for complementary service.

Remember: good, formative assessments can help with upgrading. Assessors can:

- share the benefit of experience of similar operations elsewhere, they can provide advice on better ways to do things
- Identify shortfalls and deficiencies in inventories and service levels, providing impartial and objective feedback on all relevant aspects of the business.
- Provide information about where to go for additional advice or assistance.
- Investigate customer complaints fairly and impartially, with maximum feedback to both parties.

What-if Scenarios

Running through a range of what-if scenarios is a good training tool for new assessors. Meet as a group and discuss some of the following questions.

- Q. **What if we are doing an accreditation assessment and the criteria is present but does not 'comply' with the standard?**

E.g. There is exterior lighting but not 'sufficient' to ensure safe entry at night.

A. You have to give this a cross. If it's a M or a K item, mark the cross in red. The property cannot be either listed or accredited until this problem is dealt with. Identify a timeframe (e.g. six weeks) and come back and check. Often a junior officer can be sent to do assessment follow-ups. If it is a voluntary item, it is not so important just alert the owner/operator using the comments space.

Q. What if there is just one minimum standard that is not met, can the property still be accredited?

A. Minimum standards are the very minimum. There can be no compromise, consistency is also vital here. Compromise for one property and you have to compromise to them all and then your standards are worth nothing.

Q. What if the property has facilities and services not listed on the check-lists?

A. This is why we have left some spaces in areas where you are likely to find extra items. Note down the item if it is of an acceptable standard e.g. volleyball court. If you start to notice that this items is consistently an extra you may want to include it in your standard check lists.

Q. How many bedrooms should I view?

A. At a small property used this table as a guideline, the minimum is 2, maximum 5.

Table 6. How many Bedrooms should be Assessed?

Size of property	Check at least
Less than 10 rooms	2 rooms
10-20 rooms	4 rooms
21-40 rooms	5 rooms
41+ rooms	5 rooms, walk through another 2

The check-list allows for up to five room evaluations. The overall score from each one is totaled and averaged out to give a master score for the bedroom.

Q. What if all rooms are occupied?

A. This is a frequent problem for hotel assessors, but timing can help. Time assessments for the time between

check out and check in whenever possible. When you set up the visit, check occupancy and let the hotelier know that you will need to view at least 3 rooms. In the event that no free rooms are available you will need to check at least one occupied room. It is difficult to do this but not impossible. During training visits practice assessing messy rooms so that you get used to looking beyond the mess. Go back and rate the same room when it is made up and compare the results.

Q. What if there are a large range of rooms?

A. In many properties there are a full range of rooms from dorm to honeymoon including twin, king, queen and en suite. If you only scored the honeymoon rooms this would give you a false impression of the room quality. However, if it is truly worthy of a 4 star grading, the quality of many aspects such as linen, pillows and cleanliness will be similar whatever the standard of the room.

We recommend that in the case of a small hotel, choose 2 standard rooms to assess. In the case of a larger hotel, assess the full range of rooms, one from each category.

HINT

It is important that you note down the numbers of the rooms you check and make sure you check different ones the next time the assessment is made.

Q. What if there are multiple bars, restaurants, and kitchens?

A. The principle is the same as it is for the rooms. The total score is worked out an average of the scores for all the same type of outlet. All the bars, restaurants and kitchens need to meet minimum standards. Remember when you are assessing large resorts you will need much more time.

Problems with the star rating might include:

Q. What happens if when I total all the points they have missed the next star rating by just a couple of points.

A. In the master score table there is a marginal zone of 15 points between the end of one star rating and the beginning of the next. This is margin is specifically designed to prevent that problem. Properties falling within the 15 point margin can be allocated the higher

grade for one year. If they are still in the marginal zone the following year they are automatically moved down to the grade below.

Q. How can 2 or 4pts be awarded on the star rating scheme when the Guidelines only specify 1, 3, and 5?

A. With a clear description for 1, 3, and 5 points, awarding 2 and 4 is easy, they are the facilities that are more than simple but less than very good (2pts) or better than very good but not top quality (4pts).

Q. Is it still possible for properties without restaurants, bars and public toilets to get a 5 star rating?

A. The more limited the facilities the more difficult it is to get a high rating. With increased rating come increased customer expectations. It is possible for a guesthouse to be rated five star without it having a full service restaurant, but it will have to work very hard at the other aspects of its hospitality.

Q. Isn't it unfair if a property scores less under a hotel assessment than it would if it were assessed as a guesthouse?

A. The name of the property gives the customer a particular expectations often based on their previous experience of what, for example, a resort entails. Deciding which properties fall into which categories is a task that should be undertaken in close consultation with property owners. Considerations will include:

- The managers' perception of what kind of a property he or she has
- The marketing image that is being promoted (is this of a hotel or a guesthouse?)
- The extent of facilities - does it have a restaurant, range of recreational facilities etc - if so it's probably a hotel.
- Type of clientele - some backpacker properties have restaurants too.

Q. What do you do with a traditional-style property that calls itself a 'resort'?

A. There are many examples of these across the region, as a result of misunderstanding of the terminology. Misleading names can cause confusion amongst travelers and should be avoided where possible. However, it is difficult to tell a

property it needs to change its name and this may be impinging too much on the personal choice of the owner. NTO's might consider adopting the follow deterrents:

- Properties being assessed for star rating will loose marks if their name does not reflect their type of property (there is a criteria for rating based on the name of the property)*
- Properties consistently calling themselves by a misleading name can be assessed in that category. This would mean that even a five star traditional accommodation would only be a one-star resort and soon help owners to see the benefits of a name change.*
- Categorise properties in the proper manner on NTO websites and other promotional activities to set an example.*

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Once your committee is in place, you've reviewed and finalized the criteria, and your assessors know their job, you are ready to consider implementation. Important decisions will include the following:

- How frequently you assess properties?
- How many assessors you send?
- What is the assessment process?
- How are the check-list used?
- How do hoteliers apply to be assessed?
- How much do you charge them?
- How you report back to hoteliers?
- What do you do with appeal cases?
- How do you store and manage the information?

How frequently you assess properties?

We recommend that properties are assessed at least every 18 months, preferably every year. If there is a relatively small accommodation stock, it makes sense to assess everyone from October-December every year so the awards run from January to January. If this is not possible given the amount

of properties and small number of assessors, you may need to spread the assessments out through the year. Try to do all one type of accommodation at one time as this will make it easier for assessors. E.g. Do all the hotels and resorts January - March, the Self-catering and motels April- June and so on. The award should then indicate the year and the month the award expires.

How many assessors do you send?

We recommend a maximum of two assessors. Some countries we have consulted with have large teams including fire and health officers. However, this can slow the process down considerably and reduce the possibility of helpful interaction between the hotelier and the assessor. We think its probably more effective to ensure your assessor spends a week in training with the fire and health officers, learning what to look for, reviewing the criteria with them and then gets on with the job by themselves. If there is something they find of concern the can always alert the fire or health officer to conduct an additional assessment of a property.

What does the assessment process involve?

The assessment process begins when the hotelier applies to be assessed, or, in the case of mandatory assessments, when arrangements are made to visit the establishment.

- Hotelier completes an application form and arranges an interview to discuss the classification of their property.
- Assessor reviews the application and gives a recommendation regarding the category of accommodation. This is discussed, and when the decision is made the property is billed for the assessment appropriately.
- Assessor rings to arrange an assessment visit, the receptionist is marked on his/her performance on the check list.
- Assessor arrives on time and starts by interviewing the manager in order to get answers to general, staff and sustainability questions. The manager is also asked about the extent of the facilities provided.
- The assessor follows the check-list from one area of the hotel to the other. In each room the assessor follows the same routine: ceiling, walls floor - then the detail of the criteria. The assessor should be accompanied by the manager or owner..
- If there are facilities and amenities present that are not on the list, some of these may be added. For example, if

there are BBQ facilities this could be noted and given a score.

- Following the assessment the assessor prepares the report and if the property accepts the grading, a certificate of the award is provided promptly.

How are the check-list used?

The Resources Section of this Kit provides lists of criteria for each building block and a checklist for each. The checklists for minimum standards and accreditation are simple tick and cross lists. A tick is awarded for criteria which match the expected standard. The number of ticks is totaled at the end and checked against the master score table to give the award (provided all compulsory elements are included).

The Star-rating checklists are similar only they use a point system from -2 to 5. Points are awarded based on the guidelines for expected standards at 1, 3, and 5 points. Points scored for multiple bedroom, restaurant, kitchen and bar outlets are totaled and the average score is used to add to the other results.

How do hoteliers apply to be assessed?

If the accreditation or star-rating process is voluntary as recommended here, then property owners and managers need to apply to be assessed. To do this you will need to design an application form and a property-owners guide to the assessment process. The application form should include the following information:

- Name and location of the property
- Name of the manager or applicant
- Contact details (you will need to contact them to arrange the assessment)
- No of rooms and type of property (this will help you know the fee)
- List of main facilities (this will help you know how many forms you need)

In order to apply hoteliers will need to read and agree to the code of practice, the rules applying to the assessment process and pay their application fee.

The property owners guide should consist of the following:

- Purpose and objectives of the scheme

- Frequently asked questions
- Application process
- Assessment process
- The Code
- A self-assessment form

The self-assessment form allows the property manager or owner to prepare for the assessment by going through the list and ensuring all the important items are in order before the assessors come. It also give him or her and chance to review the list and ask any questions of the process before it takes place.

However, the self-assessment form should not contain all the elements the assessors form includes. Otherwise there are likely to be disputes as the hoteliers points will not match up the assessors.

Providing only the minimum standards means that the hotelier can make sure they don't fail but cannot do the whole assessment. The rules or conditions of application may include some of the following:

Rules might include:

The applicant agrees:

- 1) To allow periodic assessment
- 2) To abide by the code of conduct of the scheme
- 3) To pay the fees as determined by the NTO
- 4) To display the decal in a prominent position should this be awarded, and immediately remove it should the establishment no longer participate in the scheme
- 5) Not to stretch, shrink or otherwise change the proportion of the decal in any marketing materials
- 6) Not to misrepresent the award received
- 7) To inform the awarding authority in the case that the property is sold or ownership is transferred
- 8) To inform the awarding agency in writing within 30 days of the assessment if they wish to lodge a complaint or appeal
- 9) To inform the awarding agency in writing if they to leave the scheme
- 10) That failing to abide by the above conditions may results in the establishment ceasing to qualify for participation in the scheme

The cook island application form is a good example and can be found at www.cook-islands.com/docs/accreditationbook.pdf

How much do you charge for the assessment?

This is a difficult decision and depends on the type of system adopted and the fee structure that the local accommodation sector can afford. It is unusual to charge for minimum standards assessment as this is normally a compulsory undertaking, linked to business licensing. In this case the cost of assessing properties can perhaps be offset by raising business license fees.

In the case of accreditation and star rating we recommend a graded fee structure which considers both the category and the size of the property. The following table is an example of the type of structure that can be used. This is not in a particular currency, just meant to demonstrate the scales that can be used.

Table 7. Fees for Star-Rating Assessment

Category	< 10 rooms	11-20 rooms	21-40 rooms	41-100 rooms	101 rooms +
1. Hotel & Resort	350	425	500	575	650
2. Self-Catering & motels	250	325	400	475	
3. Guesthouses & bed & breakfasts	200	250	350	450	
4. Traditional	100	150	200		

How and when do you report back to hoteliers?

Again, there are several possible models here. We recommend against providing an immediate result to the hotelier. Distance can assist decision-making. However, too much time can cloud memory so make sure the reporting is done the same day or the following day. To reduce the amount of administration you need to standardize the reporting process. A cover letter overall score card should be sufficient. The score card gives the name of the property, date of assessment, category of accommodation, name of assessor. It provides a break down of the points score for each area in a tabular format and any specific comments that were noted during the assessment. It should indicate whether all the minimum and key criteria have been met. A sample report sheet for the star rating and accreditation system is provided in the resources section at the end of each checklist.

Whichever method is used, it is important that before carrying out an assessment on a property, the result from the previous year is reviewed and taken to the property as a reference. This will enable the assessor to follow-up on any specific problems and also check that other rooms are selected for review second time around.

How do you store and manage the information?

It is important to develop an effective system for managing the assessment reports. This can be done by filing hard copies of the assessment reports under the properties' name or organizing them electronically. You will probably start by having all the forms completed by hand, but technologies are improving and becoming cheaper all the time. Some alternatives include:

- The simplest technological solution would be to carry a laptop computer in a sling allowing the assessor or their assistant to put the data straight into the excel spreadsheet. However, this can be difficult on the move and in the grounds when its raining.
- Machine readable forms can also be developed allowing you to shade in the appropriate box and for the machine to convert it into spreadsheet format.
- Another high-tech solution is a hand-held device which is programmed with the assessment criteria as well as allowing the assessor to note down any specific comments with a special writing stick. These are weather-proof and can transmit data directly to the mother computer.

Whichever method is used, it is important that the assessor is competent in the use of the technology prior to undertaking real assessments.

What do you do when properties fail to meet the minimum standards?

Action will vary slightly depending on which minimum standard is not met and how serious the offence is, but in general a 'grace' period needs to be determined, which gives the offending operator a period of time to improve, generally up to six weeks (or a time agreed by the minimum standards committee) to meet the minimum standards or risk losing their business license (if legal arrangements for this to occur can be made) or removal of the business from the tourism offices promotional material.

What do you do with appeal?

However good your assessors and your checklists are, many hoteliers will not agree with the result. Sometimes they may have good reason, other times they have let their impressions of their own property become overly rosey. Either way, hoteliers should have the right to object to decisions made by the assessors and need a fair process for doing this. The suggested appeal process follows:

- Hotelier writes a formal letter indicating the nature of the complaint within 30 days of the assessment.
- Committee meets within 30 days of the appeal letter and in most cases recommends a re-assessment of the property with a different assessor.
- The hotelier pays for the re-assessment, but if the complaint is upheld they get the fee back.

The appeal process and other details of the assessment should be produced in a small booklet, provided to all property owners applying for the assessment.

ADMINISTRATION & MONITORING

There are several important aspects of the on-going administration of the classification process that need to be considered here:

Award of the Decal

The Decal is the symbol used to identify an establishment that complies with the minimum standards. Whilst there are advantages in all SPTO countries using the same decal, this is unrealistic. As each country makes the system theirs and moulds it to their own needs, it is only right that this is reflected in the decal. However, that said, it is standard practice for accreditation programmes to use a TICK and stars to use a Star.

One option for accreditation programmes is to use similar layout and 'look' for their decal but with slightly different national elements. The Cook Islands decal could set the standard, and other countries could use their own symbols to ring the tick - such as kava bowls or Teuila flowers in Samoa and tapa designs in Tonga.

Whatever decal is used it must have three important elements:

- The Year of the award

- The category of the award
- The grade of the award

It may also include the name of the awarding agency.

A sticker system for decal awards is used in the Cook Islands, a certificate system for star ratings in Samoa. Whatever symbol is used, there must be some rules for its reproduction in marketing materials which properties should agree to adhere to when they sign up for the assessment process, these are noted above.

Communication & Marketing

Any assessment system that does not communicate and market its product is not going to achieve its potential. There are two elements to marketing assessment schemes. First in terms of getting property owners signed up and second in terms of letting visitors know about it.

Property Owner Incentives

Various techniques can be used to encourage hoteliers property owners to sign-up for the chosen programme.

- Make it compulsory, linked to business licensing
- Make it relatively cheap
- Provide marketing benefits such as the promotion of brochures in the visitor information centre, the inclusion of rated or accredited properties at the top of any web site listings
- Provide publicity in terms of press-releases
- Design awards linked to the "highest riser" of the year in terms of points or the "greenest" hotel linked to the sustainability criteria

Once the majority of property owners are in the scheme, the costs of not joining can perhaps also be highlighted ie non-accredited properties are not promoted.

Visitor Promotion

Once the scheme is established, visitors need to know about it so they can recognize it, use it to help make their lodging decisions and support establishments that are accredited. Here are some ideas for communication:

- Tour operators should be informed about the scheme and what the grades represent

- Information should be provided on the website about what the scheme means and what visitors need to look for
- Destination brochures should include a small box explaining the scheme and the ratings should be used to organise properties on the brochure
- Press releases should be written periodically for local newspapers showing the list of accredited properties
- Local hoteliers should be updated about the progress and any changes to the scheme on a regular basis through an industry newsletter or association meetings.

HINT

Remember, nothing works unless you communicate it!

Source: Pusinelli & Associates (2005)

Monitoring & Review

To be effective and useful in terms of upgrading standards and meeting visitor needs, the quality assurance circle needs to be completed with a review. Information for the review should come not only from assessor and hotelier feedback but also from consumers. A simple exit survey should be organized periodically to monitor visitor expectations and disappointments and the results should be fed back into the review of criteria. The kinds of questions that should be included in this survey include:

- Name of the property where most of the time was spent
- Ask the visitor to rate on a scale of 1-5 the quality of
 - Reception check-in and check-out
 - Room
 - Housekeeping and cleanliness
 - Dining room/restaurant
 - Meals
 - Outdoor facilities /garden
 - Overall hospitality
- Did the accommodation meet your expectations?
- How could it improve?

In order to improve the criteria and standards another set of questions could be asked. For example:

- What kind of accommodation are you most likely to stay in when you go on holiday in the South Pacific?
 - Hotel/resort b. Motel/self-catering c.
 Guesthouse/backpackers
 - Traditional/informal
- Rate on a scale of 1-5 how **important** the following aspects of accommodation are to you when you stay in **this** kind of accommodation
 - The facilities and comfort of your room
 - The food service
 - The bar
 - The common areas
 - The friendliness and professionalism of staff
 - The range of activities available
 - Knowing there is sound environmental management
- Are there any other facilities that you feel are very important to your accommodation experience? If so, please list these.

HINT

We have to talk to our customers. We have to provide them with non-threatening, constructive avenues of communication for feedback. We want their compliments, not just their complaints. We have to listen to what they have to say, and translate that into action.

Source: Pusinelli & Associates (2005)

CLOSING WORD

Thank you for reading this Resource Kit. Please share it with your colleagues, update it periodically with your new ideas, your new checklists and master score cards. Add new hints and thoughtful comments as you learn and experience quality assurance through practical experience.

We wish you all the best for your quality assurance programme, whatever avenue you choose, but don't forget to share your knowledge and experience with us and your colleagues in other SPTO countries. We have seen how much can be learned by sharing our ideas - keep in touch with

your fellow assessors and act as a team, it's the collective quality of the South Pacific Tourism product that matters in the end. Together we can raise standards and work towards a more sustainable accommodation sector.

SECTION 4: SUPPLEMENTARY
RESOURCES

SECTION 4 : SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

SPTO TOURISM INDUSTRY CODE OF PRACTICE



THE PRINCIPLES

- Excellence in tourism service
- Professionalism in tourism business
- Commitment to staff training
- Respect for cultural differences
- Attention to safety and security
- High standards of cleanliness and hygiene
- Care for the local ecosystem
- Reduction of waste and pollution
- Support for the local community
- Implementation and use of the Code

THE ACTIONS

SERVICE AND PROFESSIONALISM

1. Marketing and promotional materials are accurate and truthful in the nature, price and quality of the services provided.
2. Every effort is made to monitor and exceed guest expectations in the provision of services and facilities.
3. The business complies with all local laws and regulations and maintains high standards and fair practice in all business transactions.
4. Staff are given proper training and instruction in their area of work, personal hygiene and grooming, and environmental and cultural policies.
5. Procedures for the prompt handling of complaints, inquiries and refunds are dealt with properly and consistently.
6. The work of national and regional tourism organizations is encouraged and supported.



SAFETY & CARE

7. Staff and management are trained and equipped to deal with all emergencies and emergency procedures are clearly displayed.
8. High standards of cleanliness, hygiene and ventilation are observed in all buildings, and grounds are free from rubbish, unpleasant odours and unacceptable noise.
9. Appropriate security is provided for customers and their possessions, including secure storage facilities, well-maintained doors and window locks where appropriate.
10. Considerable care is taken in the operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure a safe environment for guests and staff at all times.
11. All customers and staff are treated with equal respect and consideration.
12. Clean drinking water is readily available to all customers.



SUSTAINABILITY

13. Tourism activities are compatible with the local ecosystem, cultural heritage and traditions.
14. Tourism businesses are respectful of local cultural protocol and tourists are well-informed about local customs, values and appropriate dress.
15. Efforts are made to increase the efficiency of resource and utility usage through appropriate policies, controlling devices and alternative energy systems.
16. Care is taken to reduce waste to a minimum, and dispose of it responsibly using appropriate policies, equipment and procedures.
17. Sewage disposal systems are well maintained, suitably located and of a size appropriate to the level of use.
18. The business networks closely with the local community and uses local labour, goods and services wherever possible.



DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

We support the principles of the Pacific Tourism Industry Code of Practice and commit to adopting the actions into our business operations.

Business Name _____

Owner/Manager's Name _____

Owner/Manager's Signature & Date _____



Table 8. Criteria and Assessor Guidelines for Minimum Standards

K= Key Item, compulsory for all. Other items compulsory, if area e.g. restaurant is available					
AREA	No.	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Business Operations	1	Business license	K	Up to date and clearly posted	<i>Except if not required by law. If required, ask to view licence</i>
	2	Other licenses	K	Other licenses required by law are in place	<i>May require alcohol license, employer license etc. Check any vehicles and their drivers have valid licenses.</i>
	3	Duty Manager	K	Manager or staff on call 24 hours	<i>System in place for contacting staff member or manager during the night</i>
	4	Guest registration	K	Proper system in place for registering guests	<i>View registration system, check for occupant names, room no, date in, date out.</i>
	5	Staff appearance	K	Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	6	Staff training programmes	K	All new staff receive training in their area of work	<i>Ask to manager/owner to explain training provided for new staff. Ask staff what training they received when new.</i>
	7	Telephone	K	House/public telephone available	<i>In working order for bookings and emergencies</i>
Environment	8	Sewage	K	Sewage disposal is of appropriate type, size and location	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Public Health Department</i>
	9	Waste	K	Rubbish is collected, separated and disposed of properly	<i>Specifics to be developed with Public Health or appropriate Department e.g. rubbish sorted and emptied or stored daily.</i>
Fire Safety	10	Equipment	K	Fire extinguishing equipment available on all floors	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Fire Department. E.g. smoke alarms in each room in working order</i>
	11	Training	K	Staff have knowledge of fire equipment use	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Fire Department. In the meantime, ask what they do if a fire occurs.</i>
	12	Exits	K	Information on fire procedures and fire exits is clearly posted	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Fire Department. In the meantime, check for fire information behind doors</i>
Guest rooms	13	Mattresses	K	Simple mattress with mattress protection	<i>Extra sheet is acceptable instead of mattress protector.</i>
	14	Pillows	K	1 clean pillow for each sleeping position	<i>Check for cleanliness inside pillow case</i>
	15	Linen	K	Clean sheets and pillowcases	<i>Change sheets every 3 days at least and for new arriving guests</i>
	16	Lighting & electrics	K	Safe switches, lighting and electrical wiring	<i>As deemed by building inspectors</i>
	17	Security	K	Units secure against unauthorised entry	
	18	Cleanliness	K	Ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	
	19	Insect screens	K	Insect netting on windows or sleeping net in good condition	<i>No holes or stains acceptable</i>
	20	Drinking water	K	Drinking water readily available for guests	<i>Preferably free of charge where tap water is not potable</i>

AREA	No.	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Bathrooms	21	Bathrooms	K	Bathroom and toilet areas are hygienic and odour free	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Public Health Department</i>
	22	Toilet facilities	K	Toilet with door lock, seat & paper	
	23	Shower	K	Functioning shower of suitable height with shower head	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>
	24	Non-slip floor	K	Well drained, non-slip floor	<i>Rubber shower mat recommended for baths</i>
	25	Shower curtain	K	Shower curtain or door in place	<i>Clean and adequate size to protect splash zone</i>
	26	Wash basin	K	Wash basin with soap, plug, towel and mirror	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>
	27	Water supply	K	24 hour water supply	<i>Geographic allowance may exempt some properties</i>
	28	Cleanliness	K	Bathroom clean, tidy and free from obvious dirt	<i>Check ceiling, walls, floor and odour</i>
	29	Fire safety	K	Fire safety regulations observed	<i>Details from fire office</i>
	30	Lighting	K	Light in place in working order	<i>Adequate lighting in all areas of bathroom</i>
	31	Waste bin	K	Simple, lined waste bin	
Restaurant (if available)	32	Chairs and tables		Sufficient tables and chairs	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>
	33	Table settings		Sufficient coverings, crockery & cutlery	<i>Clean, well-stored, crack-free</i>
	34	Cleanliness		Restaurant clean, tidy and well-maintained condition.	<i>General appearance</i>
	35	Floor covering		Clean and well-maintained floor covering	<i>Free from stains or excessive signs of wear</i>
	36	Fire safety		Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	<i>Details from fire office</i>
	37	Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	<i>Uniforms and name badges recommended</i>
	Bar (if available)	38	Refrigerator		In good condition
39		Sink		Clean	<i>Preferably stainless steel</i>
40		Fire safety		Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	<i>Details from fire office</i>
41		Chairs & tables		Chairs and tables provided	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>
42		Cleanliness		Bar area clean, tidy and well maintained	<i>General appearance</i>
43		Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	<i>Uniforms and name badges recommended</i>

AREA	No.	CRITERIA	COMPLIES	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Kitchen (if available)	44	Food storage		Kitchen and food storage area are clean and rodent free	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Public Health Department e.g. temperature of fridges and separation of food types</i>
	45	Insect netting		Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all kitchen windows	
	46	Waste bins		Tidy bins, separate bin for food, all bins have tops	<i>Check recommendations local environment office</i>
	47	Food storage		Food storage cupboards are clean and rodent free	
	48	Fire safety		Fire safety regulations observed	<i>Details from fire office</i>
	49	Refrigeration		Fridge and freezer in good condition with different types of foods kept separately	<i>All items clearly marked with date, separate areas for meat, poultry and fish, diary, other</i>
	50	Cleanliness		Sideboards, walls and floors in clean condition	<i>Free from stains or excessive signs of ware</i>
	51	Lighting		Cooking areas are illuminated	<i>All areas of kitchen are illuminated</i>
	52	Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	<i>Uniforms and name badges recommended</i>
53	Insect screens		Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all kitchen windows	<i>No holes, clean enough to see through clearly</i>	
Safety & Maintenance	54	First Aid	K	First Aid kit available and well stocked	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Public Health Department</i>
	55	Maintenance checks	K	Weekly checks by manager of pumping and lights	<i>Ask how often these are done and whether a check-list is used</i>
	56	Construction	K	Additions to building are properly constructed	<i>As deemed by building inspectors</i>
	57	Boats	K	All boats and marine equipment are licensed (if required) and equipped with safety measures such as life vests	<i>A license may be required for marine equipment. Specifics on safety measure to be determined by marine police</i>
	58	Grounds	K	Grounds are clear of litter and insect/rodent breeding sites	<i>Specifics to be developed in consultation with Public Health Department</i>
	59	Signage	K	Clear signage around the property including directional, warning and caution signs in dangerous areas	<i>Check danger areas such as slippery surfaces, pools, generators for caution signs</i>

Table 9. Minimum Standards Check-list

Name of Property: Accompanying manager:

Property Contact:

Address:
 www:
 Tel: Fax: Email:

Name of Assessor: Date of Assessment: Time: Title:

Type of Property: Hotel/resort Catering/motel/rental Guesthouse/B&B/Inn/Backpackers Traditional/informal

Facilities: Restaurant Bar Kitchen Recreational facilities

No. of Rooms: < 10 10-20 21-40 41+

AREA	No.	CRITERIA	COMPLIES	STANDARD	COMMENTS
Business Operations	1	Business license		Up to date and clearly posted	
	2	Other licenses		Other licenses required by law are in place	
	3	Duty Manager		Manager or staff on call 24 hours	
	4	Guest registration		Proper system in place for registering guests	
	5	Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	6	Staff training programmes		New staff receive training in their area of work	
	7	Telephone		House/public telephone available	
AREA	No.	CRITERIA	COMPLIES	STANDARD	COMMENTS

Environment	8	Sewage		Sewage disposal is of appropriate type, size and location	
	9	Waste		Rubbish is collected and disposed of properly	
Fire Safety	10	Equipment		Appropriate fire extinguishing equipment available on all floors	
	11	Training		Staff have knowledge of fire equipment use	
	12	Exits		Information on fire procedures and fire exits is clearly posted	
Guest rooms	13	Mattresses		Basic quality mattress with mattress protection	
	14	Pillows		1 clean pillow for each sleeping position	
	15	Linen		Clean sheets and pillowcases	
	16	Lighting & electrics		Safe switches, lighting and electrical wiring	
	17	Security		Units secure against unauthorised entry	
	18	Cleanliness		Ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	
	19	Insect screens		Insect netting on windows or sleeping net in good condition	
	20	Drinking water		Drinking water readily available for guests	
Bathrooms	21	Bathrooms		Bathroom and toilet areas are hygienic and odour free	
	22	Toilet facilities		Toilet with door lock, seat & paper	
	23	Shower		Functioning shower of suitable height with shower head	

	No.	CRITERIA	COMPLIES	STANDARD	COMMENTS
Bathrooms cont.	24	Non-slip floor		Well drained, non-slip floor	
	25	Shower curtain		Shower curtain or door in place	
	26	Wash basin		Wash basin with soap, plug, towel and mirror	
	27	Water supply		24 hour water supply	
	28	Cleanliness		Bathroom clean, tidy and free from obvious dirt	
	29	Fire safety		Fire safety regulations observed	
	30	Adequate lighting		Light in place in working order	
	31	Waste bin		Simple, lined waste bin	
Restaurant (if available)	32	Chairs and tables		Sufficient tables and chairs	
	33	Table settings		Sufficient coverings, crockery & cutlery	
	34	Cleanliness		Restaurant clean, tidy and well-maintained condition.	
	35	Floor covering		Clean and well-maintained floor covering	
	36	Fire safety		Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	
	37	Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
Bar (if available)	38	Refrigerator		In good condition	
	39	Sink		Clean	

	No.	CRITERIA	COMPLIES	STANDARD	COMMENTS
	40	Fire safety		Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	
	41	Chairs & tables		Chairs and tables provided	
	42	Cleanliness		Bar area clean, tidy and well maintained	
	43	Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
Kitchen (if available)	44	Food storage		Kitchen and food storage area are clean and rodent free	
	45	Insect netting		Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all kitchen windows	
	46	Waste bins		Tidy bins, separate bin for food, all bins have tops	
	47	Food storage		Food storage cupboards are clean and rodent free	
	48	Fire safety		Fire safety regulations observed	
	49	Refrigeration		Fridge and freezer in good condition with different types of foods kept separately	
	50	Cleanliness		Sideboards, walls and floors in clean condition	
	51	Lighting		Lighting in cooking area	
	52	Staff appearance		Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	53	Insect screens		Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all kitchen windows	
Safety & Maintenance	54	First Aid		First Aid kit available and well stocked	
	55	Maintenance checks		Weekly checks by manager of pumping and lights	

	56	Construction		Additions to building are properly constructed	<i>Consult building inspector if in doubt.</i>
	57	Boats		All boats and marine equipment are licensed (if required) and equipped with safety measures such as life vests	
	58	Grounds		Grounds are clear of litter and insect/rodent breeding sites	
	59	Signage		Clear signage around the property including directional, warning and caution signs in dangerous areas	

Result

Complies with all standards

Does not comply with a areas

Areas for follow-up

Follow-up completed

Name & Signature of Assessor

Table 10. Criteria and Assessor Guidelines for Accreditation

Key: M= Minimum Standards, compulsory for all K= Key Criteria, essential for accreditation

Area	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Business operations	1	Business license	M	Up to date	<i>Except if not required by law. If required, ask to view licence</i>
	2	Other licenses	M	Up to date	<i>May require alcohol license, employer license et. Check any vehicles and their drivers have valid licenses.</i>
	3	Name of business	K	Name meets most required characteristics for this accommodation type	<i>I.e. If resort, has to meet resort characteristics listed in Table of Definitions</i>
	4	Marketing materials and website	K	Marketing materials are a true reflection of the facilities and services provided	<i>Check website prior to arrival, obtain a copy of brochures and retain for reference</i>
	5	Complaints procedure	K	All complaints lodged with tourist office have been addressed	<i>Check complaints lodged with tourist office prior to visit, ensure these have been addressed</i>
	6	Maintenance checks	M	Weekly checks by manager of pumping and lights	<i>Ask how often these are done and whether a check-list is used</i>
	7	Manager		On time and available to assist assessment	<i>Arrange visit in advance. Manager should be ready for your arrival.</i>
	8	Tourism association		Member of at least one industry association	<i>May be local, national or regional</i>
Staff	9	First aid training	M	At least one staff member has first Aid training	
	10	Emergency preparedness	M	Manager has a plan and knowledge of emergency procedures	<i>Ask about what they do in the occurrence of a fir, health issue etc.</i>
	11	Staff training programmes	M	All new staff receive training in their area of work	<i>Ask to explain training provided for new staff. Ask staff member to confirm this.</i>
	12	Employee recognition		System in place for recognising exceptional employees.	<i>E.g. Employee of the month</i>
Environment & community	13	Sewage	M	Sewage disposal is of correct type, size and location	<i>Check with health department on regulations</i>
	14	Waste separation & reduction	M	Biodegradable waste is separated from other waste	
	15	Compost		Composting of vegetable and garden waste is undertaken	<i>Check with environment Dept. for recommendations</i>
	16	Environmental policy		Environmental policy in place	<i>Ask to view this</i>
	17	Environmental hazards		Manager/owner is aware of local environmental hazards	
Area	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES

Environment & community cont.	18	Environmental awareness training		Manager has attended environmental awareness training	<i>Ask to explain training provided</i>
	19	Guest satisfaction		Survey conducted in last 12 months	<i>Ask how results are used</i>
	20	Utility use		Manager can identify at least one change made to reduce utility usage	<i>Ask if any steps have been taken, if so what</i>
	21	Code of Practise		Manager is aware of SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice	<i>Once the Code is well known in the destination this should become mandatory for all</i>
	22	Local community		Business involved in at least one local community project	<i>Ask about any particular programme to support local community</i>
Reception & lobby	24	Guest registration	M	Basic registration book correctly filled in	<i>View registration system, check for occupant names, room no, date in, date out.</i>
	26	Telephone	M	Telephone available at reception for guest use	<i>In working order and can be used by guests</i>
	27	Duty Manager	M	Senior staff member available 24 hours	<i>Ask how manager is contactable during the night</i>
	28	Flooring	K	Suitable floor covering, some wear and tear	
	29	First aid kit	K	Basic First Aid kit available	<i>Ask health department for a list of contents</i>
	30	Telephone messages	K	System for providing phone and other messages to guests	<i>Ask about what is done with messages</i>
	31	Staff appearance	M	Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	34	Clock	K	Clock showing correct time in reception	<i>A large clock is best</i>
	23	Reception counter	1, 2, 3	Small reception counter with bell for summoning assistance when un-staffed	<i>Exemptions for traditional accommodation</i>
	25	Key storage	1, 2, 3	Staffed 24 hours a day or locked up	<i>Either locked cupboard or 24hour supervision</i>
	32	Staff knowledge	1	Staff demonstrate knowledge about the property	<i>Ask about facilities and services provided</i>
	33	Staff training		Reception staff have received training	<i>Ask to explain training provided</i>
	35	Staff uniforms		All reception staff in uniform	
	36	Staff name badges		All reception staff have name badges	
	37	Storage of valuables		Basic locked cupboard or file provided for guest valuables	<i>Ask about system for identifying property</i>
	38	Check- in times		Check-in and out times clearly posted in reception	
	39	Credit cards	1	At least two credit cards accepted for payment	
	40	Seating	1	One or two basic chairs available in lobby	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>
	41	Lighting		Adequate natural and artificial lighting for writing	
	42	Furnishings & décor	1	Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
AREA	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Guest room	43	Mattresses	M	Simple mattress with mattress protection	<i>Extra sheet is acceptable instead of mattress protector.</i>

	44	Pillows	M	1 clean pillow for each sleeping position	1 clean pillow for each sleeping position Check for cleanliness inside pillow case
	45	Linen	M	Clean sheets and pillowcases	Clean sheets and pillowcases
	46	Insect netting	M	Insect netting is in place on all windows or nets provided	<i>Not required in air conditioned rooms and some geographic areas</i>
	47	Lighting	M	Lights working, safe switches and electrical wiring	<i>No exposed light bulbs. Traditional accommodation exempt.</i>
	48	Drinking water	M	Boiled and chilled drinking water available on request free of charge if tap water is unfit to drink	<i>Either from taps, in mini bar or jug provided</i>
	49	Fire safety	K	Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	<i>Details from fire safety officer</i>
	51	Cleanliness	K	Ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	<i>General appearance</i>
	52	Waste basket	K	Simple waste paper basket	
	53	Security	M	Units secure against unauthorised entry via door or ground floor windows	<i>Exceptions are open traditional dwellings e.g. beach fale, where night security needs to be provided instead.</i>
	50	Table and chair	1, 2, 3	Table and chair	<i>Can be bedside table with easy chair or extra chair on the side. Traditional accommodation excluded</i>
	54	Facilities for hanging clothes	1, 2	Basic clothes hanging area with 2 hangers per sleeping position	<i>Maybe open or closed, should have at least 3 hangers per bed</i>
	55	Window privacy	1, 2, 3	Curtains or blinds providing day and night privacy	<i>Curtains or blinds are clean and cover entire window obscuring view into room from outside. Exceptions are traditional accommodation.</i>
	56	Telephone	1	Telephone for internal calls	<i>Calls can be made inside the hotel only</i>
	57	Bedside table	1	At least one bedside table at a convenient height relative to bed	
	58	Bedside light		At least one light located at bedside	
	59	Tea and Coffee	1, 2	Simple tea and coffee making facilities in room	
	60	Ventilation	1	Ceiling or standing fans provided	<i>Check are in working order and clean</i>
	61	Furnishings & décor		Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
	62	Guest compendium		Simple information sheet listing property facilities and services	
	Bathrooms (ensuite or communal)	63	Cleanliness	M	Bathroom adequately clean, tidy and free from obvious dirt
64		Toilet facilities	M	Functioning toilet with seat, lid & paper	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>
65		Shower	M	Functioning shower of suitable height with shower head	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>
AREA	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Bathrooms	66	Non-slip floor	M	Non-slip floor with floor drain	<i>Rubber shower mat recommended for baths</i>

(ensuite or munal) cont.	67	Shower curtain	M	Clean shower curtain or door in place	<i>Clean and appropriate size</i>
	68	Wash basin	M	Simple wash basin with soap	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>
	69	Waste bin	M	Simple, lined waste bin	
	70	Lighting	M	Lighting of all areas in bathroom	<i>In toilets and washbasin area, exposed light bulbs acceptable</i>
	71	Water supply	1,2,3	24 hour water supply	<i>Geographic allowance may except some properties</i>
	72	Location		Outside room but on same floor, not further than 25 steps	
	73	Water temperature	1, 2	24 hour hot and cold water	
	74	Bathroom supply	4	At least one male and female toilet & shower per 10 rooms	<i>Maximum occupancy divided by number of toilets and showers for communal facilities</i>
	75	Power socket		Bathroom safe socket	<i>Automatic cut-off in case of water contact</i>
	76	Towel rails		Towel rails provided	
	77	Towels	1, 2	At least one clean towel provided for each guest, some wear and tear acceptable	<i>Check for stains</i>
Hallways	78	Cleanliness	K	Hallways, stairwells and elevators overall in clean, tidy and well maintained condition	<i>Note down any problem areas during tour</i>
	79	Fire safety	M	Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	<i>According to national regulations</i>
	80	Furnishings & décor		Simple furnishings and décor	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
Public toilets (if available)	81	Toilet separation	K	Separate male and female toilets	<i>Do not rate the same toilets twice, these must be different to the guest bathrooms.</i>
	82	Toilet facilities	K	Functioning toilet with door lock, seat & paper	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>
	83	Wash basin	K	Basic wash basin, soap and hand drying facilities	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working. Hand dryer may be used instead of towel.</i>
	84	Waste bin	K	Simple, lined waste bin	<i>Preferably with top, not overflowing</i>
	85	Lighting	K	Adequate lighting to all parts of facility	<i>In toilets and washbasin area</i>
	86	Cleanliness	K	Clean and tidy ceiling, walls and floors and free from unpleasant odour	<i>General appearance</i>
	87	Disabled access		Disabled access and facilities provided	
	88	Baby-changing		Baby changing facilities provided	
	89	Urinal		Urinal in male toilets	<i>Check in working order and odour free</i>
	90	Vanity area		Small vanity area in female toilets	
AREA	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Restaurant or	91	Chairs and tables	M	Adequate number of simple chairs and tables available	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>

dining area (if available)	92	Table settings	M	Sufficient coverings, crockery & cutlery	<i>Clean, well-stored, crack-free</i>
	93	Cleanliness	M	Restaurant clean, tidy and well-maintained condition.	<i>General appearance</i>
	94	Floor covering	M	Suitable floor covering, some wear and tear	<i>Free from stains or excessive signs of ware</i>
	95	Fire safety	M	Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	<i>Details from fire office</i>
	96	Staff appearance	M	Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	97	Menu	1	Simple buffet meals, board or written menu provided	
	98	Staff uniforms		All restaurant staff in uniform	
	99	Staff name badges		All restaurant staff have name badges	
	100	Breakfast included	3	Breakfast is included in room tariff	
	101	Local foods		A few local items included in menu	<i>Use of local fruit, vegetable and other items encouraged</i>
	102	Furnishings & décor	1	Simple furnishings and décor	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
	103	Entertainment		Music and entertainment provided on occasions	<i>Ask about entertainment programme</i>
	Bar (if available)	104	Refrigerator	M	Basic fridge, clean and in working order
105		Sink	M	Clean	<i>Preferably stainless steel</i>
106		Fire safety	M	Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	<i>Details from fire office</i>
107		Chairs & tables	M	Simple chairs and tables provided	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>
108		Cleanliness	M	Clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	<i>General appearance</i>
110		Staff appearance	M	Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
109		Glassware	1	Simple but clean and unchipped	
111		Staff uniforms		All bar staff in uniform	
112		Staff name badges		All bar staff have name badges	
113		Stock	1	Basic selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available	<i>Wine, beer, spirits, juice, soda and water are basics items</i>
114		Furnishings & décor	1	Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
115		Entertainment		Music and entertainment provided on occasions	
AREA	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Kitchen (if available)	116	Insect netting	M	Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all kitchen windows	

	117	Waste bins	M	Tidy bins, separate bin for food, all bins have tops	<i>Check recommendations local environment office</i>
	118	Food storage	M	Food storage cupboards are clean and rodent free	
	119	Fire safety	M	Fire safety regulations observed	<i>Details from fire office</i>
	120	Refrigeration	M	Fridge and freezer in good condition with different types of foods kept separately	<i>All items clearly marked with date, separate areas for meat, poultry and fish, diary, other</i>
	121	Cleanliness	M	Sideboards, walls and floors in clean condition	<i>Free from stains or excessive signs of ware</i>
	122	Lighting	M	Sufficient lighting of cooking area	<i>All areas of kitchen are lighted</i>
	123	Staff appearance	M	Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	124	Staff uniforms	M	All kitchen staff in uniform	
	125	Guest kitchen	2	Additional kitchen for guest use	<i>All compulsory criteria apply to guest use kitchen except staff</i>
	126	Extractor fan	1	Extractor fan over cooking facilities	
127	Equipment	1	Basic kitchen equipment, some wear and tear		
Services, amenities and facilities (if available)	128	Guides or Interpretation		Provides interpretation of natural or cultural features or attractions	
	129	Bag storage	3	Basic bag storage available	
	130	Airport transfer	1	Airport transfer can be arranged	
	131	Range of rooms	1, 3	At least two of king, queen, twin, suite, dorm, family, adjoining	
	132	Common lounge	1, 3	Simple lounge area or public terrace	
	133	Laundry	2	Guest laundry or laundry service available	
	134	Coffee bar		Available within property	<i>May be self-service</i>
	135	Internet access		At least one computer with internet access available for guest use	
	136	Business services	1	Some limited business services such as printing provided	<i>At least 3 services e.g. fax, printing, copying, scanning and secretarial services available</i>
	137	Meeting services		Dedicated meeting room for more than 15 people	
	138	Complimentary hospitality		Complimentary, drinks or fruits provided to guests daily	
	139	Tour arrangements	1	Activities, tours and/or car rentals can be arranged	
	140	Convenience store		Toiletries, postcards and other general items may be purchased	
	141				<i>Extra services may be noted here</i>
	142				
	143				

AREA	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	STANDARD	ASSESSOR NOTES
Recreational facilities	144	Pool		Small pool provided for guest use, lined or tiled	
	145	Beach on site		Beach within the grounds of the property	
	146	Bicycles		Simple bicycles available for rent	
	147	Marine equipment		Marine equipment (if available) is sea-worthy, well maintained, monitored by trained staff and has safety equipment available	<i>Check with marine police on requirements</i>
	148	Health facilities		Spa, gym or fitness room available within property	<i>One or more of these</i>
	149	Games and books		A selection readily available for guest use	
	150				<i>Extra services may be noted here</i>
	151				
	152				
Grounds	153	Signage	M	Clear signage around the property including directional, warning and caution signs in dangerous areas	<i>Check danger areas such as slippery surfaces, pools, generators for caution signs</i>
	154	Exterior lighting	K	Sufficient exterior lighting to ensure safe entry at night	<i>Check pathways and steps for lighting</i>
	155	Cleanliness	M	Grounds overall in clean, tidy and well maintained condition	<i>Clear of litter and insect/rodent breeding sites</i>
	156	Parking	1, 2	Parking available	<i>Sealed or gravel parking area, field or grassy area not acceptable</i>
	157	Vehicles for guest transport		Vehicles for guest transport (if available) are road-worthy well-maintained, equipped with seatbelts and driven by licensed staff	<i>Check for transport license as appropriate</i>
Building	158	Building	M	Building appears in overall satisfactory state of repair	<i>Look at the roof, walls, extensions and paintwork. If in doubt contact building inspector.</i>
	159	Location		Buildings located in an area with attractive views	
	160	Architecture	4	Traditional architectural features used	
	161	Landscaping		Efforts have been made to landscape and beautify the gardens	
	162	Guttering		Guttering in place on building	
	163	Rainwater tank		Rainwater tank in working order	

Table 11. Accreditation Checklist

Name of Property Accompanying manager

Property Contact

Address

www

Tel: Fax: Email:

Name of Assessor Date of Assessment Time Title

Type of Property: Hotel/resort Self-Catering/motel Guesthouse/B& B Traditional/informal

Facilities: Restaurant Bar Kitchen Recreational facilities

No. of Rooms: < 10 10-20 21-40 41+

Area	No	CRITERIA	TYPE	COMPLIES	STANDARD	COMMENTS
Business operations	1	Business license	M		Up to date	
	2	Other licenses	M		Up to date	
	3	Name of business	K		Name meets most required characteristics for this accommodation type	
	4	Marketing materials and website	K		Marketing materials are a true reflection of the facilities and services provided	
	5	Complaints procedure	K		All complaints lodged with tourist office have been addressed	
	6	Maintenance checks	M		Weekly checks by manager of pumping and lights	
	7	Manager			On time and available to assist assessment	
	8	Tourism association			Member of at least one industry association	
Staff	9	First aid training	M		At least one staff member has first Aid training	

	10	Emergency preparedness	M		Manager has a plan and knowledge of emergency procedures	
	11	New staff training programmes	M		All new staff receive training in their area of work	
	12	Employee recognition			System in place for recognising exceptional employees.	
Environment & community	13	Sewage	M		Sewage disposal is of appropriate type, size and location	
	14	Waste separation & reduction	M		Biodegradable waste is separated from other waste	
	15	Compost			Composting of vegetable and garden waste is undertaken	
	16	Environmental policy			Environmental policy in place	
	17	Environmental hazards			Manager/owner is somewhat aware of local environmental hazards	
	18	Environmental awareness training			Manager has attended environmental awareness training	
	19	Guest satisfaction			Survey conducted in last 12 months	
	20	Utility use			Manager can identify at least one change made to reduce utility usage	
	21	Code of Practise			Manager is aware of SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice	
22	Local community			Business involved in at least one local community project		
Reception & lobby	24	Guest registration	M		Basic registration book correctly filled in	
	26	Telephone	M		Telephone available at reception for guest use	
	27	Duty Manager	M		Senior staff member available 24 hours	
	28	Flooring	K		Suitable floor covering, some wear and tear	
	29	First aid kit	K		Basic First Aid kit available	
	30	Telephone messages	K		System for providing phone and other messages to guests	

	31	Staff appearance	M						Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	34	Clock	K						Clock showing correct time in reception	
	23	Reception counter	1, 2, 3						Small reception counter with bell for summoning assistance when un-staffed	
	25	Key storage	1, 2, 3						Staffed 24 hours or locked up	
	32	Staff knowledge	1						Staff demonstrate knowledge about the property	
	33	Staff training							Reception staff have received training	
	35	Staff uniforms							All reception staff in uniform	
	36	Staff name badges							All reception staff have name badges	
	37	Storage of valuables							Basic locked cupboard or file provided for guest valuables	
	38	Check- in times							Check-in and out times clearly posted in reception	
	39	Credit cards	1						At least two credit cards accepted for payment	
	40	Seating	1						One or two basic chairs available in lobby	
	41	Lighting							Adequate natural and artificial lighting for writing	
42	Furnishings & décor	1						Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment		
				Bed-room 1	Bed-room 2	Bed-room 3	Bed-room 4	Bed-room 5	<i>Note rooms numbers checked</i>	
Guest room	43	Mattresses	M						Basic quality mattress with mattress protection	
	44	Pillows	M						1 clean pillow for each sleeping position	
	45	Linen	M						Clean sheets and pillowcases	
	46	Insect netting	M						Insect netting is in place on all windows or nets provided	

	47	Lighting	M						Adequate lighting, safe switches and electrical wiring	
	48	Drinking water	M						Boiled and chilled drinking water available on request free of charge if tap water is unfit to drink	
	49	Fire safety	K						Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	
	51	Cleanliness	K						Ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	
	52	Waste basket	K						Simple waste paper basket	
	53	Security	M						Units secure against unauthorised entry via door or ground floor windows	
	50	Table and chair	1, 2, 3						Table and chair	
	54	Facilities for hanging clothes	1, 2						Basic clothes hanging area with 2 hangers per sleeping position	
	55	Window privacy	1, 2, 3						Curtains or blinds provide day and night privacy	
	56	Telephone	1						Telephone for internal calls	
	57	Bedside table	1						At least one bedside table at a convenient height relative to bed	
	58	Bedside light							At least one light located at bedside	
	59	Tea and Coffee	1, 2						Simple tea and coffee making facilities in room	
	60	Ventilation	1						Ceiling or standing fans provided	

	61	Furnishings & décor							Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment	
	62	Guest compendium							Simple information sheet listing property facilities and services	
Bathrooms (ensuite or communal)	63	Cleanliness	M						Bathroom adequately clean, tidy and free from obvious dirt	
	64	Toilet facilities	M						Functioning toilet with seat, lid & paper	
	65	Shower	M						Functioning shower of suitable height with shower head	
	66	Non-slip floor	M						Non-slip floor with floor drain	
	67	Shower curtain	M						Clean shower curtain or door in place	
	68	Wash basin	M						Simple wash basin with soap	
	69	Waste bin	M						Simple, lined waste bin	
	70	Lighting	M						Adequate lighting	
	71	Water supply	1,2,3						24 hour water supply	
	72	Location							Outside room but on same floor, not further than 25 steps	
	73	Water temperature	1, 2						24 hour hot and cold water	
	74	Bathroom supply	4						At least one male and female toilet & shower per 10 rooms (communal)	
	75	Power socket							Bathroom safe socket	
	76	Towel rails							Towel rails provided	

	77	Towels	1, 2						At least one clean towel provided for each guest, some wear and tear acceptable	
		AVERAGE								
Hallways	78	Cleanliness	K					Hallways, stairwells and elevators overall in clean, tidy and well maintained condition		
	79	Fire safety	M					Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits		
	80	Furnishings & décor						Simple furnishings and decor		
Public toilets (if available)	81	Toilet separation	K					Separate male and female toilets		
	82	Toilet facilities	K					Functioning toilet with door lock, seat & paper		
	83	Wash basin	K					Basic wash basin, soap and hand drying facilities		
	84	Waste bin	K					Simple, lined waste bin		
	85	Lighting	K					Adequate lighting to all parts of facility		
	86	Cleanliness	K					Clean and tidy ceiling, walls and floors and free from unpleasant odour		
	87	Disabled access						Disabled access and facilities provided		
	88	Baby-changing						Baby changing facilities provided		
	89	Urinal						Urinal in male toilets		
	90	Vanity area						Small vanity area in female toilets		
Restaurant or dining area (if available)				Outlet 1	Outlet 2	Outlet 3			<i>Note name of outlets checked</i>	
	91	Chairs and tables	M					Adequate number of simple chairs and tables available		
	92	Table settings	M					Sufficient coverings, crockery & cutlery		
	93	Cleanliness	M					Restaurant overall in clean, tidy and well-maintained condition.		

	94	Floor covering	M				Suitable floor covering, some wear and tear	
	95	Fire safety	M				Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	
	96	Staff appearance	M				Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	97	Menu	1				Simple buffet meals, board or written menu provided	
	98	Staff uniforms					All restaurant staff in uniform	
	99	Staff name badges					All restaurant staff have name badges	
	100	Breakfast included	3				Breakfast is included in room tariff	
	101	Local foods					A few local items included in menu	
	102	Furnishings & décor	1				Simple furnishings and decor	
	103	Entertainment					Music and entertainment provided on occasions	
		AVERAGE						
Bar (if available)	104	Refrigerator	M				Basic fridge, clean and in working order	
	105	Sink	M				Clean	
	106	Fire safety	M				Meets fire regulations in terms of fire detection, fire fighting and fire exits	
	107	Chairs & tables	M				Adequate number of simple chairs and tables available	
	108	Cleanliness	M				Adequately clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	
	110	Staff appearance	M				Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	109	Glassware	1				Simple but clean and unchipped	
	111	Staff uniforms					All bar staff in uniform	


	112	Staff name badges					All bar staff have name badges	
	113	Stock	1				Basic selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available	
	114	Furnishings & décor	1				Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment	
	115	Entertainment					Music and entertainment provided on occasions	
		AVERAGE						
Kitchen (if available)	116	Insect netting	M				Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all kitchen windows	
	117	Waste bins	M				Tidy bins, separate bin for food, all bins have tops	
	118	Food storage	M				Food storage cupboards are clean and rodent free	
	119	Fire safety	M				Fire safety regulations observed	
	120	Refrigeration	M				Fridge and freezer in good condition with different types of foods kept separately	
	121	Cleanliness	M				Sideboards, walls and floors in clean condition	
	122	Lighting	M				Sufficient lighting of cooking area	
	123	Staff appearance	M				Staff clean and tidy in appearance	
	124	Staff uniforms	M				All kitchen staff in uniform	
	125	Guest kitchen	2				Additional kitchen for guest use	
	126	Extractor fan	1				Extractor fan over cooking facilities	
127	Equipment	1				Basic kitchen equipment, some wear and tear		
		AVERAGE						
Services,	128	Guides or Interpretation					Provides interpretation of natural or cultural features or attractions	


amenities and facilities (if available)	129	Bag storage	3		Basic bag storage available	
	130	Airport transfer	1		Airport transfer can be arranged	
	131	Range of rooms	1, 3		At least two of king, queen, twin, suite, dorm, family, adjoining	
	132	Common lounge	1, 3		Simple lounge area or public terrace	
	133	Laundry	2		Guest laundry or laundry service available	
	134	Coffee bar			Available within property	
	135	Internet access			At least one computer with internet access available for guest use	
	136	Business services	1		Some limited business services such as printing provided	
	137	Meeting services			Dedicated meeting room for more than 15 people	
	138	Complimentary hospitality			Complimentary, drinks or fruits provided to guests daily	
	139	Tour arrangements	1		Activities, tours and/or car rentals can be arranged	
	140	Convenience store			Toiletries, postcards and other general items may be purchased	
	141					
Recreational facilities	144	Pool			Small pool provided for guest use, lined or tiled	
	145	Beach on site			Beach within the grounds of the property	
	146	Bicycles			Simple bicycles available for rent	
	147	Marine equipment			Marine equipment (if available) is sea-worthy, well maintained, monitored by trained staff and has safety equipment available	
	148	Health facilities			Spa, gym or fitness room available within property	

	149	Games and books			A selection available for guest use	
	150					
	151					
	152					
Grounds	153	Signage	M		Clear signage around the property including directional, warning and caution signs in dangerous areas	
	154	Exterior lighting	K		Sufficient exterior lighting to ensure safe entry at night	
	155	Cleanliness	M		Grounds overall in clean, tidy and well maintained condition	
	156	Parking	1, 2		Parking available	
	157	Vehicles for guest transport			Vehicles for guest transport (if available) are road-worthy well-maintained, equipped with seatbelts and driven by licensed staff	
Building	158	Building	M		Building appears in overall satisfactory state of repair	
	159	Location			Buildings located in an area with attractive views	
	160	Architecture	4		Traditional architectural features used	
	161	Landscaping			Efforts have been made to landscape and beautify the gardens	
	162	Guttering			Guttering in place on building	
	163	Rainwater tank			Rainwater tank in working order	
		TOTAL				

Result

Complies with all standards Does not comply with all areas

Categories / Scores	Listed	Accredited	Accredited PLUS	Total points
Hotel & resort	51-86	96-129	139-	

Self Catering	51-69	79-100	110-	Recommended Award	
Guesthouse	51-76	76-85	95-		
Traditional	51-58	58-63	73-		

Areas for follow-up

Follow-up completed Name & Signature of Assessor

Table 12. Criteria and Assessor Guidelines for Star-Rating

Key: K= Key criteria, compulsory for all
 1= Compulsory for hotels and resorts
 2= Compulsory for Self-catering and holiday rentals
 3= Compulsory for Guesthouses, backpackers and bed and breakfasts
 4= Compulsory for Traditional and village accommodation

Area	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
General	1	Business licence	K	Up to date		Up to date and clearly displayed		Up to date and clearly displayed in front office	<i>Except if not required by law. If required, ask to view licence</i>
	2	Other licences	K	Up to date		Up to date and clearly displayed		Up to date and clearly displayed in front office	<i>May require alcohol licence, employer licence et. Check any vehicles and their drivers have valid licences.</i>
	3	Name of business	K	Name meets most required characteristics for this accommodation type		Name meets all required characteristics for this accommodation type		Name gives true impression of facility and meets all required characteristics for this accommodation type	<i>I.e. If resort, has to meet resort characteristics listed in Table of Definitions</i>

	4	Marketing materials and website	K	Marketing materials are a true reflection of the facilities and services provided		Marketing materials are a true reflection of the facilities and services provided, and are of good quality		Marketing materials are a true reflection of the facilities and services provided, and are of excellent quality	<i>Check website prior to arrival, obtain a copy of brochures and retain for reference.</i>
	5	Complaints procedure	K	All complaints lodged with tourist office have been addressed		All complaints lodged with tourist office have been addressed and clear process in place for dealing with complaints		Excellent process for dealing with complaints. All complaints lodged with tourist office have been addressed	<i>Check complaints lodged with tourist office prior to visit, ensure these have been addressed</i>
	6	Maintenance checks	K	Weekly checks by manager of pumping and lights		Daily checks by manager and or process in place for housekeeping to alert maintenance		24 hour maintenance for light bulbs, drains or any other maintenance problem	<i>Ask how often these are done and whether a check-list is used</i>
	7	Manager		On time and available to assist assessment		On time and available to assist assessment, appears efficient, tidy and friendly.		On time and available to assist assessment, excellent appearance, knowledge and personal skills	<i>Arrange visit in advance. Manager should be ready for your arrival.</i>
	8	Tourism Association		Member of at least one industry association		Member of several local/national/environmental associations		Board or Executive member of one or more industry associations	<i>May be local, national or regional</i>
Area	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
Staff	9	Telephone answering	K	Phone answered		Phone answered within 4 rings		Phone answered within 2 rings	
	10	First aid training	K	At least one staff member has first Aid training		All senior staff have First Aid training		All staff have First Aid training	<i>Ask where this was done, or ask to see certificate.</i>
	11	Emergency preparedness	K	Manager has a plan and knowledge of emergency procedures		Manager and all senior staff have knowledge of fire equipment use		All staff have training in fire equipment use	<i>Ask what they do if a fire occurs</i>
	12	Staff training programmes	K	All new staff receive training in their area of work		All staff receive regular training in their area of work		Excellent training programme in place at all levels	<i>Ask to explain training provided for new staff</i>
	13	Telephone greeting	1, 2	Reservation person identified name of the business		Reservation person identified name of the business and their own name		Reservation person identified name of the business, their own name and asked how they could help.	
	14	Telephone manner	1	Standard telephone manner		Good quality telephone manner		Excellent telephone manner	
	15	Telephone answering knowledge		Standard knowledge about the property		Good knowledge of the property		Excellent knowledge of the property	

	16	Employee recognition		System in place for recognising exceptional employees.		System in place for recognising exceptional employee linked to specific benefits		Excellent system of rewards in place for motivating staff	<i>E.g. Employee of the month programme</i>
	17	Staff facilities		Toilets are provided for exclusive use of staff		Toilets and changing area are provided for exclusive use of staff		Toilets, changing area and lounge are provided for the exclusive use of staff	<i>Ask to view these</i>
Sustain-ability	18	Sewage	K	Sewage disposal is of appropriate type, size and location		Sewage disposal is of appropriate type, size and location and a record of maintenance is kept		Full treatment sewage system with a record of maintenance.	<i>Check with health department on regulation. Ask about maintenance schedule.</i>
	19	Waste separation	K	Biodegradable waste is separated from other waste		Biodegradable, plastic waste and paper waste are separated		All waste products are separated and where possible recycled	<i>Ask if any steps have been taken, if so what</i>
	20	Compost		Composting of vegetable and garden waste is undertaken		At least one functioning compost bin in grounds		Several well functioning compost bins in grounds.	<i>Check with environment Dept. for recommendations. Pig feeding is also allowed.</i>
	21	Environmental policy		Environmental policy in place		Environmental policy in place and less than 3 years old		Environmental policy in place and renewed annually	<i>Ask to view this</i>
AREA	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
Sustain-ability cont.	22	Environmental hazards		Manager/owner is aware of local environmental hazards		Manager/owner is aware of local environmental hazards and has taken steps to address these		Manager/owner has a detailed plan for dealing with environmental hazards	<i>Ask what environmental concerns they have e.g. flooding, storm surge, cyclone and what the plan is in this event.</i>
	23	Environmental awareness training		Manager has attended environmental awareness training		All senior staff have environmental awareness training		All staff have environmental awareness training	<i>Ask to explain training provided</i>
	24	Guest satisfaction		Guest satisfaction survey conducted in last 12 months		Guest satisfaction survey conducted in last 6 months		Guest satisfaction survey form in every room, analysed weekly	<i>Ask how results are used</i>
	25	Utility use		Manager can identify at least one change made to reduce utility usage		Manager can identify numerous changes made to reduce utility usage		Business represents best practice in terms of utility conservation	<i>Ask if any steps have been taken, if so what</i>
	26	Code of Practise		Manager is aware of SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice		Manager is aware of SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice and has committed to it		Manager is aware of SPTO Tourism Industry Code of Practice has committed to it and has it clearly displayed	<i>Once the Code is well known in the destination this should become mandatory for all</i>

	27	Local community		Business involved in at least one local community project		Business is contributing to local community projects		Business makes considerable effort to assist the local community in many different areas	<i>Ask about any particular programme to support local community</i>
Reception & Lobby	28	Registration process	K	Basic registration book correctly filled in		Computerised registration system		State of the art registration with express check-out available	<i>View registration system, check for occupant names, room no, date in, and date out.</i>
	29	Telephone	K	Telephone available at reception for guest use		Several telephones available for international calling		Extensive telephone facilities available	<i>In working order and can be used by guests</i>
	30	Duty Manager	K	Senior staff member available 24 hours		Senior staff member available 24 hours and manager on site at least 12 hours a day and contactable during night time		Manager on site 24 hours a day	<i>Ask how manager is contactable during the night</i>
	31	Flooring	K	Suitable floor covering, some wear and tear		Good floor covering, very little wear and tear		Top quality flooring with no signs of wear or tear	
	32	First aid kit	K	Basic First Aid kit available		Good quality First Aid equipment		Excellent quality First Aid equipment	<i>Ask health department for a list of contents</i>
	33	Staff appearance	K	Staff clean and tidy		Staff clean and tidy with name badges or uniform		Staff clean and tidy with uniforms and name badges	
	34	Clock	K	Clock showing correct time in reception		Large clock showing correct time in reception		Attractive, large clock showing correct time in reception	<i>A large clock is best</i>
	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
	35	Staff knowledge	K	Staff demonstrate basic knowledge about the property		Good knowledge of the property		Excellent knowledge of the property	<i>Ask about facilities and services provided</i>
	36	Key storage	1, 2, 3	Staffed 24 hours a day or kept lock		Keys kept locked		Card keys provided for all guests	<i>Either locked cupboard or 24hour supervision. Traditional structures with no doors excluded</i>
37	Reception counter	1, 2, 3	Small reception counter with bell for summoning assistance when un-staffed		Standard size reception counter staffed during daytime and evenings		Large reception counter staffed 24 hours	<i>Exceptions for traditional accommodation</i>	
38	Staff friendliness	1	Greeting from staff on arrival		Greeting from staff on arrival with eye contact		Friendly greeting from staff at door with eye contact and smile		
39	Explanation of facilities	1	Guests provided with information on services and directions to room		Guests provided with information on services and are shown to room		Guests provided with information on services and are shown around the premises		

	40	Check-in times		Check-in and out times clearly posted in reception		Check-in and out times noted on key card envelope		Check-in and out times noted on key card envelope and back of room door	
	41	Express check-out		Hand written bill prepared in advance		Computerised billing system, printer at reception		Express check-out, highly efficient system for billing	
	42	Telephone messages	1	Phone messages left at reception for guests		Good system for delivering messages to rooms		In-room phone takes messages and indicates when message has been left	<i>Ask about what is done with messages</i>
	43	Storage of valuables		Basic locked cupboard or file provided for guest valuables		Good system for labelling and storing Guest Valuables		State of the art safe for guest belongings located in each guest room	<i>Ask about system for identifying property</i>
	44	Credit cards	1	Cash, cheque or travellers cheques can be used for payment		At least two credit cards accepted for payment		At least 4 major credit cards accepted for payment, ATM machine on site	
	45	Seating	1	One or two basic chairs available in lobby		A number of comfortable chairs available		Numerous couches, chairs and comfortable corners	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>
	46	Lighting		Natural and artificial lighting		Good natural and artificial lighting		Excellent natural and artificial lighting	
	47	Furnishings & décor	1	Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment		Significant effort have been made to create an attractive environment		Top quality décor and furnishings	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
AREA	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
	48	Spaciousness		Lobby area suited to the size of property		Standard size lobby area		Spacious lobby area	
	49	Assistance with bags		Help can be provided with bags if necessary		Staff brings bags to room		Concierge desk and uniformed porter service	
	50	Flowers		Artificial or simple flower arrangement		Attractive flowers changed daily		Excellent fresh flower arrangement	
Guest room	51	Mattresses	K	Simple mattress with extra sheet for mattress protection		Good quality sprung mattress with proper mattress protector		Top quality box spring mattress with proper mattress protection	
	52	Pillows	K	1 clean pillow for each sleeping position		1 good quality pillows for each sleeping position		2 or more top quality pillows for each sleeping position	<i>Check for cleanliness inside pillow case</i>
	53	Linen & blankets	K	Clean sheets and pillowcases		Good quality sheets, pillows and blankets available		Top quality sheets, pillows, bed spread and blankets provided	<i>Check rooms made up for new guest. Blankets apply only to made-up rooms.</i>

54	Insect netting	K	Insect netting is in place on all windows or nets provided		Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all windows or good nets provided		Insect netting is in place and in excellent condition on all windows or excellent nets provided	<i>Not required in air conditioned rooms</i>
55	Drinking water	K	Boiled and chilled drinking water available on request free of charge if tap water is unfit to drink		Boiled and chilled drinking water provided in room free of charge where tap water is not fit to drink		Bottled drinking water available in room free of charge or tap water fit to drink	<i>If tap water is fit to drink, no bottled water required. If not, sign must say NOT fit to drink.</i>
56	Fire safety	K	Meets fire regulations		Working smoke detector in place and escape plan behind door		Working smoke detector in place, escape plan behind door and in-room alarm	<i>Details from fire safety officer</i>
57	Cleanliness	K	Adequately clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Very clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors	<i>General appearance</i>
58	Waste basket	K	Simple waste paper basket		Simple, lined waste paper basket		Attractive, lined waste paper basket	<i>Can be simple rubbish bag</i>
59	Security	K	Units secure against unauthorised entry via door or ground floor windows		Units secure against unauthorised entry via door or ground floor windows. Double lock on door (check guests can use both)		Units secure against unauthorised entry via door or ground floor windows. Double lock and peep hole	<i>Exceptions are open traditional dwellings e.g. beach fale, where night security needs to be provided instead.</i>
60	Lighting	1, 2, 3	Adequate lighting, safe switches and electrical wiring		Good lighting, safe switches and electrical wiring		Excellent lighting, safe switches and electrical wiring	<i>No exposed light bulbs except in traditional properties, fluorescent tubes acceptable</i>
No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
61	Table and chair	1, 2, 3	Simple table and chair in room		Good quality table and chair in room		Top quality table and chair in room	<i>Can be bedside table with easy chair or extra chair on the side. Traditional accommodation excluded</i>
62	Window privacy	1, 2, 3	Curtains or blinds provide day and night privacy		Good quality window drapes or blinds, providing partial blackout		Top quality window drapes or blinds, providing total blackout	<i>Curtains or blinds are clean and cover entire window obscuring view into room from outside. Exceptions are traditional accommodation.</i>
63	Facilities for hanging clothes	1, 2	Simple clothes hanging area with 2 hangers per sleeping position		Good quality clothes hanging cupboard with 4 hangers per sleeping position		Top quality clothes hanging cupboard with 5 hangers per sleeping position	<i>Maybe open or closed, should have at least 3 hangers per bed</i>
64	Telephone	1	Telephone for internal calls only		Telephone for operator-assisted internal and external calls		Direct dialling for all calls including international	<i>Not applicable to traditional or isolated locations - add one point</i>

65	Bedside table	1	At least one bedside table at a convenient height relative to bed	One bedside table for each sleeping position	One bedside table for each sleeping position at a convenient height relative to bed			
66	Bedside light	1	At least one light located at bedside	At least one light located at bedside with convenient switch	One light for each sleeping position located at bedside with convenient switch			
67	Alarm clock		Alarm clock provided	Standard alarm clock radio provided	Excellent alarm clock radio provided	<i>Not applicable to traditional or isolated locations</i>		
68	Tea and coffee	2	Simple tea and coffee making facilities in room	Good quality tea and coffee making facilities in room	Good quality tea and coffee making facilities in room with matching crockery	<i>Not applicable to traditional or isolated locations</i>		
69	Iron	2	Iron and ironing board available in guest laundry	Iron and ironing board available from housekeeping on request	Iron and ironing board provided in room	<i>Available in closet or on demand from housekeeping</i>		
70	Fridge	1, 2	Chilled drinks available on request	Fridge or mini bar, clean and working	Fridge or mini bar, clean and working and stocked	<i>Check seal and ice</i>		
71	Ventilation	1, 2	Ceiling or standing fans provided	Centralised air conditioning provided in some rooms	Air conditioning provided with individual controls in each room	<i>Check are in working order and clean</i>		
72	Extra bedding		Extra pillows and blankets available from housekeeping on request	One extra pillow and blanket available in room	Several extra pillows and blankets available in room	<i>Blankets only necessary in air-conditioned rooms</i>		
No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
73	Furnishings and décor	1	Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment	Significant effort have been made to create an attractive environment	Top quality décor and furnishings			<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
74	Guest compendium		Simple information sheet listing property facilities and services	Good quality folder listing property facilities and services	Excellent folder listing property facilities and services as well as local attractions, shops and other facilities			
75	Room size	1	Limited free floor space	Ample space to move around the room	Provides a feeling of spaciousness			<i>Free space at end of beds for passage</i>
76	Room service		Minimal room service provided, breakfast only	Room service at least 10 hours a day, snack menu provided	Room service at least 24 hours a day, full menu provided			
77	Television		Colour television with remote control	Colour television with remote control and cable/satellite channels	Colour television with remote control and cable/satellite channels and pay per view movie system			<i>Check TV is tuned and working</i>

	78	Balcony		Small, child-safe balcony with non-slip floor		Standard size child-safe balcony with outdoor furniture and with non-slip floor		Spacious balcony with top quality outdoor furniture and with non-slip floor	<i>Check width of railing supports.</i>	
	79	Luggage rack		Small luggage rack available		Good quality luggage rack available		Good quality luggage rack available with storage space for extra luggage		
	80	Glassware		Water glasses provided		Range of glasses provided		Range of glasses provided including wine glasses		
Bathrooms (ensuite or communal)	81	Cleanliness	K	Bathroom adequately clean, tidy and free from obvious dirt		Very clean, tidy and free from dirt & dust		Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors	<i>General appearance</i>	
	82	Toilet facilities	K	Functioning toilet with seat, lid & paper		Good toilet with door lock, lid, seat & paper		Excellent toilet facilities	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>	
	83	Shower	K	Functioning shower of suitable height with shower head		Functioning shower of suitable height with shower head and hot and cold water		Top quality shower of suitable height with shower head and hot and cold water	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>	
	84	Non-slip floor	K	Non-slip floor with floor drain		Good quality non-slip floor with floor drain		Excellent quality non-slip floor with floor drain	<i>Rubber shower mat recommended for baths</i>	
	85	Shower curtain	K	Clean shower curtain or door in place		Good quality shower curtain or door in place		Double shower curtain in place	<i>Simple screen may be used in outdoor showers</i>	
	86	Wash basin	K	Simple wash basin with soap		Good quality wash basin with soap, plug, towel and mirror		High quality wash basin with soap, plug, towel and mirror	<i>Check clean, well-maintained and working</i>	
		No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
	87	Waste bin	K	Simple, lined waste bin		Simple, lined waste bin with lid		Good quality lined waste bin with lid		
	88	Adequate lighting	K	Adequate room lighting		Good lighting in all areas		Excellent lighting in all areas	<i>In toilets and washbasin area, exposed light bulbs acceptable</i>	
	89	Water supply	1, 2, 3	24 hour cold water supply		24 hour cold water supply and hot during daylight hours		24 hour hot and cold water supply	Geographic allowance may exempt some properties. Traditional excluded	
90	Location of bathroom	1	Outside room on same floor not more than 25 steps		Inside guest room with no door		Inside guest room with door			
91	Bathroom supply	1, 2	At least one male and female toilet & shower per 10 rooms (communal)		At least one male and female toilet & shower per 5 rooms (communal)		At least one male and female toilet & shower per 2 rooms (communal)	<i>Maximum occupancy divided by number of toilets and showers</i>		
92	Power socket	1	Bathroom safe socket provided		Good quality bathroom safe socket provided		Top quality bathroom safe socket provided	<i>Automatic cut-off in case of water contact</i>		
93	Towel rails	1,2	At least one towel rail provided		One towel rail for each shower (communal)		One towel rail for each sleeping position (ensuite)			

	Towels	1, 2	At least one clean towel provided for each guest, some wear and tear	At least one good quality clean bath and hand towel provided for each guest	Bath, hand, flannels and bath mats provided, all in excellent condition	Check for stains			
	Bathtub		Small bath provided	Full length bath tub	Full length bathtub with safety hand rail				
96	Spaciousness		Small, just adequate bathroom area	Good amount of space in bathroom	Extremely spacious bathroom				
97	Vanity side		Small side area adjacent to sink	Spacious sideboard adjacent to sink	Spacious sideboard next to sink with excellent lighting and additional vanity mirror				
98	Amenity pack		Soap provided in bath and sink	Soap and shampoo provided	An extensive selection of amenities provided				
99	Hairdryer		Simple, safe hairdryer available on request	Good quality, safe hairdryer provided	Excellent quality, safe hairdryer provided	Check for working order and smell			
Hallways, stairwells and elevators	100	Fire safety	K	Meets fire regulations	Working smoke detectors in place	Working smoke detector in place, fire fighting equipment available	According to national regulation. Where elevator exists check maintenance record		
	101	Cleanliness	K	Hallways, stairwells and elevators in clean, tidy and well maintained condition	Very clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt	Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors	Note down any problem areas during tour		
	102	Ambience and décor	1	Adequate but no special effort has been made	Efforts have been made to create an attractive environment	Top quality décor and ambience	Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings		
	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
Public toilets (if available)	103	Toilet separation	K	Separate male and female toilets	Separate male and female toilets with clear signs	Separate male and female toilets with attractive signs	Do not rate the same toilets twice, these must be different to the guest bathrooms		
	104	Toilet facilities	K	Functioning toilet with door lock, seat & paper	Good toilet with door lock, lid, seat & paper	Excellent toilet facilities	Check clean, well-maintained and working		
	105	Wash basin	K	Basic wash basin, soap and hand drying facilities	Good quality wash basin, soap, hand drying facilities and mirror	Top quality wash basin, soap, hand drying facilities and mirror	Check clean, well maintained and working. Hand dryer may be used instead of towel.		
	106	Waste bin	K	Simple, lined waste bin	Simple, lined waste bin with lid	Attractive lined waste bin with lid			
	107	Lighting	K	Adequate lighting to all parts of facility	Good lighting to all parts of facility	Excellent lighting to all parts of facility	In toilets and washbasin area		
	108	Cleanliness	K	Clean and tidy ceiling, walls and floors and free from unpleasant odour	Very clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt and unpleasant odours	Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors and unpleasant odours	General appearance		

	109	Baby-changing		Baby-changing facilities provided						
	110	Vanity area		Small vanity area in female toilets		Good size vanity area in female toilets		Top quality vanity area with mirrors and good lighting	<i>Special area for make-up application with mirrors and lighting</i>	
	111	Urinal		Simple, functioning urinal in male toilets		Good quality, functioning urinal in male toilets		Excellent, functioning urinal in male toilets	<i>Check in working order and odour free</i>	
	112	Flowers		Artificial or simple flower arrangement		Good quality fresh flower arrangement		Top quality fresh flowers	<i>Flowers from property grounds preferred</i>	
Business Services	113	Internet access		At least one computer with internet access available for guest use		More than one computer with internet access available for guest use		Internet access available in all guestrooms		
	114	Business services	1	Some limited business services such as printing provided (At least 3 services e.g. fax, printing, copying.)		A good range of business services provided (At least 5 services)		Full range of business services provided including fax, printing, copying, scanning, interpretation and secretarial services		
	115	Meeting room		Small meeting room with limited equipment provided		Dedicated meeting room for more than 15 people with good equipment		Excellent meeting facilities for 25 or more people with modern equipment		
	116	Toilets		Easy access to public toilets		Separate meeting room toilet facilities of good standard		Separate meeting room toilet facilities of excellent standard		
	117	Catering		Drinks only for meetings		Limited catering provided for meetings		Full service catering available for meetings		
		No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
		118	Postal service		Post box on property		Postal box and stamps available		Full postal and courier services available	
		119								Extra services maybe listed here and scored according to quality (basic, good, excellent)
		120								
		121								
Restaurant or dining area (if available)	122	Chairs and tables	K	Adequate number of simple chairs and tables available		Adequate number of good quality chairs and tables available		Adequate number of excellent quality chairs and tables available	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>	
	123	Fire safety	K	Meets fire regulations		Working smoke detector in place and alarms in place		Working smoke detector in place, alarms and fire fighting equipment	<i>Details from fire office</i>	
	124	Floor covering	K	Suitable floor covering, some wear and tear		Good floor covering, very little wear and tear		Top quality flooring with no signs of wear or tear	<i>Free from stains or excessive signs of wear and tear</i>	

	125	Table settings	K	Basic crockery and cutlery, paper napkins		High quality crockery and cutlery, table cloths and linen napkins		High quality crockery and cutlery, table cloths and linen napkins	<i>Clean, well-stored, crack-free</i>
	126	Cleanliness	K	Adequately clean ceilings walls and floor, free from all obvious dirt		Very clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors	<i>General appearance</i>
	127	Staff	K	Staff clean and tidy		Staff clean and tidy with name badges or uniform		Staff clean and tidy with uniforms and name badges	
	128	Staff knowledge	1	Staff can explain the menu		Staff has good knowledge of the menu		Staff has good knowledge of the menu, specials and wine service	
	129	Billing		Written bills provided for each purchase		Computerised billing for each purchase		Can be billed automatically to room	
	130	Breakfast included		Simple self-service continental breakfast included		Good quality continental breakfast included in room tariff basic service provided		Full cooked breakfast included in room tariff	<i>Good quality, should include fresh local fruit where possible</i>
	131	Menu service	1	Simple buffet meals, board menu only		Good range of snack and dining options including dessert		Three-course fine dining with extensive menu and special orders accommodated e.g. vegetarian	
	132	Local foods		A few local items included in menu		Good selection of local foods at all meals		Excellent selection of local foods at all meals	<i>Use of local fruit, vegetable and other items encouraged</i>
	133	No. Of food outlets		1- maybe combined with bar		1 separate from bar		2 or more outlets	
	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
	134	Furnishings & décor	1	Simple furnishings and décor		Efforts have been made to create an attractive environment		Top quality décor and ambience	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>
	135	Entertainment		Music and occasional entertainment provided		Appropriate local music and regular entertainment provided		High quality music and entertainment provided	<i>Ask about entertainment programme</i>
Bar (if available)	136	Refrigerator	K	Basic fridge, clean and in working order		Good quality commercial fridge, clean and in working order		Top quality commercial fridge, clean and in working order	<i>Check seals in good condition</i>
	137	Sink	K	Basic sink clean and in working order		Good quality stainless steel sink clean and in working order		Top quality stainless steel sink clean and in working order	<i>Preferably stainless steel</i>
	138	Fire safety	K	Meets fire regulations		Working smoke detector in place		Working smoke detector in place, fire fighting equipment available	<i>Details from fire office</i>

139	Chairs & tables	K	Adequate number of simple chairs and tables available		Good number of quality chairs and tables available		Numerous top quality chairs and tables available	<i>In keeping with size of the hotel</i>	
140	Cleanliness	K	Adequately clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Very clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors	<i>General appearance</i>	
141	Glassware	K	Simple but clean and unchipped		Good quality glassware		Finest quality glassware	<i>Clean, well-stored, crack-free</i>	
142	Staff	K	Staff clean and tidy		Staff clean and tidy with name badges or uniform		Staff clean and tidy with uniforms and name badges		
143	Billing		Written bills provided for each purchase		Computerised billing for each purchase		Can be billed automatically to room		
144	Staff knowledge	1	Staff can provide simple drinks		Staff can prepare mixed drinks and open wine		Staff is knowledgeable in the preparation of a wide range of drinks including cocktails		
145	Stock	1	Basic selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available		Good selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available		Extensive selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available	<i>Wine, beer, spirits, juice, soda and water are basics items</i>	
146	Furnishings & décor	1	Slight effort has been made to create an attractive environment		Significant effort have been made to create an attractive environment		Top quality décor and furnishings	<i>Use of plants, pictures, rugs and other elements to create pleasant surroundings</i>	
147	Entertainment		Music and occasional entertainment provided		Appropriate local music and regular entertainment provided		High quality music and entertainment provided	<i>Traditional preferred</i>	
148	Food		Some bar snacks available		Good selection of bar snacks available with menu		Extensive selection of bar snacks and hot food available		
AREA	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
Kitchen	149	Insect netting	K	Insect netting is in place on all windows		Insect netting is in place and in good condition on all windows		Insect netting is in place and in excellent condition on all windows	<i>Exceptions may apply</i>
	150	Waste bins	K	Tidy bins, separate bin for food		Good bins, with tops, most waste is separated		Excellent bins, with tops, all waste is separated	<i>Check recommendations local environment office</i>
	151	Food storage	K	Food storage cupboards are clean and rodent free, different types of food are properly separated		Very good food storage - cupboards are clean and rodent free, different types of food are properly separated		Excellent food storage - cupboards are clean and rodent free, different types of food are properly separated	
	152	Fire safety	K	Meets fire regulations		Working smoke detector in place and escape plan behind door		Working smoke detector in place, escape plan behind door and in-room alarm	<i>Details from fire office</i>
	153	Refrigeration	K	Basic fridge, clean and in working order		Good quality commercial fridge, clean and in working order		Top quality commercial fridge, clean and in working order	<i>All items clearly marked with date, separate areas for meat, poultry and fish, diary, other</i>

	154	Cleanliness	K	Clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Very clean ceilings, walls and floors free from obvious dirt		Spotless and dust free clean ceilings, walls and floors	<i>Free from stains or excessive signs of wear and tear</i>	
	155	Lighting	K	Adequate lighting for cooking areas		Very good lighting in all areas			<i>All areas of kitchen are lighted</i>	
	156	Staff	K	Staff clean and tidy		Staff clean and tidy with uniforms		Staff very clean and tidy with uniforms		
	157	Guest kitchen	2	Separate kitchen with simple equipment for guests		Separate kitchen with very good equipment for guest use		Separate kitchen with excellent equipment for guest	<i>All compulsory criteria apply to guest use kitchen except staff</i>	
	158	Ventilation	1	Well ventilated cooking area		Simple extractor fan		Good quality extractor fan		
	159	Equipment	1	Basic kitchen equipment, some wear and tear		Good selection of kitchen equipment		Best available kitchen equipment		
Services, amenities and facilities	160	Guides or Interpretation	E	Basic natural and cultural information provided for guests		Significant information on natural or cultural features or attractions provided for guests		Excellent information on natural or cultural features or attractions provided for guests	<i>May use guides or information boards</i>	
	161	Bag storage	1, 3	Basic bag storage available		Good system for bag storage available		Excellent system for bag storage	<i>View system for labelling and storing bags</i>	
	162	Airport transfer	1	Airport transfer can be arranged		Airport transfer with property's own bus		Airport transfer with own bus and meet and greet service		
	163	Range of rooms	1, 3	At least two of king, queen, twin, suite, dorm, family, adjoining rooms		At least three of king, queen, twin, suite, dorm, family, adjoining rooms		At least four of king, queen, twin, suite, dorm, family, adjoining		
		No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
	164	Common lounge	3	Simple lounge area or public terrace		Several comfortable and spacious lounge areas or public terraces		Numerous excellent and spacious lounge area or public terrace		
	165	Laundry	2	Self-service laundry on property		Laundry service available		Extensive laundry service including ironing and dry cleaning	Service includes room pick-up and drop	
	166	Coffee bar		Limited coffee bar on site		Good quality coffee bar		Top quality coffee bar service		
	167	Complimentary hospitality		Complimentary welcome drink on arrival		Complimentary welcome drink on arrival and afternoon tea provided daily		Complimentary welcome drink on arrival and morning and afternoon tea provided daily	Other complimentary services can substitute e.g. fruit bowl	
	168	Tour arrangements	1	Activities, tours and/or car rentals can be arranged		Activities, tours and car rentals can be arranged and run by the property		Extensive selection of activities, tours and car rentals can be arranged and run by the property		

	169	Convenience store		Basic convenience items may be purchased		A good range of convenience items may be purchased		Excellent range of convenience items may be purchased	
	170	Disabled access		Disabled access to lobby and reception		Disabled access to all public areas including toilets		Disabled guest rooms available	
	171	Newspaper delivery		Newspaper available in lobby daily		Local newspaper delivered to room daily		International newspaper delivered to room daily	
	172	Evening turndown		Turndown service on request		Turndown service everyday		Turndown service plus towel replacement and room tidying daily	
	173	Taxi service		Staff can arrange for taxi		Taxi rank located adjacent to property		Property has taxi rank on site	
	174	Cots and extra beds	1	Extra beds available and basic baby cot		Good quality baby cots and extra beds available		Best quality baby cots and extra beds	
	175	Kids club		Some children's activities arranged		Indoor and outdoor space dedicated to children's activities with full-time supervision		Full programme of supervised children's' activities	
	176	Wedding co-ordinator		Basic wedding arrangements possible		Good range of wedding services including dedicated wedding planner		Top end wedding facilities and wedding planner	
	177	Car Rental		At least one basic car available for guest rental		Two or more good cars available for guest rental		A wide range of excellent cars for rent	
	178								<i>Extra services may be noted here</i>
	179								
	180								
AREA	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
Recreational facilities	181	Pool		Small pool provided for guest use, lined or tiled		Good size pool provided for guest use, concrete or tiled		Large pool, with towels provided and attractive poolside area	Check pool rules are clearly posted
	182	Beach on site		Small swimming beach within the grounds of the property		Good, attractive swimming beach within the grounds of the property		Top quality swimming beach within the grounds of the property	
	183	Bicycles		Simple bicycles available for rent		Good quality bicycles available for rent		Bicycles available free of charge	
	184	Tennis		Simple tennis court available, poor repair		Good quality tennis court available, equipment for rent		2 or more good quality tennis courts with lights and changing area	

185	Gym or fitness room		Simple fitness room available		Moderately equipped gym or fitness room available within property		Clean, extensively equipped gym or fitness room available within property	<i>One or more of these</i>
186	Games and books		A small selection available for guest use		A good selection of books and magazine readily available for guest use		Magazines provided in guest rooms	
187	Snooker or billiards table		Small pool or snooker table		Standard size pool or snooker table		Championship size pool or snooker table	
188	Spa		Small spa with some limited services provided		Good quality spa with some limited services provided		Extensive luxury spa with wide range of services provided	
189	Snorkelling		Simple snorkelling gear available for rent		Good quality snorkelling gear available for rent		Top quality snorkelling gear available free of charge	Check for safety procedures
190	Fishing and Cruising		Fishing and/or cruising can be arranged by property		Fishing and cruising trips run by property		Dedicated fishing or cruising boat on site with safety equipment and trained staff	Check for safety equipment
191	Diving		Diving can be arranged by property		Occasional diving trips run by property		Dedicated dive boat and scuba equipment with trained staff	Check for safety equipment and emergency plan
192	Golf course		Small driving range available		Good quality golf course in grounds		Pro quality golf course in grounds	
193	Windsurfing		Basic windsurfers available for hire or complimentary use		Good quality windsurfers available with instruction from trained staff		Top quality windsurfers available with instruction from highly trained staff	Check for safety equipment and emergency plan
No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
194	Canoes & Kayaks		Basic canoes and or kayaks available for hire or complimentary use		Good canoes and or kayaks available with instruction from trained staff		Top quality canoes and or kayaks available with safety equipment and trained staff	Check for safety equipment and emergency plan
195	Sailing boats		Basic sailing boats available for hire or complimentary use		Sailing boats available with safety equipment and trained staff		High quality boats available with instruction from highly trained staff	Check for safety equipment and emergency plan
196	Playground		Small playground area with safe equipment		Good quality playground area with safe equipment		Extensive playground area with safe equipment	
197								<i>Extra services may be noted here</i>
198								
199								
Grounds	200 Exterior lighting	K	Sufficient exterior lighting to ensure safe entry at night		Good lighting of grounds at night		Attractive and low energy lighting of grounds at night	<i>Check pathways for lighting</i>

201	Cleanliness	K	Tidy grounds, no litter in sight		Tidy grounds, no litter or garden rubbish is sight		Pristine grounds, no litter or garden rubbish is sight		<i>Clear of litter and insect/rodent breeding sites</i>
202	Signage	K	Clear signage around the property including directional, warning and caution signs		Good signage around the property including directional, warning and caution signs		Excellent attractive, well placed signage including directional, warning and caution signs		<i>Check danger areas such as slippery surfaces, pools, generators for caution signs</i>
203	Parking		Gravel parking area		Lighted, gravel or sealed parking area		Large, lighted sealed parking area		<i>Sealed or gravel parking area, field or grassy area not acceptable</i>
204	Guest transport		Simple mini bus available for transporting guests		Good quality bus available for airport transfers and trips		Top quality bus available for airport transfers and trips		<i>Check for transport license as appropriate</i>
205	Landscaping		Some limited efforts have been made with garden landscaping		Substantial efforts have been made with landscaping and grounds		Landscaping and grounds are of extremely high quality		<i>Check for safety and working order</i>
206	Emergency lighting		Candles and lanterns available		Torches in stock		Back-up generator on site		
207	Spaciousness		Some grounds around buildings		Good amount of space in the grounds for walking and relaxing		Large amount of space adequate for long walks, runs and numerous activities.		
208	Privacy		Adequate privacy, no overlooking buildings or roads		Good level of privacy, guests in the grounds cannot be viewed from outside the property		Excellent privacy, exclusive location with no close roads or buildings		
209	Front entrance		Small covered entrance area		Large covered entrance area		Covered drive-through entrance area		

AREA	No.	CRITERIA	Type	1 Point Simple	2	3 Points Good Quality	4	5 Points Excellent Quality	Notes
Building	210	Building	K	Building appears in overall satisfactory state of repair		Building appears in overall good state of repair		Building appears in overall excellent state of repair	<i>Look at the roof, walls, extensions and paintwork</i>
	211	Location	4	Buildings located in an area with attractive views		Buildings located in an area with very attractive views		Buildings located in an area with spectacular views	
	212	Architectural appeal		Buildings have some roadside appeal		Buildings have good architectural appeal and are in keeping with surrounding area		Buildings have excellent architectural appeal and are in keeping with surrounding area and traditional building styles	
	213	Guttering		Guttering in place on some buildings		Guttering in place on all buildings		Guttering in place on all buildings and all gutters lead to rainwater tank	<i>Geographic allowance for traditional buildings</i>
	214	Rainwater tank		Simple rainwater tank on the property		Good quality water tank is in working order		Excellent quality water tank is in working order	

Table 13. Star Rating Checklist

Name of Property: Accompanying manager:

Property Contact:

Address:
 www:
 Tel: Fax: Email:

Name of Assessor: Date of Assessment: Time: Title:

Type of Property: Hotel/resort Self-catering/motel/rental Guesthouse/B&B/Inn/Backpackers Traditional/informal

Facilities: Restaurant Bar Kitchen Recreational facilities

No. of Rooms: < 10 10-20 21-40 41+

Key: K= Key criteria, compulsory for all
 1= Compulsory for hotels and resorts
 2= Compulsory for Self-catering and holiday rentals
 3= Compulsory for Guesthouses, backpackers and bed and breakfasts
 4= Compulsory for Traditional and village accommodation

Score: -2= Very poor -1= Poor
 1=Simple 2=Standard 3=Very good
 4=Very Good 5= Excellent

Area	No.	CRITERIA	Type	SCORE	COMMENTS
General	1	Business licence	K		
	2	Other licences	K		
	3	Name of business	K		
	4	Marketing materials and website	K		
	5	Complaints procedure	K		

	6	Maintenance checks	K		
	7	Manager			
	8	Tourism Association			
Staff	9	Telephone answering	K		
	10	First aid training	K		
	11	Emergency preparedness	K		
	12	Staff training programmes	K		
	13	Telephone greeting	1, 2		
	14	Telephone manner	1		
	15	Telephone answering knowledge			
	16	Employee recognition			
	17	Staff facilities			
Sustain-ability	18	Sewage	K		
	19	Waste separation	K		
	20	Compost			
	21	Environmental policy			
Sustain-ability cont.	22	Environmental hazards			
	23	Environmental awareness training			

	24	Guest satisfaction			
	25	Utility use			
	26	Code of Practise			
	27	Local community			
Reception & Lobby	28	Registration process	K		
	29	Telephone	K		
	30	Duty Manager	K		
	31	Flooring	K		
	32	First aid kit	K		
	33	Staff appearance	K		
	34	Clock	K		
	35	Staff knowledge	K		
	36	Key storage	1, 2, 3		
	37	Reception counter	1, 2, 3		
	38	Staff friendliness	1		
	39	Explanation of facilities	1		
	40	Check- in times			
	41	Express check-out			
	42	Telephone messages	1		
	43	Storage of valuables			

44	Credit cards	1							
45	Seating	1							
46	Lighting								
47	Furnishings & décor	1							
48	Spaciousness								
49	Assistance with bags								
50	Flowers								
Guest room				Bed-room	Bed-room	Bed-room	Bed-room	Bed-room	<i>Note rooms numbers checked</i>
	51	Mattresses	K						
	52	Pillows	K						
	53	Linen & blankets	K						
	54	Insect netting	K						
	55	Drinking water	K						
	56	Fire safety	K						
	57	Cleanliness	K						
	58	Waste basket	K						
	59	Security	K						
	60	Lighting	1, 2, 3						
	61	Table and chair	1, 2, 3						
	62	Window privacy	1, 2, 3						

	63	Facilities for hanging clothes	1, 2						
	64	Telephone	1						
	65	Bedside table	1						
	66	Bedside light	1						
	67	Alarm clock							
	68	Tea and coffee	2						
	69	Iron	2						
	70	Fridge	1, 2						
	71	Ventilation	1, 2						
	72	Extra bedding							
	73	Furnishings and décor	1						
	74	Guest compendium							
	75	Room size	1						
	76	Room service							
	77	Television							
	78	Balcony							
	79	Luggage rack							
	80	Glassware							
	AVERAGE								
Bathrooms (ensuite or	81	Cleanliness	K						

communal)	82	Toilet facilities	K						
	83	Shower	K						
	84	Non-slip floor	K						
	85	Shower curtain	K						
	86	Wash basin	K						
	87	Waste bin	K						
	88	Adequate lighting	K						
	89	Water supply	1, 2, 3						
	90	Location of bathroom	1						
	91	Bathroom supply	1, 2						
	92	Power socket	1						
	93	Towel rails	1,2						
	94	Towels	1, 2						
	95	Bathtub							
	96	Spaciousness							
	97	Vanity side							
	98	Amenity pack							
	99	Hairdryer							
		AVERAGE							
Hallways, stairwells and	100	Fire safety	K						

elevators	101	Cleanliness	K		
	102	Furnishings and décor	1		
Public toilets (if available)	103	Toilet separation	K		
	104	Toilet facilities	K		
	105	Wash basin	K		
	106	Waste bin	K		
	107	Lighting	K		
	108	Cleanliness	K		
	109	Baby-changing			
	110	Vanity area			
	111	Urinal			
	112	Flowers			
Business Services	113	Internet access			
	114	Business services	1		
	115	Meeting room			
	116	Toilets			
	117	Catering			
	118	Postal service			
	119				
	120				

	121						
Restaurant or dining area (if available)				Outlet 1	Outlet 2	Outlet 3	Note names of outlets checked
	122	Chairs and tables	K				
	123	Fire safety	K				
	124	Floor covering	K				
	125	Table settings	K				
	126	Cleanliness	K				
	127	Staff	K				
	128	Staff knowledge	1				
	129	Billing					
	130	Breakfast included					
	131	Menu service	1				
	132	Local foods					
	133	No. Of food outlets					
	134	Ambience & décor	1				
	135	Entertainment					
	AVERAGE						
Bar (if available)				Outlet1	Outlet 2	Outlet 3	
	136	Refrigerator	K				

137	Sink	K				
138	Fire safety	K				
139	Chairs & tables	K				
140	Cleanliness	K				
141	Glassware	K				
142	Staff	K				
143	Billing					
144	Staff knowledge	1				
145	Stock	1				
146	Furnishings & décor	1				
147	Entertainment					
148	Food					
	AVERAGE					
Kitchen			Outlet 1	Outlet 2	Outlet 3	
	149	Insect netting	K			
	150	Waste bins	K			
	151	Food storage	K			
	152	Fire safety	K			
	153	Refrigeration	K			
	154	Cleanliness	K			

	155	Lighting	K				
	156	Staff	K				
	157	Guest kitchen	2				
	158	Ventilation	1				
	159	Equipment	1				
		AVERAGE					
Services, amenities and facilities	160	Guides or Interpretation	E				
	161	Bag storage	1, 3				
	162	Airport transfer	1				
	163	Range of rooms	1, 3				
	164	Common lounge	3				
	165	Laundry	2				
	166	Coffee bar					
	167	Complimentary hospitality					
	168	Tour arrangements	1				
	169	Convenience store					
	170	Disabled access					
	171	Newspaper delivery					
172	Evening turndown						

	173	Taxi service			
	174	Cots and extra beds	1		
	175	Kids club			
	176	Wedding co-ordinator			
	177	Car Rental			
	178				
	179				
	180				
Recreational facilities	181	Pool			
	182	Beach on site			
	183	Bicycles			
	184	Tennis			
	185	Gym or fitness room			
	186	Games and books			
	187	Snooker or billiards table			
	188	Spa			
	189	Snorkelling			
	190	Fishing and Cruising			
	191	Diving			
	192	Golf course			

	193	Windsurfing			
	194	Canoes & Kayaks			
	195	Sailing boats			
	196	Playground			
	197				
	198				
	199				
Grounds	200	Exterior lighting	K		
	201	Cleanliness	K		
	202	Signage	K		
	203	Parking			
	204	Guest transport			
	205	Landscaping			
	206	Emergency lighting			
	207	Spaciousness			
	208	Privacy			
	209	Front entrance			
Building	210	Building	K		
	211	Location	4		

212	Architectural appeal			
213	Guttering			
214	Rainwater tank			
	TOTAL			

Result

Complies with all standards Does not comply with areas

Category	Listed	One Star	Two Star	Three Star	Four Star	Five Star
1. Hotel & Resort	104-193	208-297	312-409	424-557	572-713	728
2. Self-Catering & motels	80-145	160-225	240-305	320-425	440-545	560
3. Guesthouses & bed & breakfasts	66-117	132-183	198-249	264-348	363-447	462
4. Traditional & informal	40-65	80-105	120-145	160-205	220-265	280

Total Points

Recommended Award:

Areas for follow-up

Follow-up completed

Name & Signature of

REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS

AAA Australian Automobile Association

Background

AAA is a private sector organization that has been recognised as the voice of motoring since 1924. It works closely with industry and is well respected. Its star rating system has been in place since the 1950s and consumers are familiar with it. AAA currently assesses 11,000 properties in Australia and the ratings are marketed using the guidebooks.

System

The system awards up to 5 black stars to participating hotels (clean basic, average/moderate, comfortable/well-appointed, excellent and international/superior) and also gives half stars for properties scoring in the 'marginal zone' between two ratings. The number of categories has increased slowly over time according to demand. It started with only hotels in 1957, added caravan parks and self-catering in the 1980s, bed & breakfasts and guesthouse in 1990s, and over the last five years has added Backpackers, Green resorts and Houseboat accommodation. Criteria are reviewed and improved over time and allocate a particular number of points to each area such as reception, bathrooms, security and other amenities. Each area is then given points for maintenance and cleaning.

Assessment

Inspectors arrange appointments in advance, about every 12-18 months, and during the assessments verify information provided by the hotelier and that already on the database, review guest feedback and conduct an assessment using personal digital assistants to transmit the data to the central database. The assessment rates four main areas; facilities, amenities, maintenance and cleanliness. Points are allocated to each item on a case by case basis e.g. 8 points for 2 or more tennis courts, 3 points for limited gymnasium. Some elements are common to all types of accommodation and others are specific to particular types of accommodation. The total score 250-1000 rating being provided at the end along with a discussion with the hotelier.

New Developments

Green Stars have been recently added to AAA star rating system in partnership with green globe so that properties can progress to green globe. These focus on just three areas; energy efficiency, waste minimisation and water management. AAA is also beginning to look at international application for their rating system, with Fiji being the first international use of the system.

Strengths and weaknesses

- AAA has been in rating for a long time, it is successful in a field that is often economically unsustainable, and uses state of the art technology
- It stresses cleanliness and maintenance, important in the Pacific, and provides a range of support services to assist participating accommodation providers.
- AAA rating can be rather costly and difficult for smaller properties to afford.
- It does focus on standards, assess staff service or integrate sustainability issues into the overall criteria.
- The focus is much more on having the items than the guest experience.

Further information: www.aaatourism.com.au

Qualmark Licensing System

Background

Qualmark is New Zealand's official quality mark for tourism. It is a government-private sector partnership between Tourism NZ and NZ Automobile Association run as a not-for-profit service. Developed from the former Quality Tourism Standards established in 2001, the criteria were the subject of extensive discussion, consultation, trials and a formal pilot programme during 2002, prior to the launch of the endorsement system.

System

The system awards 1-5 star ratings (acceptable, good, very good, excellent, exceptional) to properties agreeing to abide by the Qualmark 12-point code of ethics, with different requirements for each of 6 different types of accommodation (backpackers, guest and hosted, holiday park, hotel, self-contained, exclusive). For those properties falling in between stars a 'plus' is awarded. The process involves application and fee, pre-assessment pack completed by operator, on-site assessment by one of 6 Qualmark assessors and a report sent to operator. Time is spent with the operator to discuss performance as a capacity building exercise.

Assessment

Once the operator has done their own assessment to ensure their property meets minimum standards, an assessor arranges to view the property. This take 2-8 hours and is renewed every 1-2 yrs. The accommodation assessment is divided up into 20 quality areas each with minimum requirements and a score for basic (1), higher quality (3) and delightful (5). A score of at least 1 must be achieved in each quality area to indicate the property meets minimum requirements. The scores in each area are weighted according to the importance of that area to the type of accommodation. The rating is decided as a percentage of the overall score i.e. 84-100% is five star, 76-84 is four star. The total score for the property is determined by the number of ticks received in particular columns.

New Developments

Qualmark is also available for other tourism businesses including cultural and nature experience coaches and rental cars, activity adventure tourism, transport and service operators. These are assessed using 6 core (customer service, facilities and equipment, you and your staff, environmental and cultural impacts, general safety, overall business success). This is as an endorsement rather than star rating. It is supported by the kiwihost customer experience training.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- The system puts more emphasis on nurturing and quality than on the marketing benefits.
- It focuses on outcomes rather than inventory
- Rather than a test it is presented as a process, the language used is important – quality rather than amenities, assessment rather than inspection.
- However, there could be more focus on sustainability issues in both the code and the criteria
- The points, weighting and scoring systems are quite complex and difficult to manage for self-assessment

Further information: www.qualmark.co.nz

AAA American Diamond Rating

There are several different American rating systems with AAA being the largest, followed by Official Hotel Guide (OHG) and Mobil. All are customer-information focused, most involving little feedback to managers.

Background

Established in 1905 to assist members lobby for better driving conditions, it has been involved in rating accommodation since 1963. In 1977 diamond system was introduced first for accommodation and then for restaurants. Now 65 inspectors rate 30,000 establishments. AAA is a non-for-profit organization and a parallel system, the Canadian Automobile Association, is available in Canada. The focus is on serving the needs of AA users, with information provided in the guide which currently sells 38 million copies.

System

A summative, inventory based system where 1-5 diamonds are awarded (budget/basic/comprehensive/upscale/ultimate/luxury). All lodgings are categorised at 3 levels: style of operation (b&b, cabin, Inn, condo, motel, ranch, small hotel, large hotel, vacation home (resort, casino, classic, historic); the type of management (independent, chain); and by service level (full, moderate, limited service). Further specialist categories include resort, casino, and classic. There is a monthly appeal meeting to discuss grievances.

Assessment

There are 27 minimum diamond-rating requirements which represent normal requirements of AAA members including security, fire protection, furnishings, bathrooms, lighting etc. Establishments complete self-evaluation forms and apply to the scheme with photos of their facilities. The inspector contacts the facility if he or she thinks it would appeal to members and arranges for an interview followed by a tour of the property after which the diamond rating is given. Whereas 1-3 diamond assessments are primarily on inventory, 4/5 star properties require mystery overnight evaluation and include a service assessment. During the evaluation six key areas are reviewed (management & staff; housekeeping & maintenance; exterior, grounds & public areas; room décor, ambience and amenities, bathrooms; and guest services).

New Developments

Additional accessibility requirements for special needs guests are being developed. A green program is supported but not included in the criteria. Properties are not penalised for not using it but are penalised if it reduces the guest experience.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Good grouping of service areas but complicated 3-way classification process and extensive list of requirements which may not all be sustainable or necessary.
- This process is customer focused and driven with the emphasis on service, professionalism and amenities.
- The emphasis of the process is on having a large number of standard items in the hotel room
- Mystery inspector is not very helpful for quality improvements.

Further information: www.ouraaa.com

Quebec, Canada Star Rating

Background

This is a relatively new system set up in 2000 by the Quebec Tourism Corporation (CITQ) with two key objectives; to protect travellers and to enhance the quality of accommodation in Canada.

System

The system uses a combination of summative and formative approaches with mandatory assessment replacing the previous operator permits. It is managed by a Board of Directors representing each of the seven classes of accommodation (hotel, bed & breakfast, tourist homes, resorts, hospitality villages, youth hostels and educational institutions) and is run by 15 salaried employees. Each class of establishment has a specific criteria prepared by an advisory committee made up of operators and various tourism industry representatives. The criteria were agreed by consensus, then tested in establishments, re-evaluated and finally approved by the Quebec Minister responsible for Tourism.

Assessment

CITQ classifiers arrange visits in advance and assessments are conducted in two parts, first a case history is taken to confirm all the contact details and room numbers and type. Then the assessment takes place and assessors are equipped with electronic notebooks containing assessment grids for each type of property. During the evaluation they enter the results in these and the final result is calculated. The evaluation criteria concern the quality of physical facilities, appearance, cleanliness, services offered and safety considerations. The quality of services delivered is not assessed. The cost is \$190 regardless of the type or size of accommodation. Benefits include use of logo, marketing opportunities, reference guide on upgrading. Certificates are valid for two years and can be appealed in writing up to a month after the assessment. Each category has a different colour decal with a different logo, hotels can get 0-5 stars, bed and breakfast 0-5 suns, tourist homes 0-4 stars and youth hostels 0-3 stars. There is a Classification Guide for each type of accommodation, explaining the requirements for each criteria on the appropriate scale. This also details 'demerit' points which are subtracted for things like 'no all-night lighting in entranceway'. The areas detailed include exterior of the building, entrance hall and services, room, kitchen & equipment and bathrooms.

New Developments

Recently completed a multi-stage review asking hoteliers, travellers and the respective committees involved to review the process and update the criteria and methods as a result.

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Developed in a participatory fashion with industry
- Tries to balance between visitor and quality focus
- Well designed system with clear guide for assessors
- Large number of categories and different logos may make the system confusing to visitors

Further information: www.citq.qc.ca

Lebanese Star Rating

Background

The Lebanon system was comprehensively revised in 2000, based on the Swiss System which includes quality criteria from the English and South African system and also from WTO specifications for the Middle East.

System

This is an example of a combined summative/formative approach. There are 3 main categories (hotel, tourists residencies and other) as well as bolt-on criteria for specialisations (resort, conference centre, health and wellness, historical, suites). The system balances objective and subjective criteria, allocating just under half the points to facilities and the rest to quality features. There is a carefully designed weighting system which allocates 40% points for guest accommodation, 29% for building characteristics, 21% for professional services (gyms, business centre etc) and 9% for guest services (restaurants etc). The idea is that points give greater flexibility than standards as properties can make up for not having a pool by having a meeting room. Hotels can in addition apply for a particular specialisation to help with marketing (resort, conference centre, health and wellness, historical).

Assessment

Inspectors arrive unannounced and after an interview with the owner. There are 2 parts to evaluation; first minimal standards focusing on infrastructure, then those passing minimal standards go on to a point system for amenities above minimum as well as quality factors e.g. cleanliness. Each extra facility gets points and a description of each is provided to assist inspectors. The system is evaluated by externally contracted inspecting services (1-day allowed per property) but government agencies still have a hand in the criteria used for evaluation and their review and updating. A 2-year transition period is given to lodging properties to adjust except with structural changes for which 5 years are possible. Established under the regulatory authority of the Ministry of Tourism to allow for continued revision and upgrading.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- The focus on quality works well, as does the dual system for rating, but it is slightly complicated with many criteria
- Two stages to the process are a useful addition not seen in other schemes
- The process is customer focused and driven, with the emphasis on service, professionalism and amenities.
- Mystery inspector is not very helpful for quality improvements.

Further information: www.usaidlebanon.org.lb/files/to2.pdf

Maldives Resort Classification

Background

The Maldives Resort Classification was a joint project between the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Maldives and the WTO to develop a resort classification system as part of a national quality assurance programme. The main aim of the project was to develop an objective and practical system of resort classification and gradation for the purpose of better informing consumers about the product. The project was conducted in two phases, first reviewing the rationale for the grading and then establishing and testing the system.

System

This is a specialised classification programme only focusing on resorts. Resorts are classified under five headings: Dive; Beach; Club; Boutique, and International, and graded in five steps in line with the internationally understood hotel star grading system. In addition to this system a supplementary evaluation procedure called the *Star Plus* Programme has also been developed. This included nine additional areas for assessment: Transfers, Superior Service Standards, Culinary Excellence, Activities, Health and Spa, Facilities for Children, Environmental Care, Social Responsibility, and Management Philosophy and Practices. A resort qualifying in five of these supplementary areas would be considered for *Silver Star* status, while a resort qualifying for eight of the nine awards would be designated as a *Gold Star* destination. In this way the gaining of a number of the plus awards can convert the stars gained under the core programme from black to silver or gold.

Assessment

There are 20 areas of assessment which are broad in scope including visitor well-being, business practices and sustainability principles. Undertaken by 1-2 grading officers normally taking 1-2 days each depending on the size of the resort. Officers first discuss the perceived grading of the resort and then record the presence or absence of facilities of this standard using a tick cross system with a scale of 0-5 for aspects above or below expected level. *Stars* are awarded against core values relating to the physical (or hard) elements of the product, and the *Pluses* covering the service (or soft) aspects of the travel experience.

Recent Developments

A manual has been produced for the Implementation and Administration of the programme covering issues such as the formation of a classification committee; the identification of duties and responsibilities; staffing; operational procedures; assessment procedures and recruitment and training.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- More holistic approach to seeing the resort in the context of its environment
- Bolt on – star plus programme recognises achievers without complicating the logo or splitting the market
- Very lengthy assessment programme which would be costly and require highly trained personnel to manage and run

Further information: www.maldivestourism.gov.mv/

Costa Rican National Accreditation Commission

Background

Over the past five years the Caribbean Action for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) and the Caribbean Hotel Association along with other regional organizations have become increasingly involved in ecolabels, accreditation and benchmarking. Since 1997 they have supported the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) Programme which is mostly confined to Costa Rica and regulated by the Costa Rican National Accreditation Commission.

System

The CST system is a green approach to quality assurance, designed to differentiate tourism sector businesses based on the degree to which they comply with a sustainable model of natural, cultural and social resource management. Four fundamental aspects are evaluated: the interaction between the company and its surrounding natural habitat; the management policies and the operational systems within the company; the interaction of the company with its clients; and the interaction of the company with the local communities. In each area a number of criteria have been established based on Agenda 21 and ISO 14001 these include waste reduction, reuse and recycling; energy efficiency, conservation and management; an environmentally sensitive purchasing policy; social and cultural development, hazardous waste disposal, company transportation and its effect on the environment, land-use planning and management; and environmental/historic site protection. The criteria are reviewed on an annual basis by a technical committee.

Assessment

Two guidance documents are provided to applicants. The assessments are the responsibility of the Costa Rica Institute of Tourism and during each inspection points 0-5 are awarded in each of the criteria areas. The system can award up to five bands of sustainability but very few hotels reach the fifth band which requires 95% of all standards. The cost is based on company turnover from USD200 to 5,000 and various incentives and benefits are provided, designed to increase in direct proportion to its increased rating. Benefits include international and national publicity and promotion, specifically designed for the CST; training for its personnel; and priority participation in various world tourism fairs and events.

New Developments

Starting in September 2005, the National Commission for Accreditation of the Certificate of Tourist Sustainability Program is extending the program, previously exclusively for hotels, to all tour operator agencies.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- 106 hotels are already members, half are certified
- The use of five bands avoids the need to establish a single Caribbean benchmark and helps reward companies for small steps in the right direction
- Awards are directly linked to marketing benefits and personal training
- May be considered rather expensive for some properties
- Does not cover issues such as business practice

Further information: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr/EN/sobreCST/about-cst.shtml

Green Globe (GG) 21

Background

GG21 was established in 1994 by WTTC to turn the principles of Agenda 21 into practice. It aims to improve environmental management in tourism businesses and use this to increase the company's profile.

System

It is a tourism focused green certification programme that provides benchmarking and certification for 26 different categories of tourism operation from accommodation to wineries. The emphasis is on awarding companies that improve rather than those that have achieved a particular level and various forms of internet-based assistance are provided to assist with upgrading. It uses some of the ISO 14001 system and triple bottom line analysis to address environment issues in 10 key areas (energy, greenhouse gas, air quality, noise, waste water, community relations, cultural heritage, social performance, conservation, land management and eco-systems). GG21 also incorporates ecotourism certification principles identified in the Mohonk Agreement in 2000 and Australian National Ecotourism Assessment Programme (NEAP) programme.

Assessment

Certification involves 3 steps (ABC): Awareness (affiliation), Benchmarking and Certification. Awareness involves paying membership fees and receiving information about green globe. Benchmarking involves moving towards 10 areas of environmental improvement using a self-assessment that is verified by independent auditors to see if it reaches GG21 standards. A site visit is only arranged for the Certification level when assessors provide participants with an action plan for improvement. The fee structure increases with the level of the programme achieved and is calculated based on employees and numbers of rooms from USD200-7000, not including the cost of the assessors' visit. The advertised benefits include: utilities saving, competitiveness, marketing, staff commitment, knowledge and use of logo for companies claiming to exceed standards. They have worked hard on marketing, developing alliances with airlines and global distribution systems. It has also developed an award system.

New Development

Beginning to be adopted in Fiji, Cook Islands and French Polynesia. The head office may use the logo whilst their tours are still unsustainable.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- GG21 has the greatest international reach of green certification programmes
- Adopts a hands-off but formative approach to performance rather than standards
- Has been highly criticised by WWF and others
- Companies set their own goals rather than adhering to standards practice so performance of certified companies may vary considerably
- Fee structure deters improvement
- Rarely involves site visits
- Very reliant on internet and on-line support
- Allows the use of logo prior to environmental improvements being made in the firm

Further information: www.greenglobe.org

REVIEW OF SOUTH PACIFIC SYSTEMS

Tonga Minimum Standards

Background

Minimum standards were developed in 2001 as a result of an EU Report and WTO request for increased consumer protection due to the large number of tourist complaints that were received. A check-list was developed by the Tonga Visitors Bureau (TVB) and sent out to the industry for comment but there was no feedback from the industry so the process was not put in place.

System

This is a combined system which focuses very much on standards and addressing serious problem areas, keeping checks on operators and having regular contact with the industry. The inspection is a mandatory part of the process of business license renewals. The standards developed for Tonga pay particular attention to hygiene, cleanliness and quality service through training. There are four categories of accommodation; budget, apartment, motel and hotel. The initial scheme had a point system for achieving minimum standards or being accredited, however this is no longer used due to lack of human resources.

Assessment

All accommodation and restaurants are inspected by a group of five assessors; fire, public health and two from TVB. Checks are conducted on an annual basis on which the renewal of business licenses depends. There are 20 areas examined including business operations, environmental considerations, room facilities and bathrooms some with up to 17 different criteria in each area. Previously check lists with a 1-5 point system for each item were used, but this became too slow, with too much paperwork, and the form was difficult to manage with not enough space for comments. The current system has an informal review and check system for problem areas. After the site visit a letter is sent informing the operator of any issues to deal with. Six months after the initial check a follow-up visit is made to check appropriate improvements have been made.

Recent developments

The need to review the criteria, process and check-lists is acknowledged.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Is taking place on a regular basis and helps keeps tabs on safety issues
- Regular follow-up is undertaken, ensuring standards are maintained
- It is conducted as a regulatory process with heavy reporting requirements
- Stakeholders have had no involvement in the process and there is some resentment
- May be slowed down by having too many inspectors
- The focus is very much on problems rather than quality

Further information: tonipasifiki@hotmail.com

Cook Islands Tourism Accreditation Scheme

Background

This fee-based voluntary accreditation system was set up in 1998. It was developed along the lines of the New Zealand Qualmark System as a joint venture between the Tourism Industry Council and the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC). The system started by focusing on accommodation but it was then extended to travel, transport, tour and activity operators, retailers and food and beverage providers. Accreditation is now a precondition for inclusion in Cook Islands marketing, grants and other tourism activities.

System

The Cook Islands scheme is a primarily formative-based approach which requires participating businesses to abide by the Cook Islands Tourism Charter and reach identified minimum standards in various facilities and services. There are four categories of accommodation; hotel, hostel, self-catering and guesthouse. Membership of the scheme is renewed on an annual basis subject to an inspection carried out by the CITC. The system was originally linked to a national visitor survey programme which was designed to help businesses upgrade their services by providing continuous up-to-date customer information but has been discontinued due to difficulties in distribution and collection. An appeal system is in place and the committee makes final decisions. An accreditation handbook is provided to all new applicants which details the pre-requirements, process and answers questions on the scheme.

Assessment

An assessor visits each establishment on an annual basis conducting the assessment using a simple, standardised form. Assessment begins with an interview during which various general criteria are checked. These refer to; licence to operate, membership of association, and policies in various areas related to business operations. Each area of the hotel is then visited including up to six guest rooms. In each area the listed criteria are given a tick or a cross according to whether the assessor feels the item is up to standard or not. Those criteria marked as key (compulsory) must be in place in order for the establishment to be accredited, those marked as recommended will be compulsory next year. The criteria are a mix of quality and inventory items e.g. appearance and décor, first aid kit, spaciousness, cleanliness, washbasin, shower. Once the assessment has been satisfactorily completed, and fee paid, the property is provided with a sticker with the accreditation logo and an additional sticker with the category and year.

New Developments

Steps were taken to develop an environmental inspection sheet but this became too complicated and has not been used.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Very simple list of criteria, focusing on key items rather than extensive inventory.
- The system has widespread support despite being fee-based and voluntary
- The scheme has reached maturity and needs to be reviewed and upgraded
- The system does not encourage operators to exceed the required standard
- There is no manual for assessors on how to rate qualitative items
- There has been little marketing of the system to consumers

Further information: www.cook-islands.com/accreditation.php

Samoa Star Rating

Background

The idea for a rating or accreditation programme has been considered for some time but it is only in 2003 that the development of this scheme got underway as part of the process of implementing the five year tourism plan. The Scheme was set up based on the AAA Australian model with some industry input. The assessment process was adapted from the Cook islands process.

System

The system is primarily a summative approach based on the presence or absence of particular facilities and amenities. It is a 5 star system with two main categories, hotels and beach fale. Hotels are subdivided into deluxe, standard and budget categories. It is administered by the Samoa Tourism Authority and the Samoa Tourism Authority Board handles complaints, appeals and reviews the work of the inspectors. Rating is mandatory for all accommodation and business license renewals are reliant on obtaining STA rating certificate. In some circumstances, 'geographic allowance' may be made for isolated locations or those where environmental circumstances makes it impossible to offer full services. Implementation of the scheme is due to commence in October 2005, a booklet on the scheme and the criteria used has been published with the assistance of New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAid).

Assessment

A five person inspection team including fire and public health and industry inspectors will visit each establishment every year. All inspections take place in October and November and ratings are valid for one year from January. The hotel manager or next in command accompanies the inspector team and appointments are set a week in advance. Points are scored on the basis of the quality of each of the listed criteria 5 for excellent, 4 very good, 3 good, 2 satisfactory, 1 poor, 0 unacceptable. Points are totalled at the end to indicate what star category the accommodation falls into. Those accommodation facilities that score points in the 'marginal area' between star categories may be allocated a half star until the next year's rating when they either go up or down depending on changes made. Managers are provided with a copy of the report before the team leave but the certificate is sent later. In places with different types of rooms, one of each type of room could be sighted and then the average score given. Appeals are handled through the STA Board.

New Developments

The system is to begin assessment at the end of 2005. There are plans to incorporate quality of service and environmental issues into the criteria at a later date.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- The system is very detailed and comprehensive
- There is no guide for assessors as to how to rate particular items and some confusion over the presence or absence of the amenity versus the quality
- Inspectors have no previous hotel experience
- There has been little marketing of the system to consumers and hoteliers are still unclear about how it will work out.

Further information: www.visitsamoa.ws

Island Hopper Vacations

Background

Island Hopper Vacations started up their own rating system in 1991, just one year after the firm first opened. Conscious that there were many differing standards for rating around the region already, they tried to provide something that was simple and useable while reflecting Island Hopper standards as compared to those in Fiji and Tahiti.

System

The purpose of the system is to give wholesalers a guide by which they can gauge similar properties in the Cook Islands and also relate these to the rest of the region. The system provides wholesalers offshore with a range of alternatives which they can book with confidence, knowing that the standards and facilities have been verified by Islands Hopper.

Assessment

Properties are rated annually in line with the production of rates for the following year. The grading takes both services and facilities into consideration and rates on a 0-5* scale. 43 criteria are considered through regular observation and reviews which are conducted at least twice a year. Whilst some criteria concern room layout and facilities, others relate to amenities such as the presence of a tour desk and wedding coordinators. In addition to this, the location of the property and any extras that are included in the price, are factored into the rating. Each property is visited by two senior staff members and any changes noted. The results are compared with comparable ratings for hotels in Fiji and NZ. Comment from Robert Skews: "Guess what we do is seat of the pants stuff but accurate and reflects our knowledge of the product."

New Developments

A full colour two-page summary of each accommodation is now being produced including photos, a floor plan of the rooms and resort and a table indicating the facilities provided, extras and top features of each property. In 2006 Island Hopper also plan to include a green category which will involve assessing environmental stars which is perceived as becoming more important to customers.

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Simple and attractively laid out results sheet which view the property in terms of the entire experience rather than just the facilities
- Provides wholesalers with increased confidence in purchasing decisions
- Tends to under-rate properties
- Sometimes conflicts with other rating scales
- The system is not very transparent with no clear procedures for the calculation of star allocation or appeal system for dissatisfied resorts.

Further information: www.islandhoppervacations.com

Creative Holidays

Background

Creative Holidays recognised that accommodation ratings are very important and highly regarded by the Australian traveller and that it is best not to over categorise a hotel. They decided to introduce their own rating system, because of inconsistencies between accommodation providers' own ratings and tourist organisations' ratings neither of which seemed to fit the standards provided.

System

The purpose of the system is to provide clients with a coherent guide of holiday accommodations in their product portfolio. The guide presents clients an accommodation list with a range standards, so they can tailor their holiday in accordance with their own standards. Clients are also assured that standards and facilities have been verified by Creative Holidays and meet their expectations.

Assessment

Properties are assessed by Creative Holidays' product managers who visit and judge accommodation based on guideline criteria, including a list of available facilities, services and amenities available. The star rating is a subjective judgement that takes both services and facilities into consideration and grades on a 2-5 star scale referring to four categories; budget, moderate, superior and deluxe. The categories are tailored to holiday accommodation expectations of their client base. Additionally, when a property's level of service and facilities falls between two grade categories, a half-star is introduced to indicate this.

Creative Holidays provides a half-page description on each property on their product portfolio. Each property's facilities and services are briefly described and indicated with symbols in a summary. In addition, all offered activities on a property that are not included in the price are listed as optional.

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Simple online system which describes each property and indicates allocated ratings.
- Provides repeating clients with an increased confidence and consistency for quality on holiday accommodation
- Often conflicts with hotels own estimations of their standard
- The system is rather subjective and it is not clear that the same result would be achieved given the same conditions and different assessors.
- The system tends to be tailored to Creative Holidays client base.

Further information: www.creativeholidays.com.au

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accommodation classification system

Systems providing an assessment of the quality standards and provision of facilities and/or services of tourist accommodation (ISO 18513: 2003)

Accommodation

Provision of at least sleeping and sanitary facilities (ISO 18513: 2003)

Accreditation

Process of developing a quality mark, brand or logo that can be displayed by businesses that meet or exceed the requirements or standards prescribed in the system. Usually provides businesses with an action plan for improvement. (Vine, 2003)

Associations

Partnerships between entrepreneurs, local government, NGOs, consultants, researchers and practitioners for marketing, advocacy and training purposes. May be NGOs or private sector groups.

Beach Fale

Samoaan accommodation made of traditional materials and must be situated on the beach, and offering basic facilities and sometime meals.

Bed & Breakfast

Private house where the price of accommodation includes breakfast

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the process of comparing performance and processes within an industry to assess relative position against those who are 'best in class'. It involves the continuous measurement and improvement of an organisation's performance against best practice by obtaining information about new working methods and practices that exist elsewhere. Ecolabels can provide proxies for benchmarks where the industry cannot supply its own best practice.

Bure

Traditional Fijian accommodation, in a village setting offering simple facilities

Certification programmes

Initiatives that provide a certificate and or logo to those companies that meet or exceed a defined baseline standard or benchmarked performance. This logo primarily allows the business or destination to demonstrate and advertise their credentials to consumers. Certification programmes include ecolabelling programmes, programmes for which membership criteria are set and a membership fee is paid in return for use of a logo, self assessed accreditation programmes, and third party audited and externally verified initiatives. A good certification programme should require participants to meet or exceed benchmark performance criteria prior to certification and use of a logo, and be underpinned by third party auditing and verification. (WWF, 2000)

Classification

The separation of accommodation into different classes, categories or sections on the basis of objective requirements based on the key target market (WTO, 2004)

Code of conduct

A voluntary list of recommendations provided to tourists normally including advice on appropriate environmental and cultural behaviour.

Code of practice

A voluntary list of recommendations provided to tourism operators normally including social, environmental and cultural and ethical aspects of tourism business.

Decal

A decal is a type of symbol used help identify those properties that are members of particular schemes and show their level of achievement.

Ecolabel

A scheme in which a product may be awarded a logo, which acknowledges its 'acceptable' level of environmental impact. The acceptable level of environmental impact may be determined by consideration of a single environmental hurdle, which is deemed to be particularly important, or after undertaking an assessment of its overall impacts. In a trade sense an ecolabel is effectively a certification of a particular level of environmental performance in the production of an internationally tradable product (Buckley, 2002)

Ecolodge

Low-impact building blending with natural environment, located in isolated natural area, emphasis on local culture and use of local products. Upmarket ecolodges may also use resort classification, simple lodges may use village classification.

Formative Approach

A formative approach to quality assurance involves nurturing, capacity building, advice and encouragement and continuous assessments often with extensive feedback.

Grading

The separation of resorts into different levels, on the basis of SUBJECTIVE judgements alone, or on a criteria which combines the subjective and the objective. (WTO, 2004)

Guest house

Short term budget accommodation for up to 50 guests. Sometimes meals are provided. (AAA & ISO 18503)

Holiday Rental

Self-contained units, houses, bungalows, apartments or flats equipped for self-catering on a short or long-term basis.

Hotel

Establishment with reception, services and additional facilities where accommodation and in most cases meals are available. Most are fully served with licensed food and beverage operations. Some provide business and recreational facilities. (ISO 18503 and Cook Islands Tourism Accreditation Scheme)

Quality assurance

The processes through which consistency in product and service standards, procedures and delivery are measured, and the actions taken to ensure that they are maintained and adhered to.

ISO 14001

The international standard for environmental management systems.

Motel

Accommodation units with parking facilities close-by, designed to attract motorists. Rooms usually having direct access to an open parking area, and a kitchette is normally provided.

Nature Tourism

Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas.(WWF, 2004)

Quality systems

Systems designed to promote quality awareness, manage performance and facilitate best practice (include hotel classification, awards, labels etc.)

Resort

An exclusive holiday establishment similar to a hotel, but in addition it offers a wide selection of leisure activities, such as a spa, pool, beach, multiple restaurants.

Self-catering

Accommodation available for short and medium term stay with provision of installations and equipment for preparing, cooking and serving meals by the customer

Star Rating

Internationally recognised rating system awarded to hotels on a 1-5 scale according to the existence and quality of particular facilities and services. The rating is displayed in a prominent position and may be used in marketing activities. It serves for consumer information and provides a guideline for hotel upgrades as well as a form of quality control. Rating criteria differ widely between countries and there is no currently accepted international standard. Sometimes half stars are awarded

Summative approach

Summative techniques focus on the end product and adopt an inventory-like approach to inspections.

Sustainable tourism

The WWF vision for sustainable tourism states that sustainable tourism and its associated infrastructure should:

- Be compatible with effective conservation and operate within the area's natural capacity for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources,
- Minimise the ecological footprint, and give proper consideration to local cultures and local people in host areas, and ensure that these people have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism.

WTO define have recently released a new and updated definition of sustainable tourism should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Village

Simple guest accommodation in private home in isolated village location

Weighting System

The process of giving greater or lesser emphasis to one part of the provision of facilities or services in the assessment of accommodation properties

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