

## 2.7 TUI Nordic: Promoting Codes of Conduct for Responsible Tourism Among Suppliers



### Description of Good Practice

TUI Nordic, one of the leading tour operators in Europe and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), has established a close relationship with the 'Blue Village' hotels (see Box 1), in order to integrate sustainability practices into the Blue Village quality requirements. This relationship focuses particularly on promoting hotels' environmental and social responsibility and supporting the dissemination of sustainability information to customers.

The decision to pursue this partnership was based on the recognition that Blue Village customers support environmental actions, such as recycling and water saving, and that they regard engagement in responsible tourism development as part of a hotel's quality performance.

All Blue Village Hotels contracted by TUI Nordic are required to have implemented the hotel section of the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Code of Conduct for the Travel and Tourism Industry and the Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism. In particular, the hotels must have in place an Environmental Management System (EMS), appoint a staff person responsible for environmental matters, have a written environmental plan, use non-polluting products, give priority to local suppliers and goods, sort solid waste, treat wastewater and introduce water-efficient hardware.

In terms of information provided to guests, Blue Village hotels have to inform their customers about UNESCO's World Heritage Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling (see Box 2) through information in the reception area and in each room and briefings by trained tour leaders and hotel employees.

The company worked with Blue Village hotel managers to create a common communication system that would allow benchmarking between hotels, support the message of sustainability to customers and become

### BOX 1: What is a 'Blue Village' hotel?

The 'Blue Village' hotel is a quality property in sun and beach destinations, designed for families and couples. The concept was launched by TUI Nordic at the end of the 1990s to meet requirements from customers with extra needs when it comes to service. The 'Blue Village' label is earned by adopting a pre-defined quality concept. These hotels can be either independent or chain hotels. Within the premises of the hotels, customers can find leisure areas, swimming pools, bars and restaurants, playgrounds for children, etc., and activity programmes within the hotel are arranged. Blue Village customers book early, and they know what they want. The concept is often more important than the holiday destination itself. Most customers of the Blue Village hotels originate from the Nordic region and have booked their holiday with the TUI Nordic brands: Fritidsresor, Star Tour and Finnmatkat.

## WWF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

**ORGANISATION**

- An environmental management system is implemented. (e.g. ISO 14001 and EMAS)
- The hotel is Eco-labelled.
- An environmental coordinator is appointed.
- An environmental policy is implemented and is communicated to personnel and guests.
- The environmental work is followed up by Eco-audits, to ensure that the hotel is following the plan and decrease impact on the environment.
- The hotel is producing an environmental report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

- The personnel are trained regularly and it is ensured that the personnel comply with environmental policies.
- The guests are informed about environmental and cultural initiatives and they are provided with information about environmentally responsible behavior.

**ENERGY**

- The heating systems are checked regularly.
- Energy from renewable sources is used (e.g. solar energy).
- The heat is recycled.
- The power of the heat is monitored.
- Energy saving bulbs, time switches and infrared sensors are adopted.
- Electric hand dryers are avoided.
- Televisions are not left on stand-by.
- Hot water is supplied centrally.
- The guests are informed about energy saving procedures.

**WATER**

- Flow regulators are adopted for sinks and showers.
- WC flush capacity is reduced.
- All points of water consumption are inspected regularly.
- Toilet disinfectant, odour neutralisers and aggressive toilet and drain cleaners are avoided.
- When chemicals are necessary, environmentally adapted chemicals are used.
- Environmentally adapted washing powder is used and it is not dosed more than necessary.
- The laundry/dishwashing machines are used on full load.
- The guests decide when to change towels.
- The guests decide when to change bed linen.
- The guests are informed about water saving procedures.

**WASTE REDUCTION**

- Individually wrapped portions of food products are avoided.
- Individually wrapped portions of bath and shower products are avoided.
- Canned drinks and disposable bottles are avoided and full bulk and reusable containers are prioritised.
- Plastic packaging is minimised and materials are separated.
- The paper consumption is minimised and recycled paper is used.
- The information desk is provided with a point of return for brochures and the guests are invited to return them after use.

**WASTE DISPOSAL**

The guests are informed how to select and separate waste. The waste produced are sorted into:

- Organic
- Paper
- Metal
- Glass
- Plastic

- Hazardous waste (e.g. batteries, pharmacy medications, chemicals, fluorescent lamps, aerosol sprays, paints, electronic equipment)
- Packaging is returned to supplier.

**AIR**

- The quality of the indoor air is monitored and air-condition is only used when necessary.
- The hotel is striving towards using products and equipment, which pollute the environment as little as possible.

**NOISE AND LIGHTS**

- Leisure activities such as discos etc. do not exceed the limits of tolerance.
- All kinds of lights, which can cause disturbance to wildlife (e.g. nesting turtles), are avoided.

**LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**

- Chemical products are not used to take care of grounds and gardens.
- In the catering environmentally adapted provisions are preferred.
- Local products are purchased.
- The personnel and customers are encouraged to use public transports and they are provided with special tariffs and bonuses.
- Bicycles are available to the guests and personnel and the hotel encourages their use.
- Organised sport activities are comply with environmental criteria. Sport activities that have a significant environmental impact are avoided.

In co-operation with WWF and Fritidsresor/Star Tour/Finnmatkat

THE WWF CODE OF CONDUCT

a part of the Blue Village concept. The common platform also allows tour operators to use the same information in brochures and leaflets, thus reinforcing the sustainability concepts.

In developing the sustainability requirements, the company decided to use widely accepted Codes of Conduct, as they would permit a flexible approach to communication and allow different methods of implementation. This decision was supported by the fact that TUI Nordic, together with other stakeholders, had been active in the elaboration of both Codes. In a second phase of the programme, UNESCO's Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling were included in the information platform. These guidelines were developed in collaboration between the Nordic UNESCO World Heritage Foundation and TUI Nordic.

## Implementation

The quality criteria and environmental requirements for each hotel are included in the Blue Village Product Agreement, which is an appendix to the ordinary agreement signed by TUI Nordic and the hotels.

Management in each hotel has been trained on the content of the Codes of Conduct and the company and hotels have developed a common model for customer communication.

Hotels monitor their own performance in implementing the Codes and report regularly to TUI Nordic's Concept Department. Each hotel also reports on performance and lessons learned at a yearly conference, giving them an excellent opportunity to exchange views and experiences. In promoting Blue Village hotels, TUI Nordic includes information on the hotels' environmental performance in its catalogues and on its web site.

## Benefits

The inclusion of environmental and social elements in the Blue Village concept has had a positive effect on the image of the hotels. Surveys have shown that Blue Village customers value active commitment from the hotels and believe that information is important. By implementing environmental management systems, the hotels have also been able to reduce their operational costs, for example by lowering their water and energy consumption.

The Blue Village total quality concept has also generated benefits to TUI Nordic, including early reservations, enhanced reputation, increased client satisfaction and customer loyalty.

### BOX 2: Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling

These guidelines for responsible travel were developed by the Nordic UNESCO World Heritage Foundation, in co-operation with the tourism industry.

1. Show respect for natural and cultural heritages.
2. Respect local traditions.
3. Take your time.
4. Ask before you take someone's photo.
5. In good trade, both parties are satisfied.
6. Do not give money to begging children.
7. Buy locally produced products.
8. Support local environmental activities.
9. Reduce the use of natural resources.
10. Travel in low season.

## Comments

The Blue Village concept is regularly being revised and improved. At the time of writing, TUI Nordic, in co-operation with WWF, planned an Environmental Day in the Children's Club in select hotels for the winter season 2002/03. Activities such as 'green treasure hunting' and conversations about exotic, often endangered, animals were planned to be included in the programme of activities. In addition, most of the hotels are working on the development of their environmental management systems, including third-party verification.

The environmental and social components of the Blue Village concept are also being successfully implemented in other hotels, such as the Blue Star concept hotels and properties in Thailand that use the Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children as an information tool for customers. As a further step in the development of Responsible Tourism principles, a process to introduce accessibility criteria for disabled people has begun, based on Equality's "Tourism for All" certification system ([www.equality.nu](http://www.equality.nu)). All Blue Village Hotels will be certified with the Equality label by the end of 2003.