Program Description Public GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2

1. Why does this certification program exist?

The certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 defines, within a structured catalog of criteria, which requirements must be fulfilled in the areas of ecology, economy and social responsibility for the sustainable management of an accommodation establishment and how compliance with these requirements is to be demonstrated.

Successful certification against the certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 proves that a company meets the minimum requirements defined in the certification program at the time of the audit and that their fulfillment has been verified by an independent certification body on the basis of evidence.

The certificate thus confirms the conformity of the company with the requirements defined in the certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 on the basis of a structured conformity assessment procedure and states:

> "By granting this certificate, the certified company has demonstrated that the company is managed sustainably in ecological, economic and social terms in accordance with the requirements of the standard GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2."

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2. Who is the certification program intended for?

The certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 is aimed at companies that fall under the definition of an accommodation establishment in accordance with the Accommodation Statistics Act (BeherbStatG) and Regulation (EU) No. 2019/2152 on European business statistics [1] and offer at least ten beds. [2]. Campsites are excluded from the scope of the certification program.

The certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 is applicable to both individually managed companies and centrally managed companies within groups.

The geographical scope of the program is worldwide. Only countries in which regulatory, political or security-related restrictions make it impossible to carry out a compliant certification process are excluded.

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[1] Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis): *Glossar-Begriff „Beherbergungsbetriebe“*, available online at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Branchen-Unternehmen/Gastgewerbe-Tourismus/Glossar/beherbergungsbetriebe.html [Accessed: 21.07.2025].
[2] Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis): *Methodenpapier zur Monatserhebung im Tourismus – Erläuterungen zur Erhebung von Gästeübernachtungen*, available online at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Branchen-Unternehmen/Gastgewerbe-Tourismus/Methoden/tourismus.html [Accessed: 21.07.2025].

3. What is assessed within the certification program?

The criteria catalog of the certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 holistically reflects the three pillars of sustainability: ecology, social and economy. The catalog is structured into the following ten core areas:

- Energy
- Water
- Waste
- Biodiversity & cultural heritage
- Purchasing
- Regionality & mobility
- Social responsibility
- Quality management & sustainable development
- Management & communication
- Economic responsibility

The structure of the core areas does not follow any external specification or standard structures but is based on practical relevance for accommodation establishments.

The valuation system of the certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 assigns a score between 10 and 60 points to each criterion. The score is based on the relative influence of the respective criterion on the corresponding sustainability pillar. These point values are determined through a systematic assessment by an internal group of experts at GreenSign Institut GmbH.

The maximum possible scores of the three sustainability pillars are distributed as follows: 60% ecology, 20% economy and 20% social. From the perspective of the certification program Green-Sign Hotel v. 3.2, this reflects the current political and societal understanding of sustainability with a stronger emphasis on ecological aspects

4. How is compliance against the certification program verified?

Certification is carried out by an independent certification body within a structured procedure:

1. Certification requires a contractual basis between the certification body and the company. This is established through a certification application, the review of the application with regard to scope and risk, and its acceptance by the certification body.
2. After acceptance, the company is required to complete the criteria catalog of the certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 and provide the necessary evidence (self-disclosure).
3. Following submission, the certification body verifies the information provided. Verification is carried out by a lead auditor who prepares the audit, reviews evidence, documents findings and conducts an on-site audit.
4. On site, the lead auditor verifies the company's statements based on the verification methodologies defined in the certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2, confirms fulfilled criteria, rejects non-verifiable criteria and documents all findings.
5. After completion of the audit, an independent review is conducted by a second auditor with no prior involvement (dual control principle), ensuring completeness, traceability and accuracy of the verification documentation.
6. Following the review, the results are evaluated according to the defined valuation system. Based on this evaluation, the certification body makes the certification decision.

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5. When does a company receive a certificate?

A company receives a certificate if it demonstrates, within the certification process, that the requirements of the ertification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 are fulfilled.

All deviations identified during verification are systematically classified by the certification body.

A certificate cannot be granted if major non-conformities (K.O. criteria) are present. Major non-conformities are:

- Missing the hurdle of 50% of the possible total score
- failure to meet at least one of the criteria marked as mandatory

If no major non-conformities are identified, a certificate is granted. Other non-conformities (non-K.O. criteria) are documented in the audit report and do not affect the certification decision. These include:

- falling below 100% of the possible total score
- failure to meet non-mandatory criteria

6. When is a company allowed to use the certificate?

A company may use the certification and the corresponding representations of certification, such as the GreenSign Hotel label, as long as a valid certificate exists and the company continues to meet the requirements of the certification program.

During the certification period, the company must immediately report any operational changes that may affect the certification decision.

The certification body must ensure that information from third parties regarding possible non-conformities can be received, documented and reviewed according to a defined procedure.

The use of the certification is subject to compliance with the applicable usage rules.

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7. When can a certificate be withdrawn?

A certificate must be withdrawn during its validity if

- a scheduled surveillance audit determines that relevant requirements are no longer fulfilled
- an unscheduled surveillance action triggered by a third party reveals relevant non-conformities
- an unscheduled surveillance action triggered by the company reveals relevant non-conformities.

The certification program GreenSign Hotel v. 3.2 does not provide for suspension or restriction of certificates. Only full validity or withdrawal applies.