

Green Key Criteria and Explanatory Notes

1 October 2026 – 31 December 2031

Category Definitions



This appendix explains the establishment categories eligible for Green Key certification and the eligibility conditions that apply to each category. The categorisation helps ensure that the Green Key criteria are applied consistently across different types of tourism and hospitality operations and makes clear which criteria apply to which establishments. The categorisation is based on the establishment's primary activity, operational characteristics, and services offered to the public.

Detailed rules on the certification boundary, including which services and facilities are included or excluded, are provided in the Green Key Scope document (to be accessed [here](#)). This document should be read alongside this appendix. A Glossary clarifying the terminology and concepts used in the Green Key criteria is available [here](#).

Green Key is applicable for the following categories:

Hotels and Hostels (HH)	The Green Key Hotel and Hostel criteria are applicable to fully operational hotels and hostels offering regular hospitality services. Establishments undergoing major construction/renovation works¹ can only obtain the certificate when works are finalised. While establishments offering temporary/occasional services do not fall under the scope of this category, seasonal establishments may be eligible if they are fully operational during the time of the audit. The hotel/hostel is located in one permanent setting, has more than 20 bedrooms or 40 beds, and offers its services to the general public. The Green Key certification generally does not apply to holiday home style properties, co-living sites, permanent residences, stand-alone co-living spaces or long-term lease apartments. However, in mixed-use buildings or hotel-residence hybrids, the following conditions apply: • Both short-term and long-term rentals (rooms or apartments) may be included, only if: ○ The establishment maintains regular access to the rented unit during guest stays (e.g. for cleaning or maintenance); and ○ The establishment guarantees that standard hospitality services are continuously provided, regardless of the rental duration. • If the establishment cannot enter the unit at any point during the guest's stay (min. every 3 weeks for apartment-style establishments), or if the unit is used as a private residence with no hospitality service, it cannot be included in the Green Key certification scope. Eligibility: To be eligible for the Green Key Hotel and Hostel criteria, the applicant establishment's main activity is that of a hotel/hostel. This can be verified if at least 1 of the following conditions is met: 1. The establishment holds official registration as a hotel/hostel, with this function being officially registered as its main activity in accordance with national legislation. 2. The establishment's main activity is the provision of hospitality and lodging services. 3. The establishment's marketing and communication towards clients, and the responses in the pre-screening confirm that the main activity is that of hotel/hostel operations.
Campsite and Holiday Parks (CHP)	The Green Key Campsite and Holiday Parks criteria are applicable for campsites, eco-camps, desert camps, parks composed of chalets, cottages, lodges, or mobile homes, apartments within holiday parks, etc., often with central facilities such as shared toilet/shower facilities, communal kitchen and outdoor recreation areas. Establishments undergoing major

¹ See glossary p. 1.

	construction/renovation works² can only obtain the certificate when works are finalised. While establishments offering temporary/occasional services do not fall under the scope of this category, seasonal establishments may be eligible if they are fully operational during the time of the audit. The campsite/holiday park is located in one permanent setting and offers its services to the general public. The Green Key certification generally does not apply to holiday home style properties, co-living sites, permanent residences, stand-alone co-living spaces or long-term lease apartments. However, in mixed-use buildings or hotel-residence hybrids, the following conditions apply: • Both short-term and long-term rentals (rooms or apartments) may be included, only if: ○ The establishment maintains regular access to the rented unit during guest stays (e.g. for cleaning or maintenance); and ○ The establishment guarantees that standard hospitality services are continuously provided, regardless of the rental duration. • If the establishment cannot enter the unit at any point during the guest's stay (min. every 3 weeks for apartment-style establishments), or if the unit is used as a private residence with no hospitality service, it cannot be included in the Green Key certification scope. Eligibility: To be eligible for the Green Key Campsite and Holiday Parks criteria, the applicant establishment main activity is that of a campsite/holiday park. This can be verified if at least 1 of the following conditions is met: 1. The establishment holds official registration as a campsite/holiday park, with this function being officially registered as its main activity in accordance with national legislation. 2. The establishment's main activity is the provision of campsite/holiday park services. 3. The establishment's marketing and communication towards clients, and the responses in the pre-screening confirm that the main activity is that of campsite/holiday park operations. 4. The establishment demonstrates through operational evidence (e.g. the number of guest rooms, cabins, camping pitches, or guest statistics per service category) that its primary activity falls under this category, even if its official registration states otherwise.
Small Accommodations (SA)	The Green Key Small Accommodations criteria are applicable to fully operational serviced accommodations. These accommodations could include small hotels/hostels, guest houses, bed & breakfast establishments, eco-lodges, eco-farms, etc. offering regular hospitality services. Establishments undergoing major construction/renovation works³ can only obtain the certificate when works are finalised. While establishments offering temporary/occasional services do not fall

² See glossary p. 1.

³ See glossary p. 1.

	under the scope of this category, seasonal establishments may be eligible if they are fully operational during the time of the audit. The small accommodation is located in one permanent setting, has a maximum of 20 bedrooms or 40 beds, and offers its services to the general public. The Green Key certification generally does not apply to holiday home style properties, co-living sites, permanent residences, stand-alone co-living spaces or long-term lease apartments. However, in mixed-use buildings or hotel-residence hybrids, the following conditions apply: • Both short-term and long-term rentals (rooms or apartments) may be included, only if: ○ The establishment maintains regular access to the rented unit during guest stays (e.g. for cleaning or maintenance); and ○ The establishment guarantees that standard hospitality services are continuously provided, regardless of the rental duration. • If the establishment cannot enter the unit at any point during the guest's stay (min. every 3 weeks for apartment-style establishments), or if the unit is used as a private residence with no hospitality service, it cannot be included in the Green Key certification scope. Eligibility: To be eligible for the Green Key Small Accommodation criteria, the applicant establishment's main activity is that of a small accommodation. This can be verified if at least 1 of the following conditions is met: 1. The establishment holds official registration as a small hotel/hostel, guest house, bed & breakfast establishment, eco-lodge, eco-farm, or similar, with this function being officially registered as its main activity in accordance with national legislation. 2. The establishment's main activity is the provision of hospitality and lodging services. 3. The establishment's marketing and communication towards clients, and the responses in the pre-screening confirm that the main activity is that of small accommodation operations.
Conference Centres (CC)	The Green Key Conference Centre criteria are applicable for fully operational conference centres located in one permanent setting or located within another Green Key category that is entirely externally managed offering regular conference services. Establishments undergoing major construction/renovation works⁴ can only obtain the certificate when works are finalised. While establishments offering temporary/occasional services do not fall under the scope of this category, seasonal establishments may be eligible if they are fully operational during the time of the audit. The conference centre is located in one permanent setting, can have auditoriums, lecture halls and/or meeting/conference rooms, and offers its services to the general public.

⁴ See glossary p. 1.

	Eligibility: To be eligible for the Green Key Conference Centre criteria, the applicant establishment's main activity is that of a conference centre. This can be verified if at least 1 of the following conditions is met: 1. The establishment holds official registration as a conference centre, with this function being officially registered as its main activity in accordance with national legislation. 2. The establishment's main activity is the provision of services of a conference centre 3. The establishment's marketing and communication towards clients, and the responses in the pre-screening confirm that the main activity is that of conference centre operations.
Restaurants/Cafés (R)	The Green Key Restaurant/Café criteria are applicable for fully operational restaurants and cafés in stand-alone locations or located within another Green Key category but entirely externally managed, offering regular restaurant services. Establishments undergoing major construction/renovation works⁵ can only obtain the certificate when works are finalised. While establishments offering temporary/occasional services do not fall under the scope of this category, seasonal establishments may be eligible if they are fully operational during the time of the audit. The restaurant/café is located in one permanent setting, has minimum 4 tables or 8 seats for guests, and offers its services to the general public. Eligibility: To be eligible for the Green Key Restaurant/Café criteria, the applicant establishment's main activity is that of a restaurant/café. This can be verified if at least 1 of the following conditions is met: 1. The establishment holds official registration as a restaurant/café, with this function being officially registered as its main activity in accordance with national legislation. 2. The establishment's main activity is the provision of restaurant/café services. 3. The establishment's marketing and communication towards clients, and the responses in the pre-screening confirm that the main activity is that of restaurant/café operations.
Attractions (A)	The Green Key Attraction criteria are applicable to fully operational museums, visitor/interpretation centres and theme parks. Sites that are undergoing major constructions/renovation work⁶ can only obtain the certificate once they have finalised their works. While establishments offering temporary/occasional services do not fall under the scope of this category, seasonal establishments may be eligible if they are fully operational during the time of the audit. The attraction is located in a permanent setting and offer services to the general public. Definitions of a museum, visitor/interpretation centre and theme park:

⁵ See glossary p. 1.

⁶ See glossary p. 1.

	• Museum: a permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. • Visitor/interpretation centre: a permanent institution that provides interpretation of a place of interest through a variety of media, such as video displays and exhibitions and provision of material. • Theme Park: a permanent institution designed for public entertainment, typically featuring attractions, interactive or educational activities, restaurants and sometimes theme-based attractions designed around a unifying concept or storyline, e.g. historical, cultural or fictional. This category includes parks that contribute to cultural appreciation or heritage education (e.g. historically themed parks such as Viking villages or other open-air cultural exhibits). Eligibility: To be eligible for the Green Key Attraction criteria, the applicant establishment's main activity is that of one of the listed sub-categories. This can be verified if at least 1 of the following conditions is met: 1. The establishment holds official registration as a museum, visitor interpretation centre or theme park, with this function being officially registered as its main activity in accordance with national legislation. 2. The establishment's main activity is the provision of the services of a museum, visitor/interpretation centre or theme park. 3. The establishment's marketing and communication towards clients, and the responses in the pre-screening confirm that the main activity is that of a museum, visitor/interpretation centre or theme park operations.
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