



HOTEL  
ENERGY  
SOLUTIONS

Increasing the competitiveness  
and sustainability of the EU  
accommodation sector

## HOTEL ENERGY SOLUTIONS

### “An Innovative Energy Toolkit for Hotels”

FITUR Madrid 2011

Professionals from the tourism and hotel industries, the energy and technology sectors, NGO's, national tourism administrations, certification bodies and others joined the United Nations World Tourism Organization and its partners to hear the latest on the Hotel Energy Solutions (HES) at the annual conference during FITUR Madrid 2011.

“The hotel sector is one of tourism’s largest drivers of employment and economic revenue and it is also one of the most energy intensive, currently responsible for a significant part of the total CO2 emissions from tourism,” UNWTO secretary-general Taleb Rifai said in his remarks opening the conference.

“International tourism contributes 5% of global CO2 emissions of which 21% comes from the hotel industry,” he added. “With better energy management, there is significant scope for hotels to reduce their carbon footprint while increasing profits.”

### Sharing Experiences

Conference speakers involved in the HES program shared their experiences and detailed how the e-toolkit is being applied and appraised at the four pilot destinations around Europe.

In their feedback on the program, hotel owners and operators have responded positively and many said they wished that HES had been available years ago when they were planning their energy needs.

“Ten new hotels are being built around the world every day and the HES program is an important tool in ensuring the sustainability of the industry and the planet,” International Hotel and Restaurant Association president and CEO Ghassan Aidi said.

At the conference, those attending heard:

- How the HES e-toolkit can be operated by anyone with basic computer skills and is highly user friendly.
- How the e-toolkit is adaptable to all types of hotels, from rural bed & breakfasts to five-star chain establishments.
- How the e-toolkit's questionnaire gathers precise data on the hotel's location, size, the amount and types of energy used, as well as on any energy-saving measures already in place.
- How hoteliers can learn exactly what kind of energy efficient technology they should install and what kind of savings on their operating expenses they can expect.

Speakers also discussed how using the e-toolkit raised environmental awareness among staff at the hotels where the pilot programs were carried out, educated hoteliers about the cutting-edge, energy-saving technology available for their needs and which energy efficient improvements to their properties should be prioritized.

**“Energy is getting more expensive, there is greater consumer and hotel administration concern about the environment and the old solutions just do not work anymore,”**

**Bernat Vicens Meier, the manager of the Marina Luz Hotel in Palma de Mallorca, told the conference.**

## **Lessons Learned**

Hoteliers and energy experts from the test destinations issued progress reports and evaluations on their pilot programs and explained:

- What steps should be taken to improve the application of the e-toolkit to overcome any drawbacks they had encountered.
- Elderly owners of smaller, rural hotels with little experience in computer use would need additional support to operate the e-toolkit.
- It is essential that the e-toolkit be available in languages spoken in the destinations as some hoteliers lack the necessary English-language skills.

- Hotel guests are becoming more environmentally aware and are demanding eco-friendly destinations.
- Financing initiatives for the hotel improvements through grants and subsidies from national and local governments are vital and need to be further explored.

## **Saving Energy Now**

Besides hoteliers, other private sector professionals making presentations at the conference included representatives from European companies providing energy-saving products and services especially tailored for the hotel sector.

They discussed existing methods hoteliers can apply to cut energy use such as thermostat monitoring, preventing heat and cold loss, passive cooling measures, hot water waste awareness, key card electricity control and others.

Also presented were the newest technologies to conserve and reduce energy: solar, wind and thermal energy solutions for hotels, low voltage lighting systems, more efficient boiler and radiator networks and others.

In his remarks closing the conference, UNWTO executive director for Competiveness, External Relations and Partnerships Márcio Favilla said: “Our pilot testing of the HES e-toolkit has shown that the hotel sector has a huge responsibility in saving energy and related costs and that we have a lot of work ahead of us.”

*Benjamin Jones*