

BEST PRACTICE FESTIVAL PARK SILMAR

Submitted by: Dom Spain

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline with rocky cliffs and clear turquoise water. A large, solid blue circle is overlaid on the right side of the image. In the center, a white circle contains the text 'CIRCULAR ALBANIA TOURISM'.

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INTRODUCTION



SECTION 1: BASIC INFORMATION

- Title of the Best Practice: Estival Park Silmar, La Pineda, Tarragona
- Website of the Practice: Practice: <https://www.estivalgroup.com/estival-park-silmar.html> Social Media links: <https://www.instagram.com/estivalgroup>
- Location: Carrer del Camí del Racó, 15, 43481 Platja de la Pineda, Tarragona (Spain)

SECTION 2: PRACTICE OVERVIEW

• Short Description of the Practice:

Estival Park Silmar (Estival SILMAR), a 4-star Superior hotel in Platja de La Pineda, Tarragona, is part of the Estival Park Resort managed by Estival Group Hotels and Resorts. Recently awarded the Biosphere Certified badge (2025), it demonstrates strong sustainability commitments. The hotel follows the "3Rs" principle (reduce, recycle, reuse), monitors waste management, and sources local, sustainable products. Energy efficiency is a priority, with a focus on clean, renewable energy. Additionally, some properties within Estival Group, including "Estival Park" (referring to the resort complex that includes Silmar), have received funding from the European Union's NextGenerationEU fund for projects related to self-consumption and storage with renewable energy sources, as well as the implementation of renewable thermal systems. In fact, the broader Estival Group has been certified to source 100% renewable energy for its hotels since 2020. This highlights its dedication to sustainable operations and responsible tourism.

• Implementation Period:

- Status:

☐ Planned ☐ Pilot phase ☐ Fully implemented ☒ Ongoing and evolving

• Thematic Areas Addressed:

☒ Farm to Fork / Sustainable Food Systems

☐ Waste Management

☒ Resource Efficiency

☐ Other: _____

• Describe how the practice aligns with the selected Thematic Areas:

Estival SILMAR's practices are strongly aligned with Resource Efficiency, a key thematic area of the Circular Tourism Albania project, as evidenced by its Biosphere Sustainable certification. The hotel is committed to implementing sustainable operations and infrastructure, focusing on making efficient use of resources and adopting a circular economy approach. Here are a few examples:

Estival Group, which operates Estival SILMAR, is dedicated to phasing out single-use plastics. The hotel uses amenities that meet the UNE EN 13432:2001 standard and are EU-certified as "OXO-biodegradable."

The hotel also actively involves its guests in its sustainability efforts. Through awareness campaigns, in-room messaging, and clear signage, it encourages guests to be mindful of their water and energy consumption. The hotel also promotes the "3Rs"—reduce, reuse, and recycle—within its facilities, providing guests with clear options for responsible waste disposal. Finally, Estival SILMAR's gastronomic offer specifically prioritises and publicises products from local agriculture and KMO. This initiative underscores their commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.



- **Explain how this activity fits within the tourism sector:**

Estival SILMAR's activities are deeply embedded within the hotel and resort operation segment of the tourism sector. As a 4-star Superior hotel located within the larger Estival Park Resort in Platja de La Pineda, Tarragona, it forms a core part of Estival Group's extensive offerings. Estival Group, which manages Estival SILMAR, specialises in global accommodation, leisure, and hospitality services. This encompasses a wide range of tourism sector activities like Hotel and accommodation operation, sport and wellness facilities and restaurant and gastronomy services.

- **What learning value for VET training, curriculum development or capacity-building of professionals does the practice offer?**

This practice offers significant learning value for VET training:

- For Hospitality and Tourism, the hotel's sustainable practices serve as a practical case study in green operations and supply chain management. Curriculum can incorporate its approach to green procurement (e.g., EU-certified amenities), resource efficiency (KM0 sourcing and food waste prevention), and guest engagement (e.g. the hotel's awareness campaigns on water/energy conservation), providing students with hands-on examples of sustainable business models.
- In Mechanics and Plumbing, the adoption of energy efficiency measures like LED lighting offers a real-world learning module on sustainable building management and the implementation of energy-saving technologies.
- In Culinary Arts, the hotel's commitment to using local products and KM0 sourcing provides a real-world case study for students to learn about and implement sustainable food systems and creative menu development.

The Estival Silmar platja de la Pineda offers valuable learning opportunities for professionals, even with limited resources. Its practices show that sustainability is not just about expensive technology; it's also about smart management and behavior, for example:

- Low-cost campaigns to encourage hotel guests to use less water, such as creating messaging that highlights water usage statistics.
- Create and enforce standard operating procedures (SOPs) for managing lights and thermostats, emphasising operational discipline over costly upgrades.

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES AND ALIGNMENT WITH CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES

- **What challenges or barriers were addressed?**

- ☐ Waste management and disposal
- ☒ Energy/resource use
- ☐ Infrastructure limitations
- ☐ Seasonality
- ☐ Skills and capacity gaps
- ☐ Low awareness of CE
- ☐ Behavioural resistance
- ☒ Financial or funding constraints
- ☐ Other: _____

- **How were these challenges overcome?**

Estival SILMAR, as a member of Estival Group, has effectively overcome significant challenges through a strategic approach to financial management and resource utilisation. The group successfully mitigated financial barriers by proactively securing external support. A central strategy was obtaining substantial funding from the European Union's NextGenerationEU fund to finance large-scale renewable energy projects e.g. Since 2020, all of its hotels, including Estival SILMAR, have been operated exclusively on 100% renewable energy. Furthermore, the group's successful acquisition of COVID-19 aid for the tourism sector demonstrates its strategic capability to access diverse funding streams, which ensures operational stability and allows for continued investment in sustainable initiatives even during periods of economic strain.



- **Which circular economy strategies does this practice address?**

- ☒ Waste reduction / reuse / recycling
- ☒ Renewable energy / energy efficiency
- ☐ Water conservation
- ☐ Circular product/service design
- ☒ Sustainable food systems / short food chains
- ☒ Eco-certifications or green standards
- ☐ Repair, refurbishment, or reuse of infrastructure/furnishings
- ☒ Digital tools for circularity or sustainability

- **Describe why this practice can be considered as a 'best practice' and how it contributes to one or more circular economy principles:**

Estival SILMAR represents a best practice model for integrating sustainability and circular economy principles into its operations. As a Biosphere Certified hotel, it demonstrates a verified commitment to its green initiatives. A core element of this strategy is its comprehensive energy and resource management. Since 2020, all hotels in Estival Group have been powered by 100% renewable energy. The hotel also implements various energy efficiency and water conservation measures, including awareness campaigns.

In terms of waste, Estival SILMAR actively promotes the "3Rs"—reduce, recycle, and reuse—while striving to minimise waste generation. This includes the elimination of single-use plastics and a commitment to actively monitoring and reporting on its waste management.

Furthermore, the hotel supports sustainable food systems by prioritising and publicising KMO and local agricultural products, alongside proactive food waste prevention. The hotel also contributes to community-focused circularity by providing electric vehicle charging points to promote sustainable mobility.

- **Describe why this practice can be considered as innovative. What new, creative or underused approach brings added value to circular tourism development?**

Estival SILMAR is innovative for its proactive and integrated approach to circularity, especially in energy and guest engagement. This represents an underused approach in tourism, boosting energy independence and reducing long-term costs. Their commitment to eliminating single-use plastics and using EU certified "OXO-biodegradable" amenities and their efforts in providing electric vehicle charging points extends circularity beyond their direct operations, demonstrating the group's commitment to sustainable tourism development.

SECTION 4: COLLABORATION

- **Describe any collaboration that were involved in the development of this practice? this practice involve local authorities or other groups?**

Estival SILMAR, as part of the Estival Group, collaborates with various entities, to name a few. They have a partnership with Fundación GAVI (Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance) and "la Caixa" Foundation for child vaccination campaigns. Their energy supplier, Aura Energía, certifies their 100% renewable energy use, validated by the CNMC (Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia).

SECTION 5: RESULTS AND REPLICABILITY

- **What measurable results or outcomes were achieved?**

The hotel's most significant outcome is the successful obtention of the Biosphere Certified badge in 2025, which provides an externally-audited validation of its comprehensive sustainability practices. Achieving this certification requires the hotel to meet specific, measurable targets across several key areas, for example, the certification mandates a continuous reduction in both energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This is measured by tracking kilowatt-hours (kWh) and the hotel's overall carbon footprint. Estival SILMAR's use of 100% renewable energy and its investment in energy efficiency projects directly contribute to this. Furthermore, the certification requires the hotel to track and report on waste generation in kilograms and the percentage of waste that is reused, recycled, or composted. The hotel's elimination of single-use plastics and its active monitoring system directly address these requirements.





- **Why is this practice relevant to the Albanian tourism context?**

This practice is highly relevant to the Albanian tourism context as the sector experiences rapid growth. Adopting a comprehensive sustainability model from the outset is crucial to avoid the environmental and social pitfalls often associated with tourism development. A significant increase in tourism can overwhelm existing waste infrastructure as well as put a tool on the energy supply. On the one hand, by implementing the "3Rs" (reduce, reuse, recycle) and eliminating single-use plastics from the start, like Estival SILMAR, Albania's tourism sector can proactively manage waste and preserve its pristine natural landscapes. On the other hand, embracing renewable energy and efficiency measures is vital for sustainable development.

- **What is the practice's potential for further expansion? How can it be applied or adapted to other Albanian tourism destinations or businesses?**

Estival SILMAR's comprehensive approach to sustainability has strong potential for expansion and adaptation. Their strategies for waste reduction (e.g., eliminating single-use plastics, promoting 3Rs), water conservation (optimisation devices, awareness campaigns), and sustainable food sourcing (local, KM0) are broadly applicable across various hotel and hospitality settings.

- **What advice would you give others looking to implement a similar initiative?**

Based on Estival SILMAR's practices, advice would include:

- Actively seek green energy suppliers and invest in on-site renewable energy systems, leveraging available funding opportunities like EU grants.
- Install water-optimisation devices and run awareness campaigns for both staff and guests to encourage responsible water use.
- Prioritise local products and implement measures to prevent food waste in gastronomic offerings.

SECTION 6: PICTURES

- Pictures of the practice:





Project Partners



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