

BEST PRACTICE KONCEPT HOTELS

Submitted by : ITKAM



CIRCULAR
ALBANIA
TOURISM



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SECTION 1: BASIC INFORMATION

- Title of the Best Practice: Water Conservation Strategy in Konzept Hotels
- Website of the Practice: <https://www.koncepthotels.com/#/booking/search>
- Social Media links: https://www.instagram.com/koncept_hotels/
- Location: Germany, multiple locations including Cologne, Tübingen, Bern

SECTION 2: PRACTICE OVERVIEW

- Short Description of the Practice

Konzept Hotels implement innovative and sustainable measures to reduce water and energy consumption across their properties. The initiative was brought to life by the founder, Martin Stockburger, who identified the goal of reducing the hotels' water consumption by 20% during 2024. One of the first measures was installing flow restrictors in showers. A third of hotel water usage typically comes from showers and personal hygiene; therefore, by installing shower flow restrictors, water consumption is cut by up to 50% without reducing guest comfort. Furthermore, high-tech bed linen made of organic cotton with a synthetic core reduces water usage in laundering by up to 60% and shortens drying time, saving additional energy. At their Tübingen location, rainwater cisterns supply non-potable uses such as toilet flushing and garden irrigation, conserving drinking water and protecting infrastructure during heavy rainfall. Kocept Hotels thus demonstrates that significant savings can be achieved through relatively simple, cost-effective solutions, without compromising the guest experience.

- Implementation Period: from 2024
- 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.**

Water use in hotels is heavily concentrated in showers, guest bathrooms, swimming pools and green spaces, making it a high-impact area for conservation. Konzept Hotels' water strategy addresses this resource efficiency theme by targeting technical and operational efficiency through:

- Shower flow restrictors, which create a water-air mix, cutting consumption by up to 50% while maintaining guest comfort
- Water-saving bed linen, a high-tech cotton-synthetic blend, reduces washing water by 60% and shortens drying time
- Rainwater harvesting, where stored rainwater is used for non-potable purposes such as toilet flushing and landscaping

The combination of these measures reduces demand on potable water, lowers energy use for heating water, and decreases wastewater volumes. Even with the 2024 delay in rolling out flow restrictors due to supplier product issues, the strategy's phased approach allows for testing, adaptation, and continuous improvement, ensuring eventual achievement of the 20% reduction target.

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

This activity fits within the tourism sector as part of hotel operations in the hospitality industry.

Hotels are high water consumers, particularly in guest rooms, laundry, kitchens, and landscaping. Implementing measures such as shower flow restrictors, water-saving textiles, and rainwater harvesting directly reduces resource consumption without affecting the guest experience. In tourism, where customer satisfaction is critical, these actions maintain comfort while lowering operational costs and environmental impact. This makes them especially relevant for sustainable tourism development, eco-certified accommodations, and destinations aiming to preserve natural resources while welcoming visitors.

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

This practice offers instructive case material for sustainability-oriented vocational training and professionals, providing concrete case studies on cost-effective water-saving technologies, operational management, and guest engagement in sustainable hospitality.

These lessons are broadly applicable to hospitality education and environmental management modules.

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES AND ALIGNMENT WITH CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES

- **What challenges or barriers were addressed (based on the report findings)?**

☐ 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?**

The challenge of resource use consisted of ensuring that new technologies, such as shower flow restrictors, maintained guest comfort while delivering significant water savings. This was addressed through pilot testing in a limited number of rooms before full-scale rollout, allowing the hotel to evaluate performance and make adjustments.

Financial and operational constraints also posed a challenge, as large-scale retrofitting and new installations require investment. Koncept Hotels addressed this through phased implementation, prioritising high-impact areas and spreading costs over time to align with budget cycles. Additionally, staff and guest awareness needed to be managed, since behavioural change is critical for sustainability measures to succeed. The hotel tackled this by training staff on the purpose and operation of water-saving technologies and informing guests about their environmental benefits, ensuring acceptance and proper use.

- **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:**

The Koncept Hotels water-saving initiatives represent a best practice in sustainable tourism because they provide a replicable, measurable, and cost-effective model for reducing environmental impact while maintaining guest comfort. By implementing flow restrictors in showers, hotels reduce water consumption by up to 50% without compromising the guest experience. Similarly, high-tech water-saving bed linens lower laundry water use by up to 60%, also reducing the energy needed for drying. The installation of rainwater cisterns enables the reuse of water for toilets and garden irrigation, decreasing dependence on municipal water systems and protecting local infrastructure during heavy rainfall.

First, these measures promote resource efficiency by reducing water and energy use and reusing local resources. Second, they support sustainable circular service design, showing how hotel operations can integrate environmental considerations into everyday processes. Third, they encourage behavioural change and awareness, as staff and guests adopt more sustainable water-use habits.

Overall, the combination of technology, operational planning, and local resource reuse makes this approach both innovative and highly transferable. It provides a clear example for other tourism businesses, particularly in water-stressed areas, demonstrating that economic, environmental, and social benefits can be achieved simultaneously while advancing the goals of circular tourism.

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

This practice can be considered as innovative thanks to the application of water–air mixing restrictors for high guest comfort and maximum savings, the integration of laundry-related water savings via textile technology and the act of combining technical solutions with guest-facing communication for awareness and acceptance.

SECTION 4: COLLABORATION

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

The programme involves collaboration with technology suppliers, textile manufacturers, and local contractors. For rainwater systems, municipal authorities are engaged to ensure compliance and integration with local infrastructure. Hotel management worked closely with these partners to design solutions that are both effective and guest-friendly.

SECTION 5: RESULTS AND REPLICABILITY

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

The measurable results that have been achieved to this day are: up to 50% reduction in shower water use, together with up to 60% less water for laundry. Then, the founder estimated savings of 13000 euros for a 100-room business hotel in water, energy and wastewater costs. Overall, reduced wastewater volume and potable water demand were measured. (FRR25_Web.pdf); (KONCEPT HOTELS: So läuft das mit dem Wasser - 20 Prozent weniger - max.pr)

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

Water-saving practices are highly relevant for Albania's tourism sector, especially in coastal areas like Saranda and Vlora, where hotels face high seasonal demand and stress on local water supplies. In rural and mountainous regions, rainwater harvesting and efficient water use reduce dependence on limited local water infrastructure. These measures also lower energy and operational costs, making hotels more sustainable and financially resilient. Additionally, adopting such practices supports Albania's goals for eco-friendly and circular tourism while building local capacity for sustainable hospitality.

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

The water-saving practices of Koncept Hotels have strong potential for replication across Albania's tourism sector. Flow restrictors in showers, water-efficient laundry systems, and rainwater harvesting can be applied in hotels, guesthouses, resorts, and even eco-lodges in both coastal and inland regions. Coastal areas can benefit by reducing strain on municipal water supplies during peak season, while rural and mountain destinations can improve self-sufficiency and resilience with rainwater storage.

These measures are scalable and cost-effective, allowing small and medium-sized businesses to implement them incrementally. Additionally, training hotel staff in water efficiency and raising awareness among tourists can multiply the benefits. By adopting these practices, Albanian tourism businesses can enhance sustainability, reduce operating costs, and promote an eco-friendly image attractive to environmentally conscious travellers.

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

Pilot in a small number of rooms to fine-tune guest comfort and performance. Pair technical solutions with staff training and guest awareness materials. Track water usage before and after installation for measurable results.



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