

# BEST PRACTICE HOTEL BERLIN

Submitted by : ITKAM



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## SECTION 1: BASIC INFORMATION

- Title of the Best Practice: Hotel Berlin
- Website of the Practice: <https://www.hotel-berlin.de/>
- Social Media links: [https://www.instagram.com/hotel\\_berlin\\_berlin/](https://www.instagram.com/hotel_berlin_berlin/)
- Location: Lützowplatz 17 Berlin, Germany

## SECTION 2: PRACTICE OVERVIEW

- Short Description of the Practice

Hotel Berlin implements a comprehensive and well-structured sustainability strategy across all operations. Among its many initiatives, two particularly innovative measures stand out: the “4-Minute Shower Challenge,” which invites guests to try a playful four-minute shower accompanied by fun music via a QR code to encourage water savings, and the production of sustainable soaps created from kitchen leftovers such as recovered coffee grounds. These flagship initiatives are complemented by a wide range of additional measures, which are described in detail in the hotel sustainability strategy.

- Implementation Period: since 2022
- 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.**

Hotel Berlin addresses waste management and resource efficiency through multiple initiatives. During the past few years, the hotel has considerably reduced the use of single-use plastics and introduced refillable amenities to decrease solid waste. The hotel also employs an AI tool (Winnow system) that analyses data about food leftovers and supports the development of strategies to minimise food waste. The production of soaps from kitchen leftovers (e.g., recovered coffee grounds, fruit discards from the bar) is a clear example of upcycling food waste into a new, useful product.

On the resource efficiency side, the “4-Minute Shower challenge” encourages guests to reduce water consumption while showering, linking guest behaviour directly to sustainability outcomes. Energy efficiency is enhanced through the hotel’s solar power system, 100% environmentally friendly district heating, and individual temperature and lighting controls in all areas.

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

Hotel Berlin exemplifies how sustainable practices can be embedded into the tourism experience. The hotel maintains a structured sustainability strategy, updated annually, and publishes a comprehensive sustainability report to communicate its progress transparently. Each year, measurable goals are set to improve environmental performance; for example, targets for 2025 include limiting energy consumption (electricity + heating) to a maximum of 14.10 kWh per guest night and reducing water usage to no more than 131.98 litres per guest night. To achieve these goals, the hotel implements actions such as installing low-flow fixtures and devices, using drought-resistant landscaping with efficient irrigation systems, and monitoring water usage to identify areas for improvement.

Guest engagement remains central, with initiatives like the “4-Minute Shower Challenge” and upcycled soaps allowing visitors to participate in sustainability efforts. By making sustainability visible through communication channels, including a dedicated section on the hotel’s website and the annual report, Hotel Berlin enhances the guest experience, attracts eco-conscious travellers, and provides a replicable model for hotels aiming to combine high-quality service with responsible tourism.

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

The hotel maintains a clearly defined sustainability strategy that is updated annually. Measurable targets are set for energy and water consumption, waste reduction, and other environmental indicators, and the outcomes are verified at the end of the year. This approach provides a concrete example for future tourism practitioners of how to plan, implement, and monitor sustainability initiatives in a structured and accountable way.

Staff are actively engaged through yearly training programmes, ensuring they understand the objectives, acquire necessary skills, and contribute effectively to sustainability targets. Digital tools support the measurement and monitoring of food waste and resource consumption, highlighting the value of data-driven decision-making. At the same time, creative initiatives like the “4-Minute Shower Challenge” provide a simple, engaging way to involve guests in sustainability measures, demonstrating how operational efficiency can be combined with effective guest communication.

### **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?**

Hotel Berlin overcame challenges in waste management and resource use through a combination of operational measures, technology, and guest engagement. Waste was reduced via refillable amenities, upcycled kitchen leftovers, and the AI-driven Winnow system, while energy and water use were optimised with solar power, efficient heating, and smart temperature and lighting controls. Creative initiatives like the “4-Minute Shower Challenge” further encouraged guests to participate in sustainability efforts, ensuring resource efficiency without compromising service quality.

• **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:**

Hotel Berlin can be considered a ‘best practice’ in sustainable hospitality because it combines strategic planning, operational efficiency, and guest engagement to achieve measurable environmental outcomes. The hotel maintains a structured sustainability strategy that is updated annually, setting clear, measurable targets for energy, water, and waste management, which are verified at the end of each year. This systematic approach demonstrates accountability and continuous improvement, providing a replicable model for other tourism establishments. By integrating technology, staff training, and creative guest engagement, Hotel Berlin demonstrates how circular economy principles can be applied practically in tourism. It shows that sustainable operations are not only environmentally responsible but also enhance the guest experience, offering a concrete example for VET students and tourism professionals seeking to implement sustainability in their own practices.

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

Hotel Berlin’s sustainability approach can be considered innovative because it combines structured strategy, technology, and creative guest engagement in ways that go beyond conventional hospitality practices. The hotel integrates measurable annual targets, digital monitoring tools, and playful, behaviour-driven initiatives, creating a holistic system that addresses both operational efficiency and visitor participation.

## SECTION 4: COLLABORATION

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

Hotel Berlin’s sustainability initiatives rely on strong collaborations with local organisations and specialised partners. To reduce food waste, the hotel works with Too Good To Go and, since 2022, uses



the Winnow AI system to monitor and manage leftover food. In partnership with Foodsharing, edible leftovers are collected daily and redistributed to people in need, resulting in around 4.400 meals donated between November 2023 and May 2024. The hotel sources food from local suppliers and works with Klimato to calculate the carbon footprint of each meal. For waste management, partners such as Berlin Recycling and Alba analyse and monitor waste streams to improve efficiency.

## SECTION 5: RESULTS AND REPLICABILITY

### • What measurable results or outcomes were achieved?

Measurable Results (Jan–May 2024)

- Energy consumption per guest: 17.8 kWh (–31% vs. 2023)
- Food waste per guest: 126 g (–44% vs. 2023, aided by the Winnow AI system)
- Overall waste per guest: 859 g (–31% vs. 2023)
- Water consumption per guest: 135 L (–11% vs. 2023)

### • Why is this practice relevant to the Albanian tourism context?

A key strength is the hotel's structured approach with measurable goals set annually, which allows continuous monitoring of energy, water, and waste. While digital tools like AI-based food waste systems may be expensive or unavailable in Albania, the principle of collecting and analysing operational data can be replicated using simpler methods such as manual food logs, spreadsheets, or basic monitoring sensors, providing actionable insights without high-tech investment.

The hotel also demonstrates the power of creativity in guest engagement, exemplified by the "4-Minute Shower Challenge," which could be adapted into a challenge-based model with small rewards or recognition to encourage sustainable behaviour. Furthermore, the practice of revaluing discards, such as producing soaps from kitchen leftovers, illustrates how waste can be transformed into useful products, reinforcing circular economy principles.

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

Hotel Berlin provides an excellent model for Albanian tourism businesses to develop and implement sustainability practices. On its website, the hotel publishes a comprehensive sustainability report detailing the results achieved in the previous year, a strategy for the current year, and a brochure communicating key measures in a clear and immediate way. Albanian hotels can use this approach as inspiration to set their own sustainability strategies. Moreover, these materials offer practical examples for future tourism practitioners to learn how to draft, monitor, and communicate sustainability objectives, skills that are directly applicable in their future careers.

Creative guest engagement initiatives, such as the "4-Minute Shower Challenge," demonstrate how playful, challenge-based approaches can encourage sustainable behaviour. Similar low-cost activities (e.g. energy or waste reduction competitions, "eco-pledges" for guests, or social-media-based challenges) can be easily implemented with no investment.

While some measures at Hotel Berlin depend on local infrastructure (e.g., environmentally friendly district heating) or require higher investment (e.g., AI-driven food waste monitoring), many actions can be replicated with limited resources. Examples include manual tracking of food waste, simple refillable



amenities, repurposing kitchen leftovers into soaps, or small-scale recycling initiatives, allowing hotels to start improving sustainability immediately, even in rural or smaller-scale settings.

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

Start by setting achievable, year-to-year goals and measuring progress. Implement actions such as reducing single-use plastics, tracking food and water use, and repurposing leftovers. Engage guests creatively through challenges or rewards and share your results openly.



## Project Partners



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**Project N°101182855**





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