



Water is one of the basic components of all life on earth and is essential in order to sustain it.

The issues

Water distribution over the world is uneven, and historically it has been badly managed whether or not it is scarce. There are not infinite supplies of water to meet the demands of everyone on the planet and already one person in five has no access to safe drinking water, so it not a resource we can take for granted.

97% of water is in the oceans, which cover 71% of the earth's surface. 2% is fresh water, 2/3 of which is tied up as ice in glaciers and at the poles. This leaves approximately 1% as fresh water on the ground, in rivers, lakes, the atmosphere, and in the groundwater. However, with demand rising rapidly due to global population growth, and as water use per capita increases, that one per cent is under threat. Climate change is adding to the problem because our weather patterns have become less predictable and more pronounced. Whilst a number of areas are

experiencing periods of prolonged drought, the rain that falls in some other areas is more violent. This leads to flooding and contamination of water supplies without sufficiently replenishing groundwater stocks.

The issues of availability and quality are closely linked, and reducing consumption is an important step in ensuring an adequate supply of good quality water.

Water and the hotel and tourism industry

Water is essential to the hotel and tourism industry- for food preparation, cleaning and hygiene, guest comfort and recreation. Hotels also depend upon the survival of their supply industries such as agriculture and the food and drink industries- none of which could function without sufficient water.

But there are a lot of problems in the tourism industry that are related with the sufficiency and the right management of water supplies. Reduced precipitation and increased evaporation in some regions is creating water storages and competition over water. Other threats to the industry are desertification and the increasing incidence of wildfires. Not only do they pose a risk to existing tourism infrastructure but they could affect future demand flows and seasonality. Similarly the increasing frequency of heavy precipitation in some regions is likely to lead to more floods and potential damage to historic architectural and cultural assets as well as to tourism infrastructure. Travellers and tourists will either concentrate visits into shorter time periods or they will go elsewhere.

From an economical and management point of view, water accounts for around 10% of utility bills in many hotels. Saving water reduces the amount of wastewater that needs to be treated, thereby lessening the risk of pollution. Depending on how water-efficient they are to start with, hotels can reduce the amount of water consumed per guest per night by up to 50% compared with establishments with poor performance in water consumption.

Eco Hotels and water management

According to the above, water should be maintained and properly managed. An eco hotel complies with this rule, checks daily its water consumptions, properly maintains its facilities, informs its customers about the proper and not excessive use of water and uses appropriate water saving technologies.