

Why Sustainability Matters

The Importance of Sustainability Practices in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The earth we inhabit is a gift from God that needs to be cherished and taken care of. The existing earth is complete with unlimited and limited resources, as well as renewable and non-renewable resources for us to carry out activities for survival. However, the earth also has its capacity and limits. Population growth around the world results in over-consumption that can erode the balance and resources on earth. In addition, economic and daily activities among households are able to cause climate change, which results in various negative effects on the balance of the ecosystem. Thus, sustainability has become the mainstay of every policy formulation and become the orientation for government organisations, NGOs, and so on.

The hospitality and tourism sector is one of the rapidly developing industries that provide income to the country's GDP because the industry has always had a demand from the community. No matter what kind of hospitality and tourism services are offered by the operators, they have always been favoured by the public. However, this industry always encounters risks or controversies due to activities related to the erosion of resources and the effects on the environment. For example, the development of resorts and hotels revolves around the preservation and conservation of nature. Such attractions or destination areas have great potential for income generation, but at the same time provide a risk to the environment. In addition, wastage from the hospitality industry's practices contributes to environmental risks. The same applies to the tourism industry owing to the exploitation of natural areas and the production of waste; all of which contribute to the degradation of nature. Although we are striving towards the goal of sustaining economic growth, we should never neglect the focus and efforts we have made in trying to achieve environmental stability and sustainability. Environmental erosion, excessive use of energy and resources, and excessive carbon emissions from daily human activities will result in detrimental effects and abrupt climate change, which could later ultimately affect



the smoothness of daily human activities. Therefore, sustainability principles become a crucial foundation for human activities, especially pertaining to hospitality and tourism activities. The sustainability framework can be a guide for current and future policies of hospitality and tourism in the country.

To increase the capacity of implementing sustainability, stakeholders who are involved in this industry need to adopt sustainability practices. Although sustainability has been introduced for a long time and has become the pillar of policy planning at the international, national, and local levels, the level of awareness and knowledge of sustainability among stakeholders in this industry particularly is still low. Hence, there is still a low level of engagement in terms of sustainability practices in hospitality and tourism among stakeholders at the local level. The exposure to sustainability is not only meant for the industry's key players, but also for members of the community who are the customers or service recipients. They should also know and understand the importance of sustainability in this industry so that sustainability practices can be implemented successfully at various levels among stakeholders in order to achieve the desired objectives.

The degree of knowledge of sustainability practices could determine the stakeholders' level of awareness and practice on sustainability. Therefore, it is very important for all parties to ensure that they understand the concept and practice of sustainability. Many resorts or hotel operators are hesitant in practicing sustainability in their operations, even though they would be able to obtain the benefits of sustainability practices, such as reducing business operating costs and stimulating innovative values. Sustainability practices should be the basis of the day-to-day operations of a company. However, it is not easy to adapt sustainability principles during business operations. Perhaps, various challenges may surface, but implementation needs to be continued and further enhanced toward sustainable living for the present and the future in order to achieve the desired ambition highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In a nutshell, sustainability is not a foreign term, especially among key players in the hospitality and tourism industry; its implementation should be the core of business operations as this sector is rather prominent in relation to environmental issues and excessive utilisation of resources. This sector provides a high economic return to the national income, but at the same time, we cannot ignore the aspect of environmental stability that will ultimately affect the

quality of life in the future. Proactive actions and practices need to be implemented to increase knowledge and awareness among stakeholders, to ensure that sustainability is not limited to a rhetoric, but something that can be undertaken realistically.



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