A Guide to

Concepts of Green Tourism
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About Ministry

Vision
Internationally competitive and diversified economy under the leadership of efficient and knowledgeable nationals.

Mission
To develop the national economy and create a pro-business environment that contributes to achieve balanced and sustainable development of the country, through the enactment and modernization of economic legislations, foreign trade policies, development of national industries and exports, promotion of investment, regulation of competition and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector, protection of consumer and intellectual property rights, and diversification of economic activities, under the leadership of efficient nationals, in line with international standards of creativity, excellence and knowledge economies.

Values
- **Transparency**: to apply institutional governance principles, unambiguity of information, decisions, conducts, and all communication and interconnectedness mechanisms with customers from inside and outside the ministry.
• **Respect of Rights**: to respect rights of employees, consumers and all customer classes as per applied economic legislations and work regulations.

• **Excellence**: to provide services beyond customers’ expectations and harmonize with best practices and international standards of excellence and exert efforts for uplifting the efficiency of human resources.

• **Team Spirit**: to cooperate and teamwork, support all work groups of ministry’s employees and strategic partners to achieve excellence.

• **Participation**: to manage with participation, consider all different ideas and contributions of related classes, hence adding value to work results.

• **Creativity**: to create positive climate for supporting concerned classes inside and outside the ministry convert their ideas to applicable distinguished results serving ministry’s vision and country’s competitiveness.
Foreword by
HE Minister of Economy

Tourism occupies a special place in the mind and conscience of our wise leadership. Interest in tourism increases day after day in the light of wise directives under the leadership of H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan; H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai and their brothers, Supreme Council Members and Rulers of the Emirates; as well as the outstanding efforts of tourism agencies and departments of the State, in addition to all sincere efforts, close coordination and cooperation between them and the Ministry of Economy.

In the context of our strategy in raising awareness of tourism in our esteemed society, Ministry of Economy, is pleased to present the sixth edition, within a series of Tourist Awareness Promotion entitled as:

“Concepts of Green Tourism”

This is based within the framework of our jurisdiction to spread and improve tourist awareness in the Emirati society so as to be more embracing and aware of the importance of tourism on the international level and on the domestic level, achievements that inspire us to feel proud, work much harder and become keener on the quality of the tourist services rendered.
Since tourism and environment are two sides of the same coin, paying more attention to environmental protection and developing environmental resources result in the continuity, sustainability and growth of tourism activity, as a clean environment is a guarantee for successful tourism activity.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that, thanks to the directives of our rational leadership and the sincere efforts exerted by the state's tourist authorities and facilities to the development, marketing, raising the quality of the services offered to our tourists and visitors which helped gain their confidence in us as a tourist destination, the UAE has been ranked 29th among the World's Top 50 Travel Destinations in terms of most visited countries by tourists, and 31st among 50 destinations in terms of achieved revenues. In addition the UAE stood 28th out of 128 countries in Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013, issued by the World Tourism Organization and the World Economic Forum (WEF). One of the most important reasons of these achievements is our state's increasing diligence dedicated to environmental protection, recognizing that a clean environment is a major factor in the UAE's tourist attractiveness.
Our guide “Concepts of Green Tourism”, comes as a means to raise the tourism awareness of our Emirati society by providing simplified tourist knowledge and spreading ‘environmental awareness’ among the society and tourist investors taking into account that environment is the core and axis of tourist activity and that knowledge is an essential key to the development growth of human identity.

H.E Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansoori
Minister of Economy
Introduction

The Ministry of Economy pays great attention to the importance of spreading tourism awareness due to its significant role in supporting the tourism industry, and developing the ability to create a community nurturing sustainable tourism and is conscious of its value. The awareness of tourism is based entirely on the extent of awareness and understanding of the people, their acceptance and respect for the tourist and service providers. It also depends on people’s appreciation of all economic and cultural benefits generated from tourism.

Moreover, tourism depends on activating social life in the State along with demonstrating distinct customs and traditions, which serve as a magnet for tourists who are looking for achieving recognition and convergence with the customs and traditions of other people. Integration of efforts exerted by the State, its departments and its citizens, in supporting the procedures of tourism and antiquities awareness, contributes to a balanced process of urban and human development as a tool of interaction between cultures and people. This is where the Ministry of Economy fulfills its role to instill the concept of tourism industry as the future industry.

This extends to support awareness initiatives aiming to consolidate cultural, social, environmental, touristic and economic dimensions necessary to promote such
industry through spreading tourist awareness and promoting codes of conduct among official and civil sectors.

Future Scientists agree on the existence of three industries “which serve as the driving force for economics of services in the current century”; Telecommunications, IT and Tourism Industries.

Among these three industries, the Tourism Industry appears to be unique for its developing growth, which is considered the ideal driving force for achieving a better future for next generations. This requires us to know how to create a community that nurtures tourism.

Our guide “Concepts of Green Tourism”, comes as a means to raise community awareness in the field of tourism through recognizing these concepts and definitions.

It is noteworthy to mention that tourism is no longer a luxury, but must be considered as an important element in international communication and solidarity.

The role of Ministry of economy is focused on providing a sound knowledge of tourism and making it available in a simplified manner for every citizen.

The experience of others enriches our knowledge and deepens our understanding of the universality of human society and the planet we inhabit.

Thus, we provide this guide to knowledge seekers, in general, and tourism knowledge seekers, in particular.
We hope that our guide achieves its lofty goals, whether in enriching the knowledge of Emirati community in the field of tourism industry and its various activities or in promoting positive attitudes towards tourism in our community, culminating with a community that nurtures the tourism industry leading to its prosperity and sustainability.
Green tourism as a key type of new tourism and a step towards sustainability
Green Tourism - one of the most important types of new tourism

By the end of the 20th century dramatic changes in the global economy laid aside traditional economic resources, agriculture and industrialization, to be replaced by different services industries, telecommunications, information technology, banking and travel and the tourism industry - our prestigious field which, currently leads the world economy. Tourism is no longer the activity undertaken by people, in which they go out for a particular period to spend leisure time, but a huge services industry that has grown and developed around the world over the past 25 years by 500%. Local tourism has expanded dramatically simultaneously and the world tourism traffic has reached the point of no return in terms of its increasing growth since the mid-fifties of the twentieth century. In spite of difficulties and crises, tourism has managed to deepen its roots in the contemporary culture by the end of the twentieth century.

As a result, the world is going through a dramatic period of social, cultural, civilizational, economic and environmental development which led to a so-called “new tourism era” with its special features and own trends. One of the key trends is the appearance of new types of tourism like Green Tourism, the main subject
of this guide. Green Tourism satisfies the requirements of environment and its protection from pollution through programmes in which entertainment and protection complement each other. It is described as sustainable tourism, alternative tourism as well as balanced tourism.

Environmental protection is the cornerstone for the continuity of tourism in the long term and consequently creation of new job opportunities. However, tourism policies should not only take into account economic and technological considerations, but also preserving the needs of hosting citizens in general and those of tourism staff in particular. The type of tourism that meets such requirements is named sustainable tourism, alternative tourism or balanced tourism.

Green Tourism has become the center of the world interest and the specialization of many tour operators, there are a lot of tourists who look for accommodation at eco-friendly green hotels, as a requirement. It is a responsible eco-friendly type of tourism attracting well-educated and clean, natural, environment lovers, levels of tourists. Environment is the backbone of tourism activity and clean environment is a guarantee and a key factor of tourism attraction.

Tourism and environment are two sides of the same coin, paying more attention to environmental
protection and developing environmental resources result in the continuity, sustainability and growth of tourism activity. A tourist destination’s reputation is tarnished by the lack of environment protection, as it is unlikely to achieve sustainable tourism development unless environmental resources are well protected.

Due to the close relationship between tourism and environment, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) have signed in 1982 joint declaration and established a permanent committee on tourism and environment in a bid to spread environment awareness among peoples of the world.

Due to this close relationship, the World Ecotourism Summit, was held in Quebec City, Canada from 19 to 22 May, 2002 as a sign of taking care of the world’s interest in Ecotourism that witnessed a 18% growth 20% growth, one of the highest growth rates of tourism types, and seized at least 20% of the world tourism traffic. In 2002 the world celebrated World Tourism Day under the motto: ‘Ecotourism: The key to sustainable development’. Sustainable tourism is the key to the future.

It should be indicated that new trends in environmental protection are taken into consideration
to achieve the principles of Green Tourism, in order to apply an integrated environment system to reach a sustainable tourism policy that abides with local environment laws and reduces employment costs through the optimal use of natural resources and improvement of the images of tourist facilities.

*Environmental protection has become the world’s concern and, a big challenge to humankind, as it is a matter of concern for both, today’s and the future generations. Sacrificing the future generations’ right in a clean environment means that we destroy a truth stated by scientists: “We Do Not Inherit This Earth From Our Ancestors, We Borrow It From Our Children”.

Concepts of Green Tourism
Tourism

• A social movement, performed optionally, so as to have entertainment as well as mental and physical enjoyment.

• The social axis of capitalism, where individuals and groups widen their horizons, diversify their activities and renew their energies.

• It is a set of relationships and services associated with a temporary and automatic change for the place; not for commercial or professional reasons.

Tourism is a joyful human activity includes people's travels to tourist destinations outside their homelands (the surroundings) for different tourist purposes other than residence and employment.

The Tourist

A temporary visitor to a country (tourist destination) for any purpose other than residence and employment. Tourist's stay should not exceed 12 months and be not less than 24 hours for purposes of visit, festival or treatment. This definition does not include (immigrants - diplomatic missions, transit passengers and crews). The other definition for tourist had been provided by World Tourism Organization in United Nations Conference and was approved by United Nations Statistical Commission in 1968. This definition describes tourist as “every person
living outside his usual homeland for a period that exceeds twenty-four hours provided that such stay is not converted to a permanent residence. It should be noted that first definition is more widely used in tourism statistics.

**Visitor (Traveler)**

anyone who travels to a place outside his usual homeland for less than (12 consecutive months) to exercise any activity, except employment

**Tourist Area**

A place of popular tourism demand due to the tourist attractions in the region as well as the trends, motivations of tourist activity and tourist facilities necessary to access this region. Such region becomes a target for tourists as a result of the interaction between:

- Tourist attractions (natural, industrial and human).
- Tendencies and trends of tourist demand.
- Accessibility and accommodation in this region.

**Tourism Investment Project**

A project focuses on investment in facilities or hotel units, which also aims to serve tourists in the first place. Such facilities may be (a hotel or a tourist village including service and recreational units).
It does not have the character of housing tourism (apartments or chalets).

Tourism investment project may aim to serve tourists who tend to exercise certain activities (such as golf / diving or water sports).

**Tourist Activity**

Technical and administrative activities carried out by different governmental, public and private authorities, bodies and tourist facilities which are associated with tourists in order to achieve their maximum satisfaction. It aims at achieving the highest possible revenues as well as the highest levels of tourist satisfaction mentally and monetarily, and relieving the stress and tension they suffer from, as foreigners away from their homelands.

**Tourist attraction factors**

- **Natural attraction factors**
  
  All natural esthetic values like landscape, sea, lakes, rivers, plains, deserts...etc.

- **Man-made attraction factors**
  
  Like historical antiquities and peoples’ lifestyles, customs and traditions as well as historical wealth. Such attractions could be divided according to tourist goals or purposes as follows: Historical attractions, cultural attractions.
Environment and Tourism

In general, environment is the outer frame, which includes all natural, biological, cultural and historical elements such as climate, land, rivers, mountains... etc., where human beings live with other creatures such as plants, birds and animals in an integrated, homogeneous and balanced manner. Environmental system can be divided into the following elements:

Natural Environment

- Land and Climate: include topographic soil and climatic conditions.
- Plants: include wildlife and natural areas.
- Water Systems: include seas, oceans and groundwater.
- Gas or Air Atmosphere.

Man-Made Environment

Includes systems of agricultural environment, urban societies, dams, artificial lakes and transportation systems, i.e. all human achievements, which had been created within natural environment.

- Social Environment

It is the prevailing political, economic, social, administrative and cultural systems.
New eco-friendly trends which realize Green Tourism principles

- Alternative Tourism and its applications (natural tourism).
- Green Tourism certificate.
- Blue flag beaches.
- Green hotels.
- Environmental hotels.
- Tourism development (tourism sustainable development and new tourism development concept)
- Developing and applying development optimal outlook.
- Natural reserves.

**Alternative Tourism**

A type of tourism which is concerned with maintaining ecological balance and environment protection in addition to avoiding detrimental effects resulting from unplanned tourism development that causes harm to environment. Alternative Tourism first appeared in 1990 to replace Mass Tourism which caused direct environmental damages in many developing countries. This type of tourism is based on social and cultural communication in addition to adherence to social values and good management of natural, cultural and human resources.
• **Eco – Tourism**

Eco – Tourism is an application for Alternative Tourism and could be defined as travel to natural virgin areas in order to watch, study and enjoy beauty of the nature, its flora and fauna and natural wealth, untouched by modernity. It is a modern pattern of tourism that aims to protect natural environment and avoid detrimental effects resulting from unplanned expansion of tourism. Alternative Tourism aims to embrace nature and support continuous development as well as control tourism development not to harm natural environment. It maintains harmony and unity between tourism and environment as it works to conserve natural resources, landscapes, topography of earth and characteristics of wildlife.

**This type of tourism includes:**

- **(Blue) Tourism:** to move to the beaches of seas and lakes so as to enjoy their clear blue waters.
- **(Yellow) Tourism:** to travel to deserts so as to enjoy their gold sands.
- **(White) Tourism:** to travel to ice areas in order to do ice-skating.
- **(Green) Tourism:** to enjoy green areas of the countryside and plants.
• **Farm tourism**

An application of Green Tourism, “Farm Tourism” or what is sometimes called “Farm vacations” has emerged. It includes visiting and staying in farms so as to escape from crowded cities and enjoy different rural activities. Such farms provide accommodation with simple facilities and furniture away from complex technology where the visitor enjoys aesthetics of nature.

• **Blue Flag Beaches**

- Blue flag is an exclusive eco-label award. A Blue Flag certificate is awarded by the Organization of Environmental Education to marinas and beaches that sponsor requirements of sustainable development. This is one of the leading internationally approved and documented certifications which were awarded to more than 3450 beaches and marinas from (41 countries) in Europe, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the Caribbean.

- This campaign aims to achieve sustainable development of beaches and marinas through strict criteria. It is managed by an independent, non-profit organization concerned with environmental education.
- **Green Hotel Certificate**

  This certificate is awarded to hotels that care about environment and work to rationalize the consumption of electricity and water through using modern eco-friendly hotel equipment that do not cause loss of ozone. This is also achieved by using solar heaters as well as treatment of wastewater for reusing it in irrigation of gardens.

  Green hotels participate in projects of environment protection at the community level. They educate hotel guests, directly and indirectly, to care about beaches and environment as well as encourage their efforts to reduce air and noise pollution. World Council of Travel and Tourism (WTTC) awards this certification known as Green Globe.

- **Sustainable Development**

  Environment protection is the cornerstone for the survival and existence of tourism on long-term basis and for creating new jobs accordingly. Policies of tourism should not be based only on economic and technological considerations, but they must take into account environment protection and the needs of hosting those working in the field of tourism and people in general.
• **Eco-Lodges**

  The term “Eco-Lodge” is a trade name for a product of tourism industry which is used to identify a type of tourist facility based on natural grounds which adheres to the principles of eco-tourism.

  An Eco-Lodge is built with local or recycled materials in a design that conforms to environment and harmonizes perfectly with the nature and cultural background of the place, relying on alternative energy. An Eco-Lodge encourages the recycle of wastes and sewage water after treatment. An Eco-Lodge project requires an environmental design (Eco-D).

• **Natural Reserves**

  A Natural Reserve is any area of land, coastal or interior water which breeds living organisms such as plants, animals, fish or natural phenomena with cultural, scientific or tourist value. Nature Reserves are areas allocated by a state to protect various aspects of natural heritage and to preserve natural and cultural ingredients in such areas. Strict rules and procedures have been set to ensure protecting the system of parks and reserves. Natural reserves are considered one of the most important tourist attraction elements where some tourist activities are carried out by tourists such as bird watching, geological tourism and diving.
The Concept of Tourism Development

This means developing, founding and establishing facilities in areas or cities suitable for tourism development through providing essential supplies, accommodating and recreational facilities and services as well as engineering works associated with setting up areas taking into account continuous environmental protection, setting up natural reserves, monitoring natural resources and the effects of tourism projects on the environment.

Tourism development means developing the components of the tourist product, particularly in its natural and civilizational frame which could be described as developing tourism natural and civilizational resources among the state’s potential tourist resources.

Hotel Energy Solutions Initiative (HES)

An initiative adopted by UNTWO to help hotels reduce their energy consumption.

Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP)

An organization established in November 2013 and announced during the World Travel Market (WTM) in London. ST-EP works on the maximization of the social role tourism could play for the welfare of the poor societies. South Korea, host country of the headquarters, had proposed the establishment of the organization and donated $35 million for that purpose.
Successful Green Tourism Models Implemented in the UAE
JA Jebel Ali Eco-Friendly Resort

As a part of its ongoing effort to contribute its part to the environment, the Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa developed in 2006 an onsite Bio-Garden over a small area of about 50 square meters which comprises presently an area of over 1,000 square meters planted with a selection of aromatic herbs such as rosemary, thyme, Italian basil, lemon balm, and vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, arugula and parsley which are all used in the hotel kitchen to prepare food for the guests. Aquaponics planting system is being currently activated which is a revolutionary scheme for growing plants like bell pepper and green mint by fertilizing them with the waste water from fish in a growing initiative. Aquaponic gardening is a most productive way to grow organic produce and uses 90% less water than traditional farming, 30 lemon trees are planted in the garden as well. The Jebel Ali Bio-garden serves as an educational environment, where school students visit and contribute in seed planting and crop harvesting. Some of the guests take part in planting and some European tourists even insist on planting seeds they get from their homelands in the Bio-garden. The hotel management explained that main projects are on track in a bid to make the resort more eco-friendly and, at the same time, encourage social initiatives.
on the same basis such as energy saving, increasing recycling programs, reducing carbonic footprint and encouraging aquatic life initiatives. A cooperative team managed to implement several social initiatives like paper, can and bio-waste recycling processes, reducing water and energy consumption through the usage of saving devices as well as launching (Clean the World) campaign which aims at waste collection from beaches and desert environment.

Jumeirah Group & Dubai Turtles Rehabilitation Project

Jumeirah Group, the Dubai-based luxury hotel company and a member of Dubai Holding, in accordance with Green Tourism principles, celebrated the World Sea Turtles Day with the release of 110 critically endangered hawksbill turtles and within the Dubai Turtles Rehabilitation Project (DTRP), the 1st project of its kind in the Middle East. The turtles had all been rescued from the shores of the UAE and nursed back to health by a specialized care center, where the sea turtles were returned back into the wild in the presence of Emirati school children and hotel guests. Citizens and residents support the project through awareness campaigns to help finding injured turtles on Dubai shores and delivering them to the center.
The project is at the forefront of sea turtle rehabilitation protocols and veterinary procedures. Since it was established in 2004, 692 rescued sea turtles have been rehabilitated and returned to the UAE’s waters. Some of the turtles were fitted with satellite transmitters which once tracked a turtle that travelled an amazing 8600km in nine months almost reaching the coast of Thailand.

The project has its remarkable positive impacts on environmental protection and preserving the sea turtle population. It is estimated that only one out of 1000 sea turtle hatchlings will reach sexual maturity and so by saving these animals and releasing them back into the wild the project is in effect increasing the number of turtles.


Dubai Green Tourism Award

It is noteworthy that Dubai has taken the lead in Green Tourism applications with the participation of all its tourism sector entities in environmental protection. Within the new edition of Dubai Green Tourism Award, launched by the Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DCTCM) in 2014, a plan has been set up aiming at curbing carbon emissions by 30%, reducing electricity consumption by 50% and water consumption by 30%.
The Dubai Green Tourism Award, supported by different tourism sectors, urges their staff to the creation of new applicable ideas and honors the winning hotels. Award has included in 2014 a new category, desert camps and hotel apartments, and all nominees cooperate in implementing different applications such as lighting control systems, water supply networks, or eco-friendly electric transportation. DCTCM provides educational seminars to support tourist employees taking right decisions and taking part in setting up environmental sustainability systems.

The awareness of tourist staff in the UAE in general and Dubai in particular helps to the success achieved in the application of Green Tourism principles.

Qualifying the UAE beaches for the Blue Flag program in 2015

- Departments of the Environment in municipalities are currently working to meet all the requirements of the Blue Flag programme accredited by the United Nations in accordance with the global quality standards of the beaches, services and facilities available, in terms of safety, and guaranteeing the
safety and security of beachgoers and realizing their comfort.

- The programme includes defining beach activities and providing rescue platforms and lifeguards as well as strengthening and developing the current system and beach instruction signboards.

- 32 quality standards should be met in order to get the Blue Flag, mainly based on four criteria: water quality, information of environmental education, eco-friendly administration, and safety and services.

- The Blue Flag Certificate contributes to sustainable development of beach projects and water spaces, protect the marine environment and public health, attract more tourists to the state and show that the UAE has positive initiatives to protect the environment.

The Flag is distinguished by being a sign of health, safety and environment. UAE is a coastal state with a coastline of 700-kilometers, a key tourist destination in the region and is always seeking the highest global standards. Furthermore, the UAE is characterized by its leading role in environmental protective role in the region as well as its initiatives supporting sustainability issues. The Blue Flag beach should display information about the Flag, provide and promote activities on environmental education for beachgoers and display information about swimming
water quality and information related to ecosystem. A map showing different events provided by the beach should be displayed as well as the applicable laws and procedures reflecting the regulating rules of using the beach and its surrounding areas.
