

Dubai hotels urged to cut CO2 emission by 20pc



Dubai hotels are to be set an ambitious target of reducing their carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by as much as 20 per cent by the end of 2011 in a voluntary scheme.

Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) along with leading facilities management company Farnek Avireal, unveiled the DTCM Environmental Awareness Programme.

The groundbreaking programme aims to make Dubai's hospitality industry more aware of the need to protect the environment and conserve precious natural resources.

"We want to create a partnership with Dubai's hotels, their engineers and energy providers. It is not compulsory to join, but reduced carbon emissions mean lower energy costs, so there is clearly a financial incentive as well as an environmental one," said deputy director, business development, DTCM, Shaikha Ebrahim Al Mutawa.

In addition, all participating hotels will receive a certificate from DTCM to acknowledge that they care for the environment. 'That will undoubtedly attract guests with a similar environmental conscience,' she added.

The announcement comes at a time when many hotels are beginning to experience the new tariff or slab structure introduced on March 1 by Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA).

Based on Farnek Avireal's energy database, a typical five-star city hotel has a total energy bill of up to Dh7 million (\$1.9 million) a year. That would increase by an additional Dh4.5 million. For a five-star beach hotel with energy costs of around Dh15 million, it will cost an additional Dh10 million.

Dubai hotels still lag behind their counterparts in Europe, where the average hotel produces 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per annum. In Dubai that figure is 6,500 tonnes.

The comparison on water consumption makes equally grim reading. European hotels use an average of 350 litres per guest per annum, while Dubai hotels consume 850 litres per guest.

Benchmarking performances will be reported through Hotel Optimiser a web-based software developed by Farnek Avireal. This will generate monthly reports with a plausibility check that will immediately recognise any abnormal deviation. Hotels will be graded, based on their size, facilities and occupancy levels so that a like-with-like comparison can be made.

Engineers and energy providers from participating hotels will also be invited to a series of workshops and energy audits in the second half of this year. They will be shown where and they can make savings either because of poor maintenance or simple wastage.

Energy-saving technology will also be used to demonstrate how hotels can lower their consumption levels, prior to the implementation of the initiative in January 2009.

Hotels can reduce their carbon emissions, by covering swimming pools to reduce water evaporation, installing solar panels to heat water, using solar reflective coatings to cool exterior walls and using energy-saving modules to operate air conditioning units.

“Technology will play an important role, but once embedded into corporate culture, simple energy-saving habits such as switching off lights when not in use and closing windows and doors, become second-nature to the staff,” added Oberlin.