



CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



Nature lovers and fans of animals' photographs, we wanted to create a hotel in harmony with the environment around us.

For some time now, we have begun the process of obtaining certification "Sustainable Tourism" (CST) with the Costa Rican Ministry of Tourism and we are hoping to get this commitment soon.

Sustainable tourism development's goal is to meet the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the prospects for the future. It ensures that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

❖ *The main goal :*

The Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program - CST - is a product of the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT). The CST was designed to differentiate businesses of the tourism sector, based on the degree to which they comply with a sustainable model of natural, cultural and social resource management.

CST is regulated by the Costa Rican National Accreditation Commission and consists of a scale of 5 "levels" of sustainable tourism achievement.

❖ *To this effect, four fundamental aspects are evaluated:*

- **Physical-biological parameters :**

Evaluates the interaction between the company and its surrounding natural habitat.

- **Infrastructure and services :**

Evaluates the management policies and the operational systems within the company and its infrastructure, regarding the energy saving, water polluting and waste handling policies and technology.

- **External Client:**

Evaluates the interaction of the company with its clients in terms of how much it allows and invites the client to be an active contributor to the company's policies of sustainability.

- **Socio-economic environment :**

Evaluates the identification and interaction of the establishment with the adjacent communities, analyzing for example, the degree in that the tourist companies answer to the growth and development of the region, with the generation of new employment or the achievement of benefits in pro of the collectivity.

❖ *How it works ?*

For each and every one of these items a list of specific questions was designed to help evaluate how thoroughly the firm complies with a series of standards previously established.

Each and every one of the questions refers to an element of sustainability with which the firm should comply in order to qualify in any one of the different stages or levels of fulfillment.



❖ *Levels*

To measure and fix these different levels, the CST program provides a system of "sustainability levels", on a scale of 0 to 5, in which each number indicates the relative position of the firm in terms of sustainability.

❖ *What implications does the CST have?*

- **For the national tourism**

At the country level, the CST is a **brand** that will allow Costa Rica to **be different from other destination**. It offers a tourism product with a connotation of sustainability. This will impact, not only the marketing policies undertaken by the country, but also it will control and eliminate the practice of some companies that abuse the concept of "eco", "green" or "sustainable". "The Certificate for Sustainable Tourism, known as CST, has been recognized by the World Tourism Organization as one of the programs that is changing tourism. January 2000, San Jose, Costa Rica."

- **For the tourism entrepreneur**

The program brings the possibility of having a new element of competitiveness based on a new way of differentiate the product. This element will be reinforced and promoted by the ICT, in tourism promotion campaigns, both nationally and internationally, as an incentive for touristic business. Furthermore, the CST encourages companies to efficiently use their resources and promotes savings, which will have a positive impact on the company. For example, **the use of energy saving technologies offer opportunities to reduce the expenses** of the company.

- **For the tourist**

The tourist that selects a tour company that has the logo of the CST can be sure that the company is engaged in **actions**, in all areas, to avoid negative impacts on the environment, culture and society.

- **For other productive sectors**

The CST is an innovative program, which opens **opportunities** for business development in a **sustainable way**. The need to use recycled, reusable, and natural products, to use devices for energy and water savings, waste management, information and others, opens the door to a new market for environmentally and socially friendly products. This will generate a synergy among different economic sectors and an overall positive balance in terms of sustainability.

