

HOTELS CARE

*Community Action
&
Responsibility for the Environment*



INTERNATIONAL
HOTELS
ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER PROFILE

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts joined IHEI in 2001 and has been going green ever since. Environmental responsibility is becoming a way of life for the company's 54 hotels in 25 countries around the world. Membership of IHEI has shown that sensitivity to the environment doesn't have to be at the expense of guest comfort and that the long-term benefits of sound environmental practices outweigh the costs - important considerations for a company known worldwide for providing its guests with the utmost in luxury and service. With the help and guidance of the initiative, Four Seasons is committed to environmental improvement throughout its operations.

Four Seasons Resort PuntaMita in Mexico is a case in point. This luxurious and secluded retreat is situated in one of the region's most environmentally sensitive areas. The delicate surroundings were taken into consideration throughout the building process with a team of environmentalists overseeing and controlling construction of the resort from ground breaking to opening day. The resort's low-rise buildings were designed to blend into the environment and the architectural style of the coastal region. Precious flora and fauna were preserved or relocated in order to maintain the integrity of the surrounding landscape. Indigenous vegetation also thrives with extensive reseeded at the Resort's on-site nursery and at the Jack Nicklaus-designed Four Seasons golf course at Punta Mita a computerised weather station monitors ground moisture, helping to conserve water by irrigating greens and fairways only when necessary. Organic fertilisers are used and natural vegetation is preserved around the course. The result of all these efforts is a beautiful hideaway that fits seamlessly into its natural environment.

The care taken to create Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita will not only ensure the resort's success for years to come; it will help maintain the viability of the environment of the Mexican Riviera. The Pacific Ocean's white sand beaches and the area's lush green mountains are as much an attraction for tourists as the resort itself. The natural beauty of a destination often factors into a tourist's decision to travel there. Four Seasons believes that it is incumbent on the tourism industry to do its part to protect the air, water, land, plants, animals and communities that make the destinations where it operates so special and that the actions taken today will benefit the industry for years to come.

For these reasons, Four Seasons is taking measurable steps towards environmental protection. With the help of IHEI, it has created a set of guidelines which are followed by all of its hotels around the world. The overall strategy is quite simple:

- To conserve energy and natural resources without affecting guest satisfaction or safety
- To minimize waste and its impact on the environment
- To use products from environmentally responsible sources and with minimal packaging
- To promote awareness of environmental issues through staff training and local educational initiatives.

To ensure these guidelines are met, each hotel has a team of employees charged with identifying best practices and inspiring their colleagues to join the effort.

Developing an awareness of the environment and establishing ways to protect it does not happen overnight. It requires a comprehensive plan and a willingness to implement it. This is a challenging prospect for a company with hotels in various parts of the world, where local laws, practices and services vary significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Using the resources of the IHEI, Four Seasons is able to tackle the challenge head on, while continuing to provide its guests a hotel experience of exceptional quality.

Case study: Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa

At **Four Seasons Resort Maldives** at Kuda Huraa guests can enjoy all that nature has to offer and actually participate in preserving its beauty. The resort occupies the entire island of Kuda Huraa, one of 1,100 coral islands scattered across the Indian Ocean in the Republic of Maldives, south of Sri Lanka. The reef of the Maldivian archipelago represents one of the richest ecosystems on earth and the resort provides the ideal vantage point from which to observe it in action.

The resort's staff strongly believe in protecting the natural resources that surround them and the extensive series of environmental initiatives employed at the hotel speaks to their dedication. A resident marine biologist educates guests about the fragile ecosystems of the Maldives, escorting daily snorkelling excursions and conducting 'Fish Talk' presentations each evening.

The fragility of the coral reefs around Kuda Huraa is a key issue. It takes thousands of years to create large coral reef systems, but minutes for them to be destroyed by inexperienced divers or snorkelers. To ensure the longevity of the coral reefs surrounding Kuda Huraa, the staff at Four Seasons Resort Maldives created the 'Adopt-a-Reef Ball' project. Reef balls are man-made structures comprising a special marine-friendly concrete. They are designed to mimic natural reef systems and to facilitate growth of corals in areas where the reef has been damaged. On average, each reef ball produces about 180 kilograms (400lbs) of plant or animal life and has an expected life of about 500 years. Many guests of the hotel have adopted a reef ball for US\$250.

Recycling and waste disposal are also of paramount concern on this island of pristine beaches and crystalline waters. All used water is properly treated and re-used for landscaping purposes. Recycling and waste separation programmes are in place for staff at the hotel.

The methods employed at Four Seasons Resort Kuda Huraa are successful because they enhance the guest experience as well as protecting the environment. The extraordinary efforts of the staff contribute to making this remote island paradise in the Indian Ocean a truly natural wonder for tourists from around the world.

View From The Top

“Environmental responsibility has always been practiced at hotels within the Four Seasons family. What we lacked was consistency to our approach. Our recent association with the IHEI has helped us to focus our energies and coordinate the effort. As the leading operator of luxury hotels in the world, we believe it is our duty to respect and protect the areas where our hotels are built to the fullest. We owe it to the communities where we operate and to the tourism industry as a whole.

Through our new environmental initiative at Four Seasons we have developed a series of guidelines for our hotels to follow. Having made this first step, I believe we have the momentum to keep moving forward. We will endeavour to measure our results and constantly strive to improve them. We will set up new systems and reward hotels that are successful. We will undertake to protect the environment with the same fervour and dedication with which we serve our guests. It is our goal to become a leader in the industry when it comes to environmental responsibility. We will challenge our partners in the industry to follow our lead.

The IHEI gives hotel companies the tools and encouragement they need to make a measurable difference to the environment. At Four Seasons, we recognize that the investments we make today are certain to pay off in the long run. We operate hotels in some of the most beautiful and environmentally sensitive places on earth.

From Bali to Nevis, Hawaii to the Maldives, each of our exotic locations requires special care and attention. Equally important are the measures we take to protect the environment around our city hotels. Under the guidance of the IHEI, Four Seasons is pleased to be contributing to a greener and healthier global environment ”.

**Wolf Hengst, President, World-wide Operations
Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts**

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