Green Key's Policy on suspension and withdrawal

1. INTRODUCTION

This Green Key Policy on suspension and withdrawal of the Green Key certification takes effect on 1 October 2026 and replaces all former policies regarding the suspension and withdrawal of the Green Key certification.

2. SUSPENSION OF THE GREEN KEY CERTIFICATION FOR AN ESTABLISHMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Suspensions occur when the Certification Body judges that an establishment no longer conforms with the Green Key certification requirements.

The purpose of the suspension is twofold:

- To reduce risk to the reputation of an establishment promoting that it has a sustainability certification when it is known that the establishment does not conform with the Green Key requirements.
- To allow the establishment a reasonable period to demonstrate conformity before its certification is re-instated or withdrawn.

B. CASES/CONDITIONS FOR SUSPENSION

Suspension may occur in the following cases/conditions:

a. The Green Key certified establishment informs the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator) about non-conformity with the Green Key requirements (as assessed during the on-site certification audit), such as when:

    - The establishment is undergoing a major renovation (involving >50% of the establishment) and cannot conform with the Green Key requirements during the renovation period.

- The establishment is changing owner/brand and cannot immediately conform with the Green Key requirements under the new owner/brand.
- The establishment is subject to an extreme event natural or man-made disaster (e.g., wildfires, droughts, floods, landslides, storm events such as hurricanes and typhoons, earthquakes, volcano eruptions, tsunamis, extreme snowfall and avalanches, pollution disasters such as oil spills or nuclear radiation, epidemics/pandemics such as Covid, Ebola, SARS, armed conflicts, etc.), and thus cannot conform with the Green Key requirements during such a period.
- Other cases where the establishment cannot conform with the Green Key requirements.

b. The Green Key surveillance activities feedback not delivered or demonstrating non-conformity with the Green Key requirements within one month after the establishment has been informed about the non-conformities.

c. Verified feedback or complaints from guests or other stakeholders demonstrates non-conformity with Green Key requirements.

d. Non-payment of the Green Key levy.

C. THE ACTIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE CERTIFICATION BODY IN CONNECTION WITH A CERTIFICATION SUSPENSION

a. The Certification Body must ensure that the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator) informs the establishment about the reason for suspension:

- Acknowledge the feedback from a certified establishment that provided information about non-conformity with the Green Key requirements.
- Inform a certified establishment about the exact non-conformity with the requirements revealed during the verified feedback or complaints.
- Inform a certified establishment about the exact non-conformity with the requirements revealed during the surveillance activities.
- Inform a certified establishment about non-payment of the Green Key levy within the payment deadline.

b. The Certification Body must ensure that the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator) informs the establishment about the stipulations of the suspension:

- When the establishment was subject to an extreme natural event or man-made disaster, the establishment will have six (6) months to rectify the non-conformity with the Green Key requirements.
- In all other cases, the establishment will have two (2) months to rectify the non-conformity with the Green Key requirements.
- During the period of certification suspension, the establishment must remove any references to the Green Key certification from its website and its information material.
- The establishment must send written proof that conformity with the relevant Green Key requirements has been achieved within the above-mentioned period.
- If conformity with the relevant Green Key requirements is not achieved within the above-mentioned period, the establishment will have its certification withdrawn.

c. The Certification Body must ensure that the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator) takes the following actions during the period of certification suspension:

- Temporarily remove the certification status for the establishment in the Green Key registry.

d. The Certification will in relation to the termination of the certification suspension:

- Evaluate the feedback and proof from the establishment under certification suspension with the purpose of deciding on the outcome of the certification suspension.
- If the feedback/proof confirms that the establishment has achieved full conformity with the Green Key requirements, the Certification Body will ensure that the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator):
    - Informs the establishment that the establishment is again Green Key certified (and that it will have to reinstate its references to Green Key).
    - Ensure that the establishment is again displayed in the Green Key registry.
- If there is no feedback or the feedback/proof does not indicate that the establishment has achieved full conformity with the Green Key requirements, the Certification Body will ensure that the establishment's certification is withdrawn (see below).

D. ACTIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT IN CONNECTION WITH A CERTIFICATION SUSPENSION

- Ensure that it rectifies the specific non-conformity with the Green Key requirements within the set timeframe.
- Send the information about the rectification of the non-conformity (including proof) to the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator) within the set timeframe.
- Remove its references to the Green Key certification from its website and its information material during the certification suspension period.

3. WITHDRAWAL OF THE GREEN KEY CERTIFICATION FOR AN ESTABLISHMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Withdrawing a certification means that the certification expires earlier than original expiry.

B. CASES/CONDITIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal occurs in the following cases/conditions:

a. The establishment no longer wishes to hold the Green Key certification.
b. There has been a breach of the Certification Agreement, or one party has terminated the Agreement.
c. The Certification Body has legitimate reasons and evidence for losing confidence in the establishment's conformity with the Green Key certification standard, including if:
    - The Certification Body has suspended the certification, and the establishment did not take any or sufficient corrective action within the set timeframe.
    - There is evidence that the establishment has been engaged in bribery or other criminal activity.
    - The Certification Body has other proven reasons for believing that ongoing certification of the establishment could damage the reputation and credibility of Green Key, the concept of sustainability certification and/or any other stakeholders involved in sustainability certification.
    - Legislative changes in the region of the establishment raise significant sustainability concerns (for example, a location removes environmental legislation that the Certification Body relied upon to assess conformity with a specific criterion, or the local government introduces labour or human rights legislation that could lead to exploitation or abuse of the establishment's staff).

C. ACTIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE CERTIFICATION BODY IN CONNECTION WITH A CERTIFICATION WITHDRAWAL:

The Certification Body must ensure that the Green Key National Operator (or Green Key International in countries without a National Operator) informs the establishment about the reason for withdrawal:

- Inform the establishment about the withdrawal and the reason for it.
- Inform the establishment that it must remove its references to the Green Key certification from its website and its information material.
- Inform the establishment that it can only re-apply for Green Key certification (re-start the certification process) once it has addressed the reasons for the withdrawal and can show proof that it has rectified the causes of the withdrawal.
- Remove the certification status for the establishment from the Green Key registry.

D. ACTIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT IN CONNECTION WITH A CERTIFICATION WITHDRAWAL

- The establishment must remove its references to the Green Key certification from its website and its information material (see Green Key's policy regarding references to the Green Key trademark).