

Quality and Environmental Standards



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1. Introduction

An HI Iceland Hostel is a lodging place which is part of HI Iceland, and thereby, Hostelling International. The Icelandic word “Farfuglaheimili” is a registered trademark in Iceland. All references to HI Hostels from now on refer to HI Hostels in Iceland specifically.

Hostelling International (HI) issues international quality standards which serve as basic requirements for HI Hostels around the world. The standards’ purpose is to ensure guests’ wishes and expectations regarding the services and facilities provided are met, no matter where in the world the guests are located.

HI Iceland is obligated to adapt the quality standards to conditions in Iceland and make sure that hostels which belong to the chain of HI Hostels fulfil the requirements regarding services and facilities for guests. Exemptions from the standards can be made in special circumstances; this applies to small hostels in remote locations and these hostels shall be advertised especially in all promotional material. See further the chapter about exemptions.

Furthermore, HI Hostels are required to adhere to all laws and regulations set by Icelandic authorities regarding lodging places, including building codes and regulations on health, fire safety, and workplace environment. The quality standards widely refer to public requirements and regulations. If the requirements set by public regulations are higher than those in the quality standards, the public regulations shall be adhered to.

HI Hostels which fulfil extra requirements regarding environmental and sustainability practices are advertised as “Green Hostels” in all HI Iceland promotional material. The goal is that before May 1st 2018, three years after the third issue of the quality standards, all HI Hostels will be Green Hostels. New additions to the HI Hostels chain shall commit to fulfilling all Green Hostels’ requirements within one year of signing the partnership contract with HI Iceland.

Changes to the quality standards shall be presented and discussed at the HI Iceland Annual Meeting but need to be approved by the Board of HI Iceland to be validated.

Managers of HI Hostels are encouraged to consider the quality standards as minimal requirements and go to extra lengths to improve facilities and services for guests. Consequently, the standards are split into two different categories:

M (Mandatory Requirements): requirements that every HI Hostel must fulfil.

S (Supplemental Quality): suggestions for the hostels to provide their guests with even better service and experience. The S criteria in the final chapter on sustainability are mandatory for the Green Hostels.

The quality standards are issued in Icelandic and English. If any discrepancies can be found between the two texts, the Icelandic version is valid.



2. Responsibility

HI Iceland supervises that all HI Hostels fulfil the requirements set in the quality standards, and that all HI Hostels are correctly presented in all HI and HI Iceland promotional material.

HI Iceland will:

- Introduce the standards to HI Hostels managers, explain the standards' purpose, and make sure all HI Hostels fulfil the requirements set by the standards. The manager of each HI Hostel shall sign the partnership contract with HI Iceland.
- Conduct an annual audit of HI Hostels where both the quality standards and special check-lists are used along with guests' comments received by various means (surveys, online reviews, emails, phone communications, etc.)
- Follow-up on audits with instructions for improvements and general counselling. A certain time frame is decided for when improvements shall be concluded (at least 4 weeks but no more than 5 months from date of audit). If no action is taken regarding instructions for improvements, the Board of HI Iceland is authorised to cancel the partnership contract with the hostel in question.
- Provide consultation on whatever may come up in the day-to-day operations of the hostels.

HI Hostels managers will:

- Familiarise themselves with the standards and use them in all day-to-day operations.
- Make sure that hostel staff is also acquainted with the standards and works according to the requirements set by the standards.
- Make improvements as instructed in the annual reports within the set deadline and provide HI Iceland with information on the progress.
- Have at all times the permits requested by Icelandic authorities and provide HI Iceland with information on permits and any comments made by Icelandic authorities regarding the operations.

3. Welcome

M1 Discrimination of Guests Is Prohibited

HI Hostels are open to all. Guests are treated equally regardless of sex, race, nationality, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, social status, and political views. Everyone is entitled to good service and manner of friendship and respect.

Staff of HI Hostels are permitted to deny individuals service with other guests' interests in mind, but not based on the grounds above.



M2 Guest Safety

Hostel guests who commit serious offenses, such as theft, overconsumption of alcohol, drug use, sexual harassment, violence, or serious damage to hostel or other guests' property are not permitted to stay at the hostels. It is important to react quickly and guests shall be dismissed. HI Iceland's main office and other HI Hostels should be notified of the occurrence as soon as possible.

M3 Condition of Hostel Properties and Surroundings

All HI Hostels and their staff shall bear a witness to both cleanliness and neatness. This refers to indoor and outdoor facilities, driveway, grounds, and nearest surroundings. All furniture and equipment shall be kept clean and in good condition. Furthermore, special attention should be given to paint work (both indoors and outdoors), floors, and all windows must be free from cracks or broken panes. Outdoor lighting should also be satisfactory.

M4 HI Membership

It is not mandatory to be a member of HI Iceland or other HI national associations to stay overnight in an HI Hostel. However, guests who show proof of valid HI membership should always be given the best possible prices for accommodation, regardless of how they make a booking. The Board of HI Iceland determines the minimal price difference between those with HI membership and those not with HI membership.

Each HI Hostel is required to sell both Icelandic and international membership cards and introduce guests to the benefits of becoming members of HI, for instance by advertising the HI membership cards at reception.

About HI membership:

Icelandic membership cards are for all whose permanent residence is in Iceland. Those who buy Icelandic membership cards shall fill in special forms at the hostels and the forms then sent on a regular basis to HI Iceland's main office (see attachment 1).

Guests who reside outside Iceland can buy international membership cards. Forms for international membership shall also be filled in and the forms sent to HI Iceland's main office (see attachment 2).

Children under 4 years of age stay for free at HI Hostels so long as they sleep in baby beds or share a bed with a parent. Children 4 – 12 years of age are entitled to a discount.

M5 Length of Stay

Guests can stay for as long as they wish and if circumstances allow.



M6 Propaganda

Any kind of religious or political propaganda is not allowed at HI Hostels; the hostels are for people with various backgrounds, religious beliefs, and opinions. HI Hostels should avoid all material and circumstances which may offend guests.

M7 Enquiries and Bookings

All enquires and booking requests should be dealt with quickly and efficiently. Same rules apply for all complaints.

A system to monitor bookings must be in place and reservations made in accordance with pre-bookings.

The service of booking other HI Hostels for guests shall be in place.

All HI Hostels should be bookable on HI/HI Iceland booking engines. An exemption can be made for hostels which are not bookable through any online travel agencies (OTA).

M8 Promotional Material

Promotional material for HI Iceland shall be readily available at all hostels. The unique aspects of each hostel shall be advertised in all material issued by HI Iceland and the hostels themselves, and it is imperative that all information is as correct as possible. When hostels make their own promotional material, they should use the manual from HI Iceland (*Merkjastaðall Farfugla*).

M9 Approach and Signs

Signs should be in harmony and tastefully arranged in appropriate locations. See further in the manual: *Merkjastaðall Farfugla*.

The HI logo and/or signs from The Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration shall be used to give directions to the hostels.

The HI flag shall be used at hostels where possible. The HI logo shall also be clearly visible on the hostel building where guests arrive.

All signs shall be clean and in good condition.

M10 Non-Smoking Hostels

Smoking is not permitted indoors at HI Hostels. If a hostel permits smoking outdoors, that area shall be clearly marked and not affect non-smoking guests staying at the hostels. Wall mounted ashtrays or other cigarette containers shall be in place.



M11 License

HI Hostels must adhere to Icelandic laws and regulations regarding health, safety, and cleanliness. The operational license and permit from the local health authorities shall be on display and visible to guests.

M12 Overnight Stays

Reports for overnight stays shall be done on a monthly basis and sent to Statistics Iceland as well as HI Iceland's main office before the 5th of every month.

M13 Reception Hours

Clear information on reception hours, and when staff is present and/or located shall be visible. Opening period for each hostel shall be the same as advertised in all promotional material. It is recommended that information on reception hours can be seen from the outside when the hostel is closed.

During high season, staff shall be present to assist guests at minimum between 8:00 and 10:00, and between 17:00 and 22:00. Reception hours are more flexible during off season but it is important that the hours are clearly advertised.

M14 Bathroom and Luggage Facilities

Guests waiting for the reception to open shall have access to bathroom and luggage facilities.

M15 Staff

Staff shall be easily recognised by the HI logo or a name badge.

Staff shall be helpful, friendly, and serve guests with their welfare in mind. At check-in, guests shall be informed about the building and the services provided. Staff shall also be capable of providing guests with information on the hostel's local environment, history, and culture.

M16 Children

HI Hostels shall provide baby beds and high chairs (for kitchen use) for families travelling with children. Playing cards, board games, and other entertainment for children shall also be provided.

M17 Check-In

Individual travellers are obligated to fill in check-in cards with name and passport number upon arrival. Groups booked through travel agencies (9 persons or more) do not need to fill in check-in cards.



Information for Statistics Iceland and HI Iceland's main office regarding groups (numbers and nationality for instance) needs to be acquired in a different manner.

M18 Emergencies

The emergency phone number 112, as well as the hostel's own emergency phone number, shall be visible at the hostel's entrance and by the telephone (if one is provided).

In case of emergencies, it is important that a member of staff can be reached at all times, 24/7.

Where there is no phone reception, information on emergency phone numbers and where to find the nearest telephone, or where to seek assistance, must be provided. Staff must make appropriate arrangements to ensure guests and their belongings are safe during their stay. For instance, landings, balconies, and windows where children may injure themselves must be blocked with baby stair gates and shields.

M19 Overbookings

Guests who have confirmed bookings must be provided with accommodation. If a hostel becomes overbooked, the manager is obligated to find similar accommodation close by and pay for the price difference, if there is any. The guest shall pay the price already confirmed for the booking at the hostel.

M20 Staff Training

Managers ensure that hostel staff is familiar with HI Iceland and other HI Hostels, and is thereby better equipped to provide guests with information and encourage them to stay at other HI Hostels when travelling around the country.

Manuals from HI Iceland shall be used for staff training and staff shall sign for having had the training afterwards.

M21 Information

Maps, travel information, and other general information about the area shall be readily available at the hostels.

The hostels shall provide information on the following:

- Facilities and services provided onsite and nearby. If access to services is restricted in any way, such as access to laundry and guest kitchen, it needs to be properly advertised.
- Price list for accommodation and other services provided.
- Bus schedule as well as schedules for other available transport services.
- Places of interest and activities available nearby.
- Instructions regarding cleanliness and safety.
- House rules, advertisements, and other important information.
- Reception hours and when staff is present.

- Check-in times.
- Check-out times.
- Weather forecast.

Information provided shall be simple and clear, and provided in at least Icelandic and English. Information shall be positive and polite and tastefully arranged in appropriate places. The hostels are encouraged to use pictures or other graphic material when providing information.

M22 Surveys

Guests are encouraged to take part in service surveys to give them opportunity to share their opinions on the facilities and services provided at each hostel. They shall likewise be encouraged to participate in online surveys on booking sites and social media sites.

S.3.1 Pictures of Staff

It is recommended to have pictures of staff in the reception area.

S.3.2 Guest Book

Guest books are made available where guests can share their thoughts.

4. Safety

Although guests staying at HI Hostels are responsible for themselves and their belongings, hostel managers need to make appropriate arrangements, in accordance with circumstances, to ensure guests and their belongings are safe.

M23 Fire Safety

Fire extinguishers must be available at all hostels, and emergency evacuation paths clearly marked without any hindrances. An HI Hostel must fulfil the requirements set by fire safety regulations and do what is possible to prevent fire. Fire alarm systems and smoke detectors shall be checked at least on an annual basis and managers must provide documentation for checks. At larger hostels sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and emergency lighting must also be checked.

Fire blankets shall be available in guest kitchens.

M24 First-Aid Kit

A fully-equipped First-Aid kit shall be provided according to local health regulations. The kit shall be checked and supplies renewed on a regular basis.



M25 Emergency Evacuation Plans

Clear emergency evacuation plans shall hang in all areas of each HI Hostel: bedrooms, kitchen, dining area, lounge, and other common areas.

M26 Unauthorised Persons

Necessary measures must be taken to ensure guests' safety as well as the safety of their belongings. Arrangements shall be made so that unauthorised persons cannot enter the hostels. At check-in, guests are given keys or key cards. Exemptions to this rule can be made, especially at older hostels where keys have not been in use up to now.

M27 Staff Training

Hostel staff shall be capable of dealing with emergencies that occur. Staff shall know the procedures of dealing with emergencies, such as to dial 112, how to attend to a guest who is injured, know the emergency evacuation plans, and where to find First-Aid kits.

M28 Upper Bunks

Managers shall make appropriate arrangements to prevent guests falling out of bunk beds. Bunk beds shall be secured to a wall or be very steady.

M29 Safety Issues

Guests shall be made aware of any possible safety issues at the hostels, for instance slippery staircases, high thresholds, low ceiling beams, hot water, etc.

M30 Luggage Storage and Valuables

Storage facilities shall be provided and advertised to guests so they may keep their valuables and personal belongings safe.

M31 Bed Bugs

Managers will do everything in their power to prevent the occurrence of bed bugs and other viruses at the hostels. This includes regular inspections, training of staff, use of insecticides, and so-called black boxes.

M32 Animals

Guests are not permitted to bring animals to HI Hostels. Certain exceptions can be made if requested at time of booking, such as for guide dogs. Hostels can reserve particular facilities where animals are welcome, such as cottages or similar facilities, and put up signs to indicate that animals are welcome.



Staff shall make sure their own animals are kept out of guest facilities (bedrooms, kitchen, and other common areas). Keeping of animals shall be mentioned in promotional material.

5. Privacy

M33 Single Sex Bedrooms

Single sex dormitory rooms shall be available. If dormitory rooms are mixed, it must be advertised in promotional material and to guests in the booking process.

M34 Single Sex Bathrooms

Single sex bathrooms shall be available where possible.

M35 Curtains

Curtains shall be provided in bedrooms to cover windows and dim light.

M36 Age Restrictions

Age restrictions at HI Hostels:

The minimum age for a child to stay in a shared dormitory room is 8 years old.

The minimum age for an individual traveller is 18 years old. Exceptions can be made for those with parental or legal guardian written consent.

No age restrictions apply for children travelling with parents when staying in private rooms.

6. Bedrooms

M37 Room Types

Private rooms and shared dormitory rooms where guests can book single beds must be available at all HI Hostels. The number of dorm beds varies between hostels; the number is based on the size of each hostel and the facilities available. The partnership contract between HI Iceland and each hostel shall list the bed capacity and the number of dorm beds available.

M38 Bedroom Space

Space for sleeping per person in a bedroom shall be at least 5m³ and floor space at least 4m² per single bed. The space from each bed (single or upper bunk) to the ceiling shall be no less than 75 cm.

M39 Bedroom Facilities

Each bedroom shall have in addition to beds:

- Table and chairs
- Mirror
- Waste basket
- Curtains to cover and dim light
- Hooks for clothing (at least 2 per bed) or a wardrobe
- Windows that open
- Good lighting

M40 Bed Size

The minimum size for a single bed is 80x190 cm and the minimum space between beds is 75 cm unless beds are separated by a partition.

M41 Beds and Mattresses

Mattresses shall be at least 12 cm thick. Each mattress must have a mattress cover which can be removed and washed as necessary. Both mattress and mattress cover must be in good condition.

Beds shall be sturdy and in good condition.

Mattresses, duvets and pillows shall not be used without bed linen. Duvets and pillows shall be kept in closed storages when possible.

HI Hostels have 3 possible options for bed linen: these are minimum requirements and managers are encouraged to go beyond these requirements. All options are approved by health authorities.

a) Sheet is provided for each guest. Pillow with pillowcase and duvet with duvet cover are available for rent.

A sheet is provided on each bed which is changed after each guest. The sheet is ready on the bed and a guest may use a sleeping bag and borrow a pillow with pillowcase included free of charge. If guests do not have their own sleeping bags, they can rent bed linen (duvet cover and pillowcase) upon arrival and will also be given a duvet and pillow.

b) Sheet and pillow with pillowcase for each guest. Duvet with duvet cover is available for rent.

In addition to providing a sheet, the manager may choose to include a pillow with pillowcase in which case the pillowcase shall be changed after each guest. If guests do not have their own sleeping bags, they can rent bed linen upon arrival and will also be given a duvet.

c) Bed linen, duvet, and pillow for each guest.

Bed linen (sheet, pillowcase, and duvet cover) is included in the price. A duvet and pillow are on each bed and guests make their own beds.

M42 Waste Sorting

Waste baskets are in each room. Waste sorting and disposal of waste shall be conducted according to health regulations and the final chapter of the quality standards.

M43 Air Conditioning

All bedrooms must have good air conditioning.

S.6.1 Bed Size

HI Hostels that wish to offer higher quality shall provide single beds which are at least 90x200 cm and double beds which are at least 150 cm in width.

S.6.2 Lighting

Lighting shall be provided for each bed. The light can be secured to the wall or bed.

S.6.3 Electrical Outlets

Electrical outlets for plugs with two round prongs are provided.

S.6.4 Mirror

A full length mirror is available in bedrooms.

7. Bathrooms

M44 Bathroom Facilities - General

Toilets, sinks, showers, mirrors, and other appliances shall be kept clean, in good condition, and free from cracks which may attract bacteria.

M45 Minimum Requirements for Bathroom Facilities

- 1 toilet for every 12 guests (at least one for each sex)
- 1 sink for every 6 guests
- 1 shower or bathtub for every 15 guests
- Two hooks for each shower/bathtub shall be provided and shelves in shower stalls for guests to put soaps down and so forth

M46 Running Water

All HI Hostels must have both hot and cold running water.

M47 Soap

Liquid hand soap is provided in all bathrooms at HI Hostels.

M48 Hand Towels

Electric hand dryers, paper towels, or cotton towel (if permitted by health authorities) are provided in all bathrooms.

M49 Waste Bins

Waste bins for sorting of paper towels and sanitary towels shall be provided in bathrooms.

S.7.1 Ventilation

Bathrooms have automatic ventilation (preferably time fan units).

S.7.2 Mirrors

Mirrors are provided above all washbasins.

8. Food and Beverages

M50 Guest Kitchens

Guest kitchens or other similar facilities where guests can prepare food, eat, and clean afterwards are available at HI Hostels. The size and situation of kitchens shall be in accordance with the size of each hostel, location, and total number of guests. The cleanliness and organisation of guest kitchens shall be given special attention.

M51 Kitchenware and Kitchen Appliances

All common kitchenware and kitchen appliances are provided in guest kitchens, such as saucepans, frying pans, cups, glasses, cutlery, bowls, plates, microwave oven, hobs, toaster, and refrigerator. Markers and pens shall also be provided for guests to label their food and food baskets. Space shall be allocated for guests to store their own food.

M52 Washing-Up

The necessary equipment for cleaning up shall be provided for guests in kitchens (cloths, sponges, washing-up brushes, broom and dustpan).

M53 Refrigerator

Refrigerator size is in accordance with the maximum number of guests staying at a hostel. Temperature shall be set at 0-4°C and the refrigerator shall be emptied and cleaned on a regular basis. A code of practice for keeping refrigerators and food storages clean shall be in place for staff and guests notified of the practice so they can store and label their food correctly.

M54 Instructions for Use of Guest Kitchens

Instructions regarding access to guest kitchen, storage of food, and cleaning shall hang in guest kitchens.

M55 Waste Bins

Waste bins must be provided in guest kitchens with clear instructions on waste sorting. Waste bins are emptied and cleaned on a regular basis in accordance with the quality standards' final chapter.

M56 Food for Sale

It is recommended to sell food supplies and other necessities at HI Hostels where prepared food is not sold and guests cannot buy food close by. Alternatively, it needs to be mentioned especially in promotional material if guests are required to bring their own food.

M57 Storage of Food

All leftovers from food service shall be stored in closed containers or covered by cling film. Staff shall mark the containers with two dates: the expiration date from the manufacturer and when the packaging was opened.

Staff must be neat at all times, especially when preparing and serving food. Aprons and gloves are used when doing kitchen work, and hair must be kept away from food.

9. Common Areas and Services Provided

M58 Lounge

Guests shall have access to a lounge or other similar facilities.

M59 Facilities

Hostel premises, equipment, as well as all conduct must ensure hostel guests are disturbed as little as possible by external noise and movements of other guests and staff indoors.



M60 Access to Internet

If Wi-Fi access is not provided, this must be clearly mentioned in all promotional material.

M61 Common Areas

Tables and chairs shall be available in common areas, and lighting be comfortable. Playing cards, chess, board games, or other entertainment options shall also be provided.

S.9.1 Events Calendar

An events calendar is used to promote events happening at the hostel and in the vicinity of the hostel. A board can be used at the hostel to advertise the calendar, as well as confirmation emails to guests and social media to promote the events.

S.9.2 Discounts

It is recommended to make contracts with local tour providers, restaurants, and shops to provide discounts of products and service for members of Hostelling International.

S.9.3 Information Board

HI Hostels provide information boards where practical information can be shared and guests can leave messages.

S.9.4 Internet Access

HI Hostels are encouraged to provide free Wi-Fi access in all common areas.

S.9.5 Additional Services

Below are ideas for additional services that HI Hostels can provide in order to offer a higher standard of service. Deposits can be requested for items that guests borrow and return after use.

- Hairdryer
- Alarm clock
- Iron and ironing board
- Outdoor seating area
- Outdoor barbecue
- Hot tub
- Foosball table, ping pong table, or other entertainment equipment
- Sewing kit
- Chargers and adapters

S.9.6 Wheelchair Access

Managers make every effort to provide wheelchair access for guests and obtain official accessibility certification.

S.9.7 Electric Vehicle Battery

Electric vehicle battery is provided.

S.9.8 Facilities for Bikers

HI Hostels are receiving an increasing number of guests travelling by bike and their needs should be considered. Below are ideas for improving services for bikers:

- Indoor bike storage
- Information on bike routes
- Information on shops which sell biking equipment and provide information to bikers
- Provide repair equipment for bikes
- Provide the most common spare parts necessary for bikers
- Facilities to clean bikes
- Offer guests travelling by bike discounts of accommodation prices and other services to promote eco travelling

10. Exemptions

As mentioned in the opening chapter of the quality standards, exemptions can be made in special circumstances. This only applies to small HI Hostels in remote locations. It is very important that accurate information on the facilities and services of these hostels is provided in all promotional material.

Exemptions can be made for the following:

- Shorter reception hours and fewer hours when staff is present at the hostel. The reception hours and hours when staff is present at the hostel shall be advertised in the hostel's promotional material as well as at the hostel itself.
- Fewer requirements for room size.
- Fewer requirements for general comfort, such as common areas. Guests should nevertheless always be guaranteed a good night's sleep.
- Fewer requirements for bathroom facilities (number of toilets, sinks, and showers per guests)

Exemptions will not be made regarding cleanliness or guests' rights to sleep in single sex bedrooms.

11. HI Iceland Code of Ethics

The HI Iceland Code of Ethics is consistent with the VAKINN Code of Ethics, issued by the Icelandic Tourist Board for all tourism companies in Iceland.

- M62** HI Hostels provide their customers with polite and reliable service.
- M63** HI Hostels are discreet and loyal towards their customers.
- M64** HI Hostels are honest and fair in all communications and business.
- M65** All customers are treated equally at HI Hostels, regardless of for instance sex, nationality, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, social status, and physical appearance.
- M66** HI Hostels ensure that all information given to customers is accurate and that promotional material truly reflects the service and facilities provided.
- M67** HI Hostels advertise their prices in a clear way and in accordance with the law.
- M68** HI Hostels shall respond to all enquiries and requests in a fair and efficient manner.
- M69** HI Hostels ensure that all complaints are dealt with quickly and in fairness.
- M70** HI Hostels adhere to all laws and regulations regarding their business.
- M71** HI Hostels ensure that bookkeeping and financial statements are done in a professional manner.
- M72** HI Hostels fulfil legal obligations towards employees as well as obligations set by collective wage agreements.
- M73** HI Hostels ensure proper training and appropriate working conditions for staff.
- M74** HI Hostels ensure staff and customer safety with a professional mode of conduct, good facilities, and certified equipment.
- M75** HI Hostels behave responsibly towards Icelandic nature, surroundings, and society.
- M76** HI Hostels observe Iceland's interests and reputation as a high quality destination where professionalism, hospitality, good service, and sustainability are at the forefront.

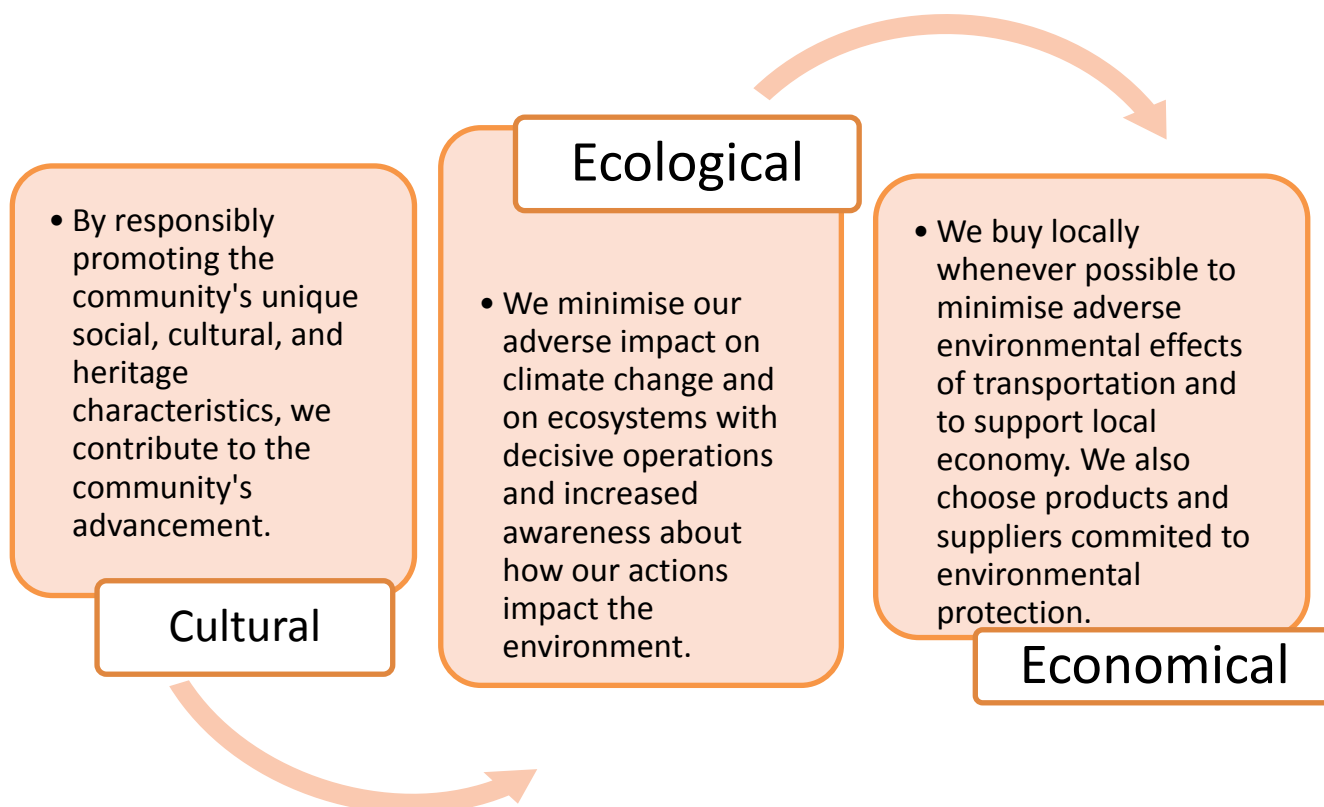
12. Sustainability

One of the main focuses of HI Iceland is to offer hostel guests facilities, services, and entertainment where responsibility towards nature, society, and surroundings are at the forefront. Since its foundation in 1939, HI Iceland has focused on environmental work as evident in HI Iceland's bylaws. They stipulate that the role of HI Iceland is to promote travelling which increases people's knowledge of the environment, concern for nature, and respect for the cultural value of cities and towns around the world.

All HI Hostels are required to fulfil the quality and sustainability standards set by HI Iceland. The HI Hostels that also fulfil the S criteria in this chapter are called "Green Hostels" and can use the Green Hostels logo in marketing. It is important to note that the Green hostels logo is not a recognised environmental certification, but the criteria used are decided by HI Iceland. However, the Green hostels are assessed in the beginning by a consulting agency, which also advises staff and the board on the development of the Green Hostels criteria.

The Green Hostels classification was done in order to make it easier for guests to choose a more eco-friendly way of travelling. By focusing on sustainability in our work, we support a more eco-friendly way of travelling which increases the travellers' awareness for the environment, concern for nature, and respect for cultural differences.

We work together towards a sustainable future in harmony with nature.



12.1 Consumption

The business of running a hostel often requires purchasing in great quantities and in large units, for instance cleaning supplies, washing powder, food and beverages (if food is prepared and sold), appliances, office equipment, furniture, bed linen, etc. The benefits of having a clear purchasing policy include:

- Promotion of local produce by shopping locally and choosing domestic products. This can also enhance the hostel's popularity in its closest surroundings.
- Good business procedures and social responsibility by choosing fair trade products when available.
- Eco-friendly and healthy food is made available by shopping for organic produce.
- Minimum adverse impact on the environment by choosing environmentally certified products (for instance eco-labelled cleaning products which have fewer effects on soil and water).
- Less waste by shopping for products in larger units, by avoiding disposable products (such as plastic cups), by avoiding unnecessary packaging when possible, and by encouraging wholesalers to deliver products using reusable packaging.

M77 Reusable Tableware

Reusable tableware only shall be used in guest kitchens and when serving food.

M78 No Unnecessary Packaging

Unnecessary packaging shall be avoided by choosing large packaging and products shall not be bought in individual portions (for instance butter, marmalade, sugar, and soaps).

M79 Environmentally Certified Products

Environmentally certified products take precedence over all other available products. This applies to cleaning products, chemicals, equipment, and disposable tissues (toilet paper and paper towels).

M80 Water Quality

Guests receive information on the quality of water in Iceland and are encouraged to drink water as well. Labels with information on the quality of water in Iceland are available at HI Iceland's main office.

M81 Tap Water Available Where Food Is Sold

Tap water shall be provided where food is sold.



S.12.1 Buy Locally

Icelandic and/or environmentally certified products take precedence over all other products; at least three types of products shall bear witness to this fact. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.

S.12.2 Homemade/Home-Grown/Organic Produce

At least three types of homemade/home-grown/organic produce (bread, fruit, vegetables, tea, etc.) shall be available where food is sold and a menu provided where this is mentioned. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.

12.2 Reuse and Recycling

Hostels generate a lot of waste, mostly packaging from purchased goods. Some of the packaging can be very dangerous to the environment, water, air, and soil; it can even be dangerous for people if the disposal of the packaging is not done correctly.

Special emphasis shall be put on decreasing the amount of waste by reusing and recycling the waste generated at the hostels. Waste can also be decreased by avoiding unnecessary packaging and choosing products which do not have extra packaging. "Reuse" refers to all things that can either be reused or donated where they can be reused (such as Red Cross or other charities).

Third and last step in any product's lifecycle is recycling. Making a product from recycled material requires less energy and material than if the product were made from scratch. As people are becoming more and more eco-conscious, it is also very important for the guest to have access to a good and effective recycling system.

M82 Environmentally Certified Products

Environmentally certified products shall be chosen whenever possible. Less waste can be achieved by:

- Choosing reusable products instead of disposable products.
- Choosing recycled and recyclable products.
- Sorting waste and proper disposal of all material which can be recycled and reused.

M83 Labels

Clear instructions on how to sort waste shall be available at HI Hostels. Labels for waste sorting are available at HI Iceland's main office.

M84 Staff Training

Staff shall be trained in the sorting and disposal of waste.

M85 Sorting of Waste

The following categories shall be sorted and disposed of in the appropriate manner:

- Deposit beverage containers
- Batteries – can be disposed of at petrol stations around the country
- Organic waste from kitchens and usable garden waste is sorted and used for compost or fed to animals
- Medication – can be delivered to pharmacies
- Hazardous materials: paint, lacquer, solvents, gas, methylated spirits, medication, and oil-based materials.

M86 Brochures

Undamaged used brochures left behind by guests are kept for others guests.

M87 Food Baskets

Guests are encouraged to leave dry goods, spices, and other food in guest kitchens instead of throwing the food out. Instruction labels are available at HI Iceland's main office. Common food areas need to be included in cleaning lists.

M88 Book Exchange

Books and magazines left behind by guests become part of the hostel's library.

S.12.3 Recycling

The following categories need to be sorted, as long as recycling centres or drop-off centres are provided by the local municipality:

- Cardboard
- Newspapers and magazines
- Tetra Pak
- Plastic

S.12.4 Clothes and Shoes

Facilities for guests to leave behind unwanted clothes/shoes for other travellers shall be available. Whatever is not used by other guests shall be donated to the Red Cross or other charities.

12.3 Pollution

Air, water, and soil pollution can be a side effect to running a hostel. If chemicals are used incorrectly, waste is not sorted properly, or if drainage does not work as it should, it can be dangerous for the surroundings, as well as guests and staff.

M89 Detergent

Detergents for washing machines must be used sparingly and according to instructions. Instructions shall be placed in laundries and staff instructed on the use of detergents. Instruction labels are available at HI Iceland's main office.

M90 Improvements/Renovations

Proper use of environmentally certified products is recommended when choosing material for maintenance, such as paint and flooring. HI Iceland's main office can be consulted when choosing materials.

M91 Hazardous Chemicals

Hazardous chemicals shall not be used for daily cleaning or any other regular operations at the hostels. Staff shall be trained in the use and storage of chemicals.

M92 Dustbin Cleaning

Outdoor dustbins must be large enough for waste generated and the dustbins shall be emptied and cleaned on a regular basis. Wall mounted ashtrays and waste bins are located in appropriate places.

S.12.5 Air Freshener

Air Freshener is not permitted unless eco-labelled. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.

S.12.6 Eco-Labelled Washing Products

All detergent for washing machines and dishwashers and washing-up liquid must be eco-labelled. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.

S.12.7 Eco-Labelled Cleaning Products

At least 80% of the cleaning products used daily at the hostels shall be eco-labelled. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.



S.12.8 Microfiber Cloths

All equipment or cloths used at the hostels for daily cleaning shall not require chemical cleaning agents. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.

12.4 Energy and Water Consumption

Energy cost is the largest item of expenditure for many hostels and it is increasing in many areas, partly because energy-intensive new technology is now part of the standard equipment for travellers. Although Iceland relies on renewable energy: hydroelectric power, geothermal energy, and thermal power, it is important to think about environmental education and how guests travelling from all over the world may be influenced. This refers to water consumption as well; even though many areas have water in abundance, it should not be wasted. Part of raising awareness about how our actions impact the environment involves reminding people that only 1% of water in the world is drinkable, and there are many travel destinations in the world which face serious water shortage. Thus, it is important to consider other areas of the world and set a good example for our guests.

Improvements in daily operations and measuring water and energy consumption can reduce both energy cost and water consumption, and increase light bulbs' durability.

M93 Energy and Water Consumption Log

Energy and water consumption shall be monitored so measures can be taken as soon as something goes amiss.

M94 Piping and Radiators Monitored

Piping and radiators shall be monitored so that any system imbalance or malfunctions can be rectified as soon as something goes amiss.

M95 Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs

Regular light bulbs shall be replaced with energy-efficient light bulbs when possible and light sockets replaced during maintenance.

M96 Energy/Water Conservation Sanitary Equipment

All new sanitary equipment and equipment replaced during renovations must be chosen with reference to their lifespan, as well as energy and water consumption.

M97 Energy Conservation

Guests are encourage to save energy and switch off lights. Labels are available at HI Iceland's main office.

S.12.9 Equipment Switched Off

Lights and equipment shall be switched off when not in use to save energy. Three examples shall be mentioned during audits.

S.12.10 Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs

Energy-efficient light bulbs shall be used in at least 40% of the building's lights.

S.12.11 Water Conservation

Guests are encouraged to save water. Labels are available at HI Iceland's main office.

12.5 Transport

Transport is an inseparable part of the travel industry; improvements in management and better use of resources have been brought about by the effects of transport on ecosystems, the deterioration of the most popular tourist destinations, and the traveller's experience. HI Hostels are required to inform guests how to decrease the effects of transport on the environment. This can be done by providing information on carpooling, footpaths, public transport, and bike rentals.

M98 Footpaths

Information is provided on footpaths and places of interests close to the hostels which can be reached on foot and/or by bike.

S.12.12 Carpooling

Guests are encouraged to carpool and are given assistance when possible to organise carpooling, for instance by advertising the carpooling website www.samferda.net.

12.6 Surroundings

This chapter includes suggestions for reducing or preventing adverse impact on the environment. HI Hostels can also seek ways to improve biodiversity and environmental production by contributing to environmental production in their areas. This is especially important in Iceland where the nature is both fragile and also the main attraction for many tourists.

M99 Public Footpaths

Guests and other travellers shall be directed to public footpaths in order that both the earth and sensitive vegetation can be protected.



S.12.13 Minimum Use of Weed Killer

Toxins such as weed killer shall be used as little as possible. See HI Iceland's purchasing suggestions.

12.7 Environmental Education

Environmental education is an integral part of sustainable tourism, both for the traveller and the local environment, and needs to be incorporated into the daily running of HI Hostels. Education increases our understanding of the correlation between economic prosperity, contribution to society, and environmental and human health. Environmental awareness and education are a large part of eco-management, which is a key factor in the running of the Green Hostels.

In order to reach their sustainability goals, HI Hostels require support from their staff and guests who hold the key to the hostels' environmental work. The environmental policy is maintained by providing purposeful education, thus increasing the awareness and commitment of both guests and staff.

As part of tourist services in Iceland, HI Hostels can contribute to sustainable tourism by advising guests of responsible ways to travel. In this way, the hostels are able to influence the guests' experience and their environmental awareness.

M100 HI Iceland's Environmental Policy on Display

HI Iceland's environmental policy shall be displayed in both Icelandic and English in common areas and be visible to guests and other visitors. The policy is available at HI Iceland's main office.

M101 Environmental and Quality Training for Staff

All staff shall be informed about HI Iceland's environmental policy and the quality standards.

M102 Guest Reviews

Guests shall be given *Your Opinion* cards to fill in; the cards are available at HI Iceland's main office. The opinion cards shall be reviewed on a regular basis and matters brought up dealt with. The cards shall be sent to HI Iceland's main office so the results can be logged and included with the hostels' annual reports.

S.12.14 Hostel's Own Environmental Policy on Display

In addition to having HI Iceland's environmental policy on display, each Green Hostel is required to have its own environmental policy visible for guests.



S.12.15 Courses

Manager and/or hostel staff have participated in a course on environmental issues or environmental education programmes organised by HI Iceland in the previous two years.

S.12.16 Annual Project Plan


An annual project plan, which precisely details the hostel's goals and how to achieve them, shall be in place. The project plan shall include the goal of each project, execution, who is responsible for the project, closing date, and any comments.

S.12.17 Green Accounting

The hostels shall do green accounting by keeping records of hazardous waste, waste disposal, as well as energy and water consumption if meters are available.




Attachment 1: Application for HI membership (for those with permanent address in Iceland)

Umsókn um félagsskírteini Farfugla		
Óskað er eftir:		dags. _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Einstaklingskírteini Senior 3000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fjölskylduskírteini Family 4000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hópaskírteini Group 8000 (allt að 10 manns, 600 kr. per mann eftir 10 manns)	
Nafn _____		
Heimili _____		
Staður og póstnúmer _____		
Gsm sími _____		Kennitala _____
Heimasími _____		Netfang _____
netfang er notað við félagatal Farfugla		
Ef fjölskylduskírteini		
Nafn maka _____		
Kennitala _____		
Barn/börn undir 16 ára		
Nafn _____	Fædd/ur _____	
Nafn _____	Fædd/ur _____	
Nafn _____	Fædd/ur _____	



Attachment 2: Application Form for International HI Membership



Hostelling International Membership

Expiration Date: _____

Senior (Individual Membership) 3000 ISK

Name: _____

Nationality: _____

Email: _____