Hospitality Green Business

Global Certification

Scheme Rules, Governance & Certification Process

FSG Certification Limited

Company Registration Number: 820829

Rannagh, Liscannor, Co. Clare, Ireland

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About this document

This document sets out the public rules and governance arrangements for the Hospitality Green Business Certification scheme. It should be read together with the current published Hospitality Green Business Certification Standards and Evidence Requirements, which contain the detailed Bronze, Silver, Gold and Emerald criteria.

FSG Certification Limited is the scheme owner and certification body. Independent monitoring and evaluation of conformity with the scheme requirements is undertaken by Agent4Change, a legally separate third-party organisation. The detailed certification criteria are deliberately not repeated in this document.

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1. Scheme Purpose

The Hospitality Green Business Certification scheme independently assesses and recognises hospitality organisations that demonstrate conformity with defined environmental, social and governance requirements.

The scheme is intended to provide organisations, customers and other stakeholders with transparent information about the requirements against which a certified property has been assessed. Certification confirms conformity with the published scheme requirements within the certified scope and validity period; it does not constitute a general or unlimited statement that every activity, product or service of the organisation is sustainable.

2. Scheme Owner and Governance

FSG Certification Limited is the owner and operator of the Hospitality Green Business Certification scheme and is responsible for scheme governance, development and maintenance of certification requirements, application review, certification review and decision, issuance of certificates and marks, surveillance, complaints, appeals, suspension, withdrawal and recertification.

Monitoring and evaluation of compliance with the published certification requirements is undertaken by Agent4Change, an independent third-party organisation legally separate from FSG Certification Limited and Fifty Shades Greener Limited.

Outsourcing independent monitoring and evaluation does not transfer scheme ownership or overall responsibility for certification from FSG Certification Limited.

3. Scope and Eligibility

The scheme is available to hospitality organisations, including hotels and other accommodation businesses, that fall within the published scope of the scheme and are willing and able to comply with the applicable requirements.

Certification applies only to the legal entity, property, location and scope identified on the certificate. Certification of one property does not automatically extend to another property, subsidiary, franchise, brand or group company unless that entity or location is expressly included within the certified scope.

Scheme-specific criteria marked as not applicable will be treated in accordance with the published standards and audit methodology. Applicants must provide sufficient information for FSG Certification to confirm eligibility and scope before evaluation begins.

4. Fair, Open and Non-Discriminatory Access

The scheme is open on transparent, fair and non-discriminatory terms to all hospitality organisations willing and able to comply with the published requirements.

- Access is not conditional on the size of the organisation, except where published fees vary proportionately by size.
- Access is not conditional on membership of any association, group or network.
- Access is not conditional on the number of certifications already issued by FSG Certification.
- Purchase of training, education or consultancy from Fifty Shades Greener Limited or any related organisation is not a condition of certification and provides no preferential treatment or advantage in the certification process.

5. Application and Certification Process

The certification requirements and evidence criteria are publicly available before application. Following application and payment, the applicant receives a certification pack containing evidence templates, submission guidance and audit preparation information.

1. Application and scope review: FSG Certification reviews the application, confirms eligibility, scope, applicable requirements and any known impartiality risks.

2. Evidence submission: the applicant completes the required tools and evidence templates and submits the required objective evidence.

3. Independent evaluation: Agent4Change assigns a suitably competent and conflict-checked auditor to evaluate the submitted evidence against the published certification requirements.

4. Clarification and further evidence: the auditor may request supplementary evidence, conduct interviews, perform remote checks or require an on-site audit where necessary.

5. Audit report: the auditor documents findings, non-conformities where applicable and a recommendation regarding conformity. The auditor does not make the final certification decision.

6. Independent review and decision: a competent Decision Maker who has not participated in the audit reviews the report and evidence and decides whether certification is granted, refused, or whether additional evidence or corrective action is required.

7. Certification issuance: where approved, FSG Certification issues the relevant certificate and authorises use of the corresponding certification mark.

6. Independent Third-Party Monitoring

Agent4Change undertakes independent third-party monitoring and evaluation of conformity with the scheme requirements. The assigned auditor must meet FSG Certification's documented competence, confidentiality, impartiality and conflict-of-interest requirements.

- Auditors assess only against the applicable published certification requirements and scheme procedures.
- Auditors must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before accepting an assignment.
- Auditors must not have a commercial interest in the certification outcome.
- Auditors must not make, promise or imply a certification decision.
- FSG Certification shall not instruct or pressure an auditor to alter findings or recommendations for commercial, financial or reputational reasons.
- Where independence or impartiality cannot be demonstrated, another auditor must be appointed.

7. Evidence Requirements

Certification findings must be supported by sufficient, relevant, current and verifiable objective evidence. The published standards identify examples of acceptable evidence for each criterion.

- Evidence may include records, invoices, policies, procedures, data, training records, photographs, supplier documentation, interviews, site observations or other verifiable material.

- Verbal statements alone will not normally be sufficient where documentary, physical or digital evidence would reasonably be expected.

- The auditor may use sampling appropriate to the size, complexity and risk of the organisation.

- The auditor may request additional evidence where information is incomplete, inconsistent, unclear or insufficient to demonstrate conformity.

- Applicants must not falsify, manipulate or materially misrepresent evidence. False or misleading evidence may result in refusal, suspension or withdrawal of certification.

8. Certification Review and Decision

Audit and certification decision-making are separate functions. The audit report and supporting evidence are independently reviewed before a certification decision is made.

The Decision Maker must be competent to understand the applicable certification requirements, must not have participated in the audit being reviewed, and must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

Possible outcomes include:

- certification granted at the applicable level;
- certification refused;
- additional evidence requested;
- corrective action required before a decision can be finalised;
- further evaluation or site audit required.

Certification decisions are based solely on objective evidence of conformity. No person involved in selling or delivering training or consultancy to the applicant may influence the certification decision relating to that applicant.

9. Certification Levels and Published Standards

The scheme provides four certification levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Emerald. The detailed criteria and acceptable evidence requirements are contained in the current published Hospitality Green Business Certification Standards and Evidence Requirements.

Unless otherwise stated in the published standards, an applicant must demonstrate conformity with at least 90% of the criteria at the level sought and 100% of the applicable criteria at all lower levels. For Emerald, the applicant must meet 100% of applicable Bronze, Silver and Gold criteria plus at least 90% of applicable Emerald criteria.

Only the certification level formally approved by the Decision Maker and stated on the certificate may be represented by the certified business.

Award Level	No Standards	No Mandatory Standards	Sustainability achievement
Bronze	12	5	We have the foundations
Silver	18	3	We understand our impacts and have plans
Gold	25	2	We have implemented meaningful action
Emerald	11	0	We can demonstrate measurable sustainability outcomes

Standards marked in red are Mandatory to achieve the award level.

BRONZE AWARD			
No	Criteria	Evidence	Yes/No
B1	The business identifies the environmental, employment, health and safety, accessibility and other legal requirements relevant to its operations and maintains evidence of compliance with applicable requirements.	Legal/compliance register; licences and permits; inspection records; compliance certificates; documented review of applicable requirements	Review the list of laws for Ireland
B2	The business has appointed a sustainability lead and green team to support the programme implementation and continuation	List of green team members with role descriptions	
B3	The green team meets regularly, at least every quarter, to set and or review sustainability KPIs and action plans	Meeting sign in records, meeting minutes, photos of meetings, action plan	
B4	The business has compiled environmental data from energy, waste, water and CO2 emissions for the reporting year	GHG emissions workbook.	
B5	The business has provided health and safety training to employees handling chemical cleaning products.	Signed training records	
B6	The business has an up-to-date sustainability policy which includes the business green KPIs and quantifiable goals for the future.	Link to policy on the website, or image of the policy, copy of the policy	
B7	The business has informed all stakeholders (employees, board members, customers and suppliers) of the sustainability policy.	Meeting minutes, internal communication SOP, staff canteen notice board image, photo evidence of info displayed at the premises	
B8	The business has provided training to their employees to raise sustainability awareness (Green skills	Signed training records, or certificates of completion or email confirmation from the	

	level 1)	training company.	
B9	A towel and linen reuse programme is available to guests or a procedure where linen and towels are not changed during a guest stay	Website link or images of in room information	
B10	The business only uses waste collectors with valid permits	Waste collector contract and/or permit	
B11	Records of employee ages are kept and show an absence of any form of child labour	HR employee files showing ages of employees	
B12	The business ensures that all employees are paid at least the applicable legal minimum wage and periodically reviews pay against an appropriate recognised living-wage benchmark.	Social sustainability policy, minimum wage policy, or sample wage payments from the lowest paid employees - employee interviews might be required to confirm this.	
SILVER AWARD			
S1	A comprehensive energy audit has been completed to include lighting and equipment (Minimum requirement kitchen, refrigeration, and office equipment),	Energy audit workbook	
S2	A comprehensive energy audit has been completed for heating, cooling systems as well as building insulation.	Energy audit workbook	
S3	The business purchases 100% renewable electricity	Supplier invoice	
S4	The business has developed an energy management plan to reduce energy that is time bound and specifies who is accountable	Energy action plan and environmental policy	
S5	A comprehensive water audit has been completed to include (at least) water flow rates & leak detection	Water workbook	
S6	The business actively monitors water use to identify possible water leaks	Leak detection system SOP and/or images of water meter checks	
S7	The business provides its	Signed training records	

	employees with health & safety training and keeps a record of this	for the reporting year	
S8	The business has developed a water management plan to reduce water use that is time bound and specifies who is accountable	Water action plan	
S9 Only applies to premises with commercial kitchens	A grease trap is installed in the kitchen	Images, proof of installation in the from of an invoice	
S10	A comprehensive waste audit has been completed to include waste segregation, waste collection, food waste audit, single-use items audit	Waste workbook	
S11	The business has developed a waste management plan, to reduce general, recycling and food waste, that is time bound and specifies who is accountable	Waste action plan	
S12	The business provides waste segregation bins in all departments (including customer bedrooms) for at least 2 waste streams: food (where necessary), general and recycling.	Images of bins per department and customer rooms	
S13	The business safely handles and disposes of its hazardous waste and e-waste	Hazardous waste SOP	
S14	The business keeps public pathways outside its premises free of litter	Images, SOP or inclusion on a job description	
S15	The business has a green purchasing policy in place and is able to demonstrate it has been communicated to its stakeholders	Policy document and if available published page on website	
S16 Only applies to businesses serving food	Vegetarian and vegan options are available to guests	Images of menus, invoices from food suppliers, order receipts	
S17	The business pays all relevant taxes according to their country's legislation	Tax compliance letter or certificate	

S18	Communicate ESG/sustainability/CSR values and targets on the website/marketing/annual report, ensuring transparency and including only verifiable claims.	ESG Communications and Claims Register mapping every material public claim to evidence, owner, approval and expiry/review date.Website/report links, underlying KPI data	
GOLD AWARD			
G1	LED lighting makes up for at least 80% of the property's guest and public room lighting	Lighting audit, invoices of LED purchases	
G2	The business demonstrates a measurable improvement in energy performance compared with an appropriate baseline period. Performance must be assessed using an appropriate intensity measure, such as energy consumption per guest night, occupied room, m^2 or another justified operational measure, so that significant changes in occupancy or activity are taken into account.	Energy consumption data for baseline and current reporting periods; energy KPI calculations; guest nights/occupancy data; utility bills; meter data; explanation of material operational changes; energy projects implemented; independent energy assessment where available.	
G3 Only applied to businesses that have their own operating car park	The business offers electric car charging stations	Invoice from installer and/or images	
G4 Only applicable to premises with a pool	The business has installed a pool cover to reduce evaporation and condensation	Invoice from installer and/or images	
G5 Only applicable to premises with in-house laundry	The business has set the washing machine temperature to a maximum of 60°C for its towel & linen laundry	Laundry equipment SOP and/or Images, records of temperature checks	
G6	The business hot water boiler is set to not more than 60°C	Water boiler images, records of temperature checks	
G7	The business demonstrates a measurable reduction in general/landfill waste	Waste contractor reports; waste weights; food-waste data; waste per guest night/cover;	

	generation compared with an appropriate baseline period, using total waste and/or an appropriate intensity measure such as waste per guest night, occupied room, cover or another justified operational measure.	baseline and current-year comparison; waste audits; procurement records; records of prevention/reuse initiatives; explanation of significant operational changes.	
G8 Only applies to businesses with food services	The business has a food waste policy that includes food waste prevention, reduction, and disposal.	Policy and/or web link to policy	
G9	Single-use plastic toiletries have been replaced by bulk dispensers	Invoice from installer and/or images	
G10	The business offers guest facilities to refill reusable water bottles	Invoice from installer and/or images/SOP	
G11 (for premises that sale food only)	The business has provided food waste training to all kitchen staff	Training records (dated and signed), programme descriptor, certificates of completion	
G12	The business only uses water-efficient toilets (e.g. 6 litres per flush)	Water workbook	
G13	The business only uses water-efficient showers (e.g. 12 litres per minute)	Water workbook	
G14	The business only uses water-efficient taps (e.g. 10 litres per minute)	Water workbook	
G15 Only applies to businesses with food services	The business has organic and fair-trade food products on their menus	Supplier invoices, menu images, products' images	
G16	The business offers bicycle rental (and parking on site) or information about local rental options	Images, guest info booklets, web links to info on website	
G17	The business uses only certified eco-cleaning products	Supplier invoices	
G18 Only applies to businesses with green spaces	The business takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive species and prioritises the use of native species for landscaping.	Garden/green spaces maintenance plan including species planted	
G19	Local artists are offered a platform to display their talents or are supported through other initiatives	Images	

G20	The business provides guests with information regarding local ecosystems, heritage and culture, as well as visitor etiquette	Images, web links, brochures	
G21	The business provides equal and universal access to all customers and visitors	Images of access ramps, lifts, disabled toilets & rooms.	
G22	Employees are given equal opportunities for learning and development and career advancement	EDI policy, employee handbook	
G23	The business uses local, small and medium-sized enterprises to meet 80% of its maintenance, service, marketing & non-Food and Beverage supply needs	Invoices, purchasing policy	
G24	The business provides training to employees to identify, report and stop child sex tourism and sex trafficking	Signed training records	
G25	The business has an employee wellbeing programme	SOP of wellbeing programme, images, training records.	
EMERALD AWARD			
E1 Only applies to businesses with food services	At least 50% of food is sourced from the property's local region (e.g. within 100km from the property location)	Invoices, purchasing policy	
E2	The business generates its own energy from renewable sources or where it does not, a proper assessment has been completed identifying why the business cannot generate its own energy	Invoice from installer and/or images	
E3	The business offers only certified eco-friendly toiletries in guest rooms	Supplier invoices with eco-friendly certification	
E4	Environmentally friendly materials are used for refurbishments, or construction works that started and/or were completed in the past 12 months	Invoices, images, certificates	
E5	The business	GHG inventories; Scope	

	demonstrates a reduction in operational greenhouse-gas emissions against an appropriate baseline period. The calculation must use a consistent methodology and account for significant changes in occupancy, floor area, services or business activity where relevant.	1 and Scope 2 calculations; baseline and current reporting-year data; emissions intensity per guest night or other appropriate operational measure; energy data; renewable-energy records; methodology; evidence explaining significant changes.	
E6	The business demonstrates a reduction in water consumption against an appropriate baseline period, taking account of significant changes in occupancy, facilities or operational activity. Performance is measured using an appropriate intensity indicator relevant to the business.	Water bills; meter records; baseline and current-year data; litres per guest night/occupied room or other appropriate KPI; leak records; water-saving projects; occupancy data; explanation of material operational changes.	
E7	The business demonstrates sustained improvement in waste prevention and circularity, including a measurable reduction in general and recycling waste generated. Where food is served, food-waste performance forms part of the assessment.	Waste per guest night/cover; total waste data; residual/general waste data; recycling/composting data; food-waste measurements; baseline comparison; waste contractor reports; reuse/refill systems; purchasing records; evidence of materials avoided.	
E8	The business demonstrates measurable positive outcomes for its employees resulting from its responsible-business activities. Outcomes must extend beyond the existence of policies or wellbeing programmes and demonstrate evidence of meaningful benefit.	Employee engagement or wellbeing survey results and trends; employee retention/progression data; training and development outcomes; documented programme results; year-on-year performance indicators.	
E9	The business demonstrates that sustainability performance is embedded in business	Three-year sustainability KPI trends where available; annual sustainability	

	decision-making. Performance is reviewed by senior management, significant underperformance is investigated and improvement actions are implemented.	performance reports; management-review records; sustainability dashboards; environmental action plans; completed improvement actions; investment decisions; budgets; corrective actions; evidence of management oversight.	
E10	The business demonstrates a measurable positive contribution to biodiversity conservation or ecosystem protection during the certification period. The outcome may be achieved on the property or beyond the property's physical boundaries, allowing businesses without gardens, grounds or direct access to natural habitats to demonstrate positive biodiversity outcomes through credible conservation partnerships, restoration projects, habitat protection, species-support initiatives or other appropriate biodiversity actions.	Biodiversity baseline and subsequent assessment; habitat area created, restored or protected; documented improvement in habitat condition; species monitoring; native planting results; removal/control of invasive species; biodiversity survey results; conservation partnership reports; quantified financial or in-kind contribution to a biodiversity project; project impact reports; evidence from conservation organisations; employee or guest participation where this contributes to a documented conservation outcome.	
E11	The business shall identify and assess the climate-related risks that could affect its people, guests, buildings, operations, essential resources and supply chain.	A documented climate-risk assessment or climate-resilience plan.	

10. Certification Validity and Recertification

Certification is valid for 12 months from the date of issue unless a different validity period is expressly stated on the certificate. Certification is subject to continued conformity with the scheme requirements.

Certification does not renew automatically. An organisation wishing to continue certification must complete the applicable recertification process before expiry. Recertification may include updated evidence, independent audit, review of previous non-conformities and surveillance outcomes, and a new certification review and decision.

11. Surveillance and Site Audits

FSG Certification may undertake surveillance during the certification period to confirm continued conformity. Surveillance may include requests for updated evidence, review of material changes, investigation of complaints, review of certification-mark use, remote verification or additional independent audit.

Every certified property will undergo an independent physical site audit at least once in each two-year period. FSG Certification or the independent monitoring provider may require an earlier or additional site audit where documentary evidence is insufficient, inconsistencies or risks are identified, significant changes have occurred, or further on-site verification is necessary.

During a site audit, the auditor may:

- interview relevant management and employees;
- inspect buildings, facilities, products and services within scope;
- review records, policies and procedures;
- corroborate evidence previously submitted;
- sample operational practices and relevant data.

The organisation must provide reasonable access to relevant areas, personnel and records. Where overnight accommodation is reasonably required for a multi-day site audit, the applicable arrangements and fees will be communicated in advance.

12. Non-Conformities and Corrective Action

Where a certification requirement is not met, the auditor will document the non-conformity and the objective evidence supporting the finding.

The applicant will be informed of any required corrective action and the timeframe for response. Corrective action must be supported by appropriate evidence and verified before closure where closure is required for certification.

Certification will not be granted or maintained where unresolved non-conformities prevent conformity with the applicable scheme requirements.

13. Suspension, Withdrawal and Reduction

FSG Certification may suspend, withdraw or reduce certification where, for example, an organisation:

- no longer meets applicable certification requirements;
- fails to resolve required corrective actions within the stated timeframe;
- refuses required surveillance or access for independent verification;
- provides false or misleading evidence;
- misuses the certification mark;
- makes materially misleading environmental or sustainability claims linked to the certification;
- undergoes a material change that affects the certified scope or conformity;
- seriously breaches the certification terms; or
- requests voluntary withdrawal.

Where certification is suspended, withdrawn or reduced, the organisation will be formally notified and must cease or amend use of the relevant certification mark in accordance with the Certification Mark Rules. FSG Certification will update its certification records and public register where applicable.

14. Complaints

Complaints may be submitted by applicants, certified organisations, consumers, employees, stakeholders or other interested parties in relation to certification activities, auditor conduct, use of certification marks, certified organisations or the impartiality and integrity of the certification process.

Complaints will be handled impartially and, wherever possible, by persons who are not directly involved in the matter complained about. Appropriate corrective action will be taken where a complaint is substantiated.

The current Complaints Procedure and contact route are published by FSG Certification QA Manual.

15. Appeals

An applicant or certified organisation may appeal a certification decision, including refusal of certification, the certification level awarded, suspension, reduction, withdrawal or refusal of recertification.

Appeals are considered by a person or panel independent of the original audit, review and certification decision. No person involved in the original audit, review or decision may decide the appeal. The appeal outcome and rationale will be documented and communicated to the appellant.

16. Certification Mark and Claims Rules

Certification authorises the organisation to use the applicable FSG Certification mark only within the certified scope and validity period and only at the level formally awarded.

- The mark may be used only by the certified organisation and for the certified property or scope.
- The mark must not be altered, adapted or used in a misleading manner.
- The mark must not imply that products, services, locations or activities outside the certified scope have been certified.
- The mark must not be used after expiry, suspension or withdrawal.

- Certification does not authorise broader environmental or sustainability claims that are not supported by the certification scope or other appropriate evidence.
- Certified organisations remain responsible for ensuring that environmental claims in their commercial communications comply with applicable consumer-protection legislation.

FSG Certification may require correction or removal of any use of the mark or related claim that is inaccurate, misleading, outside scope or inconsistent with the Certification Mark Rules.

17. Changes to Scheme Requirements

FSG Certification may revise certification requirements following periodic review, stakeholder consultation, regulatory or legislative change, technical developments, new evidence or recognised changes in good practice.

Material changes will be subject to appropriate governance and document control. Relevant certified organisations and applicants will be informed of material changes and, where appropriate, any implementation or transition arrangements.

18. Fees

Certification fees are structured by property size to support proportionate and fair access. Fees are exclusive of VAT.

Hotel rooms	Annual certification fee	Site audit fee
1–15	€450	€300
16–100	€900	€500
101–249	€1,500	€750
250+	€2,700	€900

The annual certification fee includes certification administration, independent third-party evaluation by Agent4Change, certification review and the certification decision process. Site-audit fees apply separately as indicated. Any additional travel, accommodation or exceptional audit costs will be agreed in advance where applicable.

Audit fees and auditor remuneration are not contingent on certification being granted or on the certification level achieved.

19. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information submitted during certification is treated as confidential and is accessible only to 21uthorized persons involved in the certification process, including the independent monitoring/audit provider and Reviewer/Decision Maker where necessary.

All persons involved in certification activities are subject to appropriate confidentiality obligations. Information will not be disclosed to other parties except where 21uthorized, necessary for certification, required by law, or required by a competent authority.

Personal data will be handled in accordance with applicable data-protection legislation and FSG Certification's data-protection and records-management procedures.

20. Impartiality and Related Organisations

FSG Certification actively identifies, assesses and manages risks to impartiality arising from ownership, governance, shared directors, commercial relationships, training or consultancy, personal relationships, auditor-client relationships and other interests that could influence or appear to influence certification activities.

FSG Certification Limited and Fifty Shades Greener Limited are separate legal entities. Fifty Shades Greener Limited provides sustainability training and education services. Purchase or completion of those services is not a prerequisite for certification and provides no preferential treatment or advantage.

Personnel involved in selling or delivering training or consultancy to an applicant shall not influence independent audit findings or certification decisions relating to that applicant.

21. Regulatory and Quality Framework

The scheme is designed to operate consistently with the certification-scheme requirements introduced by Directive (EU) 2024/825 on empowering consumers for the green transition, including publicly available scheme requirements, fair and non-discriminatory access, stakeholder consultation, independent third-party monitoring, procedures for non-compliance and suspension or withdrawal of the sustainability label.

FSG Certification's certification processes are designed and operated in alignment with the principles and applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17065. FSG Certification does not claim accreditation to ISO/IEC 17065 unless and until such accreditation is formally obtained.

The detailed scheme standards, Quality Assurance Manual, complaints and appeals procedures, and other public certification information should be read together where relevant.

Important

The certification mark confirms conformity with the published FSG Certification requirements within the certified scope and validity period. It must not be used to imply broader sustainability performance that has not been independently assessed or otherwise substantiated.