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Guests on Earth, An introduction to sustainability in hospitality

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This book is entitled *Sustainable Value Creation in Hospitality, Guests on Earth*, and you are probably wondering what exactly these words imply. In this introduction we briefly explain what we mean by hospitality and by sustainability. We also clarify why we believe that sustainability matters to hospitality, and why all those who work in this fascinating sector should behave like ‘guests on Earth’.

Hospitality is generally understood to be the art of making people feel welcome. Hospitality is demonstrated in private settings, as when we invite a friend to dine with us; in social settings, as when we relate to foreigners, and in commercial settings (Lashley, 2000). Restaurants, cafes, caterers, hotels and other forms of accommodation such as those offered by Airbnb, are all part of commercial hospitality. This book focuses specifically on commercial hospitality and, within this setting, on hotels and other forms of accommodation, even though several of its chapters will also prove useful to the food and beverage sector, including restaurants, cafes and caterers. Before addressing why it is important for hospitality to engage in sustainability and why therefore this book is useful for people wishing to join or already working in the hospitality sector, I would add that I hope this book will also be interesting for professionals working in the broader tourism industry for at least three reasons. First, because it discusses themes such as tourism transportation that are of immediate interest to the tourism industry in general. Second, because hotels and accommodations are essential components in any tourism package, and thus getting to know their operations better may be useful for all tourism professionals. And third, because of the so-called multiplier effect of hotels, or in other words the quite unique capacity of this sector to generate returns for a broader area and not only for the hotel premises itself. Take, for example, the labour and all goods, such as food and furniture, needed in a hotel. If labour and goods are sourced locally and paid fairly, this will have a positive socio-economic effect on the community surrounding the hotel. A vibrant community, in its turn, is attractive from a tourism perspective. Therefore, also in this respect, hotels are of interest to tourism developers and professionals.