{rokbox title=|Tourist at Isla de Los Micos (Monkey Island), Colombian Amazon.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Colombia/noticias/selloverde/isla-micos.jpg{/rokbox}

Tourist at Isla de Los Micos (Monkey Island), Colombian Amazon.

The Ministry of the Environment, Housing and Territorial Development and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism created the “Sello Ambiental Colombiano” (the Colombian Environment Seal) to promote the offer of ecological services.

The Colombian hotel industry begins its adhesion to this trend, which seeks to preserve the environment and undertakes the protection of nature. The country’s hotels may voluntarily request the seal, once they have adapted their infrastructure and carried out the accreditation process. Thus, Colombia now competes at the international level in the sustainable products market.

The measure, which was taken in the framework of the Plan Estratégico de Mercados Verdes, or Strategic Plan for Green Markets, arose not only as commitment to environmental sustainability, but also as a response to tourist interest in purchasing services from providers who manage their waste responsibly and do not attack the planet’s balance.

Hotels request the SAC certification voluntarily.

The Colombian Environment Seal is regulated by Resolution 1555 of 2005, and certifications are issued by an independent certification entity that also grants certifications for other types of goods and services.

The idea is to enable consumers and tourists to find verifiable, straightforward, precise information on the products they use and to have the companies involved use environmentally sustainable products and processes. In such a way, the demand and provision of products and services with minimum impact on the environment is fostered.

What does it mean to be a hotel with a green seal?

{rokbox title=|Green Seal Hotels take care of the environment.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Colombia/noticias/selloverde/nenufares.jpg{/rokbox}

Green Seal Hotels take care of the environment.

In implementing the Seal, the hotel industry obtains a competitive commercial strategy, since consumers perceive an added value that they may not find in companies that have not been certified.

Once hotels obtain the SAC certification and logo, it is clear that:

- Supplies and raw materials are used in environmentally sustainable way.
- The raw materials used do not harm the environment.
- Production processes use either less energy or energy from renewable sources (wind, solar, and the like), or both.
- They recycle their waste, reuse material, and select biodegradable products.
- They use recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable packaging, and in minimum quantities.
- They use clean technology or technology with relatively less impact on the environment.
- The best way for the final disposal of consumer waste is pointed out to customers.

A quality tourism brand, an environmental seal

{rokbox title=|The norm guides hotels in caring for the fauna and flora.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Colombia/noticias/selloverde/isla-micos1.jpg{/rokbox}

The norm guides hotels in caring for the fauna and flora.

In view of the many aspects concerning the care of nature, the Unidad Sectorial de Turismo Sostenible – USNTS (Sector Unit for Sustainable Tourism) was established to design and divulge technical sustainability norms for tourism services providers.

Tourism sector companies, tourists and members of the government participated in its creation.

The USNTS was created in 2005 and established Norm 002 to determine sustainability requirements for hotels, hostels, and similar institutions. The reference for developing the regulation is the Norma Técnica Colombiana 5133 (NTC 5133) (Colombian Technical Norm 5133). The three dimensions around which the regulation revolves refer to environmental, socio-cultural, and economic aspects.

The members of the technical committees are tourism sector representatives, academics, users (clients and tourists), and government delegates from the ministries of Environment and Trade.