

New hotel rating scheme: AFNOR Certification branches into hotel inspections

AFNOR Certification, France's leading certification authority, has received authorization to inspect hotels as part of the new hotel rating system, thereby stepping up support for players in the tourist industry in their pursuit for recognition.

AFNOR Certification, the leading certification and assessment body for systems, services, products and skills in France, offers the most widely known brand names in the market, including NF, European Ecolabel and AFAQ. AFNOR delivers over 500 different services. With national and international accreditation, AFNOR offers a real on-the-ground service with 13 French regional delegations and 27 offices across the five continents.

AFNOR Certification has forged true expertise in the tourist industry. Quality and respect for the environment ? the two new categories in the hotel ranking system ? underlie the recognition processes available to professionals, such as the Hotelcert quality of service certification, and the European Ecolabel ?Tourist Accommodation? environmental kitemark.

AFNOR Certification has just received approval from COFRAC (the only national accreditation body) to inspect hotels, from 1-star to 5-star establishments. Applying the same strict selection process used for its 1,400 auditors, AFNOR Certification has chosen inspectors with extensive knowledge and expertise in the hotel industry to carry out its inspections.

Review of the new hotel rating system

France, the world's leading tourist destination, is home to 30,000 hotels, 17,000 of which are ranked. Since early 2010, professionals have been invited to move into line with the new hotel ranking scheme. Over 240 criteria are now used to rank hotels, and a fifth star has just been added. The process is voluntary-based, since quality of service has become one of the scheme's main attractions.

Hotels wishing to apply for an inspection can be ranked according to a grid arranged into three sections:

- Facilities: surfaces, condition and cleanliness, room facilities, Wi-Fi and computer equipment, etc.
- Range of services open to customers: quality of information, reception, dining facilities?
- Accessibility and initiatives promoting sustainable development: accessibility for disabled people, energy conservation, waste management, and so on

After the inspection has been carried out according to these criteria, AFNOR Certification issues an inspection certificate giving its view based on the requested category (1 to 5 stars). The hotel sends its application complete with the certificate from AFNOR to the prefecture, which publishes the ranking.

For further information on the hotel ranking inspection scheme, contact Fabienne Bonin-Bree: +33 (0)1 41 62 62 96