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# Modernizing Lebanon's Classification System



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	ii
I. PURPOSE OF CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS .....	1
A. Typology of Systems .....	1
B. Recent Trends in Ratings Systems .....	3
II. LEBANON ANALYSIS .....	5
III. PROPOSED APPROACH FOR LEBANON .....	6
A. Focus of Rating System .....	6
B. Structural Characteristics of Classification System .....	6
IV. PROPOSED TYPOLOGY .....	9
A. Current Typology .....	9
B. Proposed Typology .....	9
V. CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS .....	12
A. Methodology .....	12
B. Introduction to Proposed Classification System .....	13
C. Proposed New Classification Standards .....	15
D. Classification Process .....	36
VI. CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST RESIDENCES .....	38
A. Methodology .....	38
B. Introduction to Proposed System .....	38
C. Proposed new Classification Standards for Tourist Residences .....	39
D. Classification Process .....	45
VII. TRANSITION PERIOD .....	46
A. Classification Team .....	46
B. Reclassifying Existing Hotels .....	46
C. Maintaining a Modern Rating System .....	47

ANNEX  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN  
DEVELOPING CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

Tourism regulations can have a significant impact on the development of a country's tourism industry. Among these, perhaps the most important regulations are those concerning the classification of hotels and other lodging establishments. The two main purposes of hotel ratings are to provide information to consumers when choosing a lodging and to encourage and guide investment in lodging properties.

Unfortunately current Lebanese regulations do not successfully meet either one of these needs, as they are seriously outdated, dating back to 1970 and earlier. A careful analysis of current tourism laws reveals a confusing array of tourist establishments, an "overclassification" of tourist establishments, an "overspecificity" in rating criteria, and a generally confusing rating system, signifying an urgent need to modernize the country's tourism regulatory framework .

### Structure and Focus of New Classification System

While there is no single "best" classification system for tourism properties, a review of international experience reveals important principles and trends that Lebanese stakeholders need to take into account in order to develop a new classification system that is efficient and productive.

Most countries in the developed world focus their classification efforts on hotels, with some also setting standards for some other lodging properties. It is recommended that Lebanon follow this practice and discontinue the rating of restaurants, bars, cabarets and other food and drink establishments. Unlike lodging ratings, food and beverage ratings do not serve a tourist purpose.

The SRI team also suggests a new typology for lodging establishments, consolidating the current *International Hotels* and *Tourist Hotels* into the *Tourist Hotel* category, and consolidating *Residence Hotels* and *Furnished Studios and Apartments* into *Tourist Residences*.

### Methodology for Developing New System

Drawing from other countries' experience in developing new classification systems, the design team developed the proposed system based on the following considerations:

- *International Classification Practices:* The highlight of which is a move toward including qualitative criteria in modern rating systems.

- *International Hospitality Trends:* A heavy emphasis on the quality and size of guest bedrooms over other hotel amenities.
- *Middle-Eastern Tastes:* These show a predilection for many amenities at the high-end categories.
- *Lebanese Conditions:* These require a need to combine infrastructure criteria to help guide new hotel construction and remodeling of new hotels, with quality criteria that can help maintain a quality product across all categories.

### System Overview

The system that is proposed is based on the Swiss classification system, with some quality factors borrowed from those of Scotland, England and South Africa, and some basic standards from France, Bahrain and the World Tourism Organization's specifications for standards in the Middle East. The Swiss system's main attraction is that it has a good balance between objective infrastructure criteria and quality factors. Moreover, its quality factors can be easily expanded as the Lebanese industry matures. The system categorizes hotels using the internationally recognized five-star rating system.

The standards were designed to be straightforward and transparent. Even the qualitative factors are carefully interpreted, and are assigned a clear weight within the overall evaluation criteria.

The system is composed of two parts. The first sets some basic standards according to hotel category focusing on basic hotel infrastructure. The second part consists of a point system that allows hotels to score points for amenities above the minimal standards, as well as for quality factors, such as the quality of hotel furniture and cleanliness of public premises. Hotels of all categories need to score a determined number of points in order to qualify for a particular rating. Hotels that do not meet the criteria of both parts are classified under the lower of the two categories.

The most significant proportion of weighting criteria is reserved for Guest Accommodations factors (bedrooms and bathrooms) which are assigned nearly 40 percent of the overall weight. Overall Building Characteristics account for 30 percent of possible points, Guest Leisure and Professional Services (work-out facilities, pools, gardens, and business and conference facilities) account for just over 20 percent of possible points, and Hotel Attention and Services (restaurants and bars, live entertainment and the availability of miscellaneous services such as express check-out and bed turndown) account for 10 percent of the weight.

The system was designed so as to not favor urban hotels over others and vice-versa, or business hotels over ones primarily geared toward leisure guests. It is not expected that even five-star hotels will be able to offer all the services and amenities described, but

instead it allows for hotels to offer varied products. It does assume, however, that high-end hotels will have certain facilities either geared for leisure or business clients. An urban five-star hotel, for instance, is not required to have a pool on the premises, since it is likely to make-up lost points by offering high-quality conference rooms. Lower category hotels are only expected to collect a fraction of the total number of possible points.

The proposed system for rating tourist residences is similar in structure to that of the hotels system, with the exception that no additional factors are evaluated beyond the minimal ones. In other words, tourist residences are only evaluated according to their minimum standards.

### **Process**

The classification process is designed to be conducted by an expert classification team with a thorough knowledge of the hospitality industry and its standards. This team should be willing to and capable of answering any kinds of informational questions regarding the new standards and their interpretation.

Most developed countries are now moving to contract out the inspecting services to consulting firms with a specialization in the area. In Lebanon, the benefits of following on a similar path would be substantial, and the SRI team believes that the Ministry of Tourism should consider taking this now best-practice approach. This concept is also strongly supported by the Lebanese private sector, which is interested in being inspected by a firm with an international reputation to facilitate the marketing of their properties to tour operators, travel agencies and individual tourists in the international market. The Ministry of Tourism should continue to have a strong role in the setting of the standards by which the private consulting firm will evaluate and rate tourist properties.

### **Applying and Modernizing the Proposed Standards**

The SRI team proposes providing existing hotels and tourism residences with a two-year transition period to adjust to the new standards, except for those related to the structural aspects of a building. Standards necessitating major adjustments in current buildings can be met within five years. New lodging establishments will be subject to the new standards immediately.

Tourism regulations should always be in a state of careful evolution, seeking to best meet the needs of a shifting industry. For this reason, it is recommended that, to the degree possible, the new standards be established under the regulatory authority of the Ministry of Tourism, rather than as legislation or decrees difficult to amend at a later time. The continued revision and improvement upon these proposed standards by the Ministry and the private sector will ensure that they stay current within a constantly evolving global industry.

## I. PURPOSE OF CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Almost every country with a tourism industry has some system for classifying/categorizing its hotels. The two main reasons for this are to:

- **Provide Information to Consumers.** Rating systems allow customers to make informed choices about where to stay by allowing them to make comparisons among tourist establishments. A good system will adequately differentiate the infrastructure and/or service to be expected in a two-star hotel, versus that to be expected in a four-star hotel. This is particularly important for tourists visiting a place for the first time who have no knowledge of hotels in that area. Travel agencies and operators also rely on hotel classification when putting together packages or guiding individual customers. Categorization systems whose main purpose is to provide this type of comparative information are often referred to as "informational systems."
- **Encourage and Guide Investment into Hotels.** Standards are often set to encourage the private sector to make investments in improving and maintaining the quality of the local hotel infrastructure. Developing countries in particular have had governments establish standards for what a five-star hotel should look like, so that investors interested in building hotels for international tourists will build an establishment according to international standards of excellence. In countries where standards are non-existent or antiquated, one finds a generally lower quality of infrastructure and/or service. Even in Europe, recent experience shows that where standards have been high, there has been a continuing interest on the part of managers and owners in maintaining high-quality properties. Categorization systems whose main purpose is to encourage investment into quality are often referred to as "developmental systems."

### A. Typology of Systems

#### 1. Private-Government

Classification systems worldwide vary in the degree to which they are private-sector or government controlled. The continuum of government-private involvement can be stylized as follows.

- **Government-Set Standards, Government Inspection:** In many countries, with France being the most important example, governments set the standards by which hotels and other tourist establishments are to be ranked, and have teams of government inspectors whose function is to provide an establishment with an initial rating and maintain some form of ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance with set criteria. Among these countries there is variation in the degree to which the private sector is consulted on the standards to be imposed.

- **Government-Set Standards, Private Sector Inspection:** In some countries, governments have the lead role in setting the categorization standards, but are not involved in the certification process. One type of such systems is where a government hires consultants to do the initial and ongoing inspections under its direction. This system allows the government to play a leading role in the monitoring process, while giving it the ability to hire private-sector experts with hospitality experience to perform the inspections. This eliminates the complication and expense of having a group of inspector-bureaucrats. A second type of system has governments leasing the rights of conducting the certification process to one or more companies that are allowed to do the inspecting according to government regulations. Such companies are either paid directly by the government according to the number of inspections performed or are given the right to collect a fee directly from the inspected establishments.
- **Industry/Association Standards and Inspection:** Some countries have experimented with giving the local hotel association the power to set and monitor classification standards. Like governments, associations can either do everything in-house, hire consultants or outsource the inspecting activities.
- **Private Sector Standards and Inspection:** Many countries, with the United States being the most important example, do not have any government involvement in the categorization or inspection of hotels. In such places private sector organizations or consulting firms, such as the American Automobile Association and Mobil in the United States, and Michelin in Europe, set their own criteria for categorizing hotels and conduct their own inspections. Given that these systems depend on their credibility, these organizations tend to have very fluid relations with the private sector. The sustainability of these systems hinges on the fact that hotels pay to be inspected and categorized by these credible organizations, many of which not only give their stamp of approval to the establishment but also market the inspected hotels in travel and hotel guides that they produce for public information.

## **2. Infrastructure-Service**

The areas on which classification systems are focused also vary a great deal between countries and even regions and cities within countries. The type of criteria that is used generally depends on the status and objective of the local tourism industry.

- **Infrastructure.** Traditionally, classification systems have focused mostly on benchmarking hotel infrastructure. Classic classification systems require five-star hotels to have one or more pools, three or more restaurants, rooms of a certain size, lobbies with art on the walls, and so on. Infrastructure standards are set, and "stars" are awarded by the type of facilities available. One benefit of this type of system is that such standards are relatively easy to inspect. Another is that it encourages the construction of hotels with a minimum standard of facilities, an

important issue in developing countries where developers are often uninformed about standard facilities in the rest of the world. Under such systems, large hotels tend to receive higher ratings than smaller hotels, most of which tend to be independently owned. These systems have traditionally been based on the stars system of classification, with hotels awarded one to four/five stars.

- **Service Quality.** A second type of criteria focuses on judging hotels according to the range and quality of service that they offer. These types of criteria have both objective and more subjective aspects to them. Objective standards include things such as the availability of 24-hour room service and the number of languages spoken by the reception staff. More subjective criteria can include the general attitude and helpfulness of the personnel, certain managerial practices and the concierge's knowledge of local restaurants. The main benefits of these systems is that they can highlight high-quality small hotels, and they can encourage an overall high-quality service in the industry. These types of systems can be based on the classic star system, with hotels displaying the highest quality of attention earning four/five stars, and those with the least earning only one. Another way in which such systems run is by high-quality establishments earning a particular type of ribbon, or a quality seal of approval from the inspecting organization, in addition to the star rating they receive according to their infrastructure.
- **Mixed.** Many systems now combine some infrastructure and some service criteria. One example is the Mexican systems which awards one to five stars depending on hotel facilities, and one to five diamonds depending on the quality of service. Spain is now incorporating quality criteria into its system. Hotels are categorized by stars that focus on infrastructure, but can also opt to be reviewed for service. Those who meet quality standards receive a "Q" for quality that can be displayed at their entrance and in their promotional literature.

## **B. Recent Trends in Ratings Systems**

As experience with standards grows, general lessons emerge regarding the proper focus and methods of classification systems. While a wide variety of systems exist across countries, the following trends appear to be prevailing.

- **Private/Public Partnerships.** According to most observers, private/public partnerships are set to become the norm in most countries. Traditional systems, in which government set the standards and inspected facilities, have been less popular as they are seen to be unresponsive to private sector needs and latest trends and even prone to corruption. In these systems, industry either tends to ignore government's long-term view or deliberately tries to undermine its efforts. As a result, government spends an inordinate amount of time trying to force the unwilling to comply with even basic standards. The net result is an overall decline in standards due to the fact that the inspecting personnel takes on a "policeman" approach to try to catch errant hotels doing something wrong. Not



enough emphasis is placed on reward and encouragement -- particularly when the industry views the government system as just another law which is policed by persons without the ability to add value.

The latest trend is for governments to create the environment in which classification can take place. Since it is in the national interests of a country to provide world-class standards to visiting tourists and businessmen, it is logical that government will need to create the necessary legislation or controlled environment in which classification can take place. Once government leaders/bureaucrats set the parameters of their expectations and goals, industry representatives and interest groups are invited to sit with them to create a realistic benchmark of prevailing industry standards. These are then compared with international norms and standards, and a compromise and win-win situation is started, which ultimately ends in the formulation of a national standard.

Most often, the government then lets the private sector play the leading role in the actual implementation and management of standards. This can occur by leasing the rights to specialized consultancies, quality management companies and auditing firms.

- **Move Toward Quality Standards.** There seems to be a growing concern for integrating quality factors into hotel classification worldwide. This results from several factors. First, there is a growing awareness that customers' ideal hotel stays depend to a great degree on the type of service that they receive, not just on the facilities available. Second, quality standards are a way to highlight some of the smaller, independent hotels that may not have all the rooms and facilities necessary to qualify for five-star rating, but may in fact provide a luxurious hospitality experience for travelers. Third, systems with a quality component generally meet the goal of helping hotels, particularly independents, learn about management processes and other practices that can improve their product and efficiency. Inspections under systems with quality standards tend to be carried out by individuals who can not only assess the quality of the establishment, but can also help the management reach the standards set. In this way, inspections are not so much policing operations as they are consultancies, with hotels benefiting from the expertise of the inspectors.

International experience with quality standards highlights the need for a very high level of expertise on the part of inspectors. In many cases, government bureaucracies are unable to maintain and train high-caliber individuals attuned to industry trends to perform this function. In such cases, governments either hire individual consultants to perform inspections, or lease the activity to private organizations with industry credibility and ability.

## II. LEBANON ANALYSIS

Current Lebanese regulations for tourism establishments are seriously outdated, dating back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in some instances even earlier. The most important of these is the September 1970 Decree No. 15598, which establishes a typology of tourist establishments and sets guidelines for their classification.

A careful analysis of current regulations reveals the following major problems.

*A Confusing Array of Tourist Establishments:* The current typology of tourist establishments specifies too many categories which are not clearly demarcated or responsive to industry developments over the past thirty years. The current differentiation between international hotels, tourist hotels, residence hotels, furnished apartments, motels, campgrounds and others is not particularly clear and needs to be revisited. In particular, there is a need to consolidate categories.

*An "Overclassification" of Tourist Establishments:* Current regulations establish the need for the Government of Lebanon to rate many tourist establishments that are not normally rated in the international scene. The most salient of these is the rating of Food and Drink establishments, which from a tourism perspective are not generally necessary to rate. The same can be said for pools, beach resorts campgrounds and other such properties which are currently regulated and rated by the Ministry of Tourism. By expending resources on these types of establishments, attention is diverted from hotels and furnished apartments, which are the backbone of the tourism industry and which should be carefully rated.

*An "Overspecificity" of Rules:* Many of the rules governing the classification are too specific, depriving properties of originality without necessarily guaranteeing quality. It is often better to set broader rules that can allow for a wider variation in styles and tastes.

*A Confusing Rating System:* The current hotel rating system with all its categories and subcategories (International, Four-Star A, Four-Star B, Three Star-A, etc.) is confusing for the consumer. The prospective new system should be easier to understand, based on the standard five-star system recognized by consumers worldwide.

### III. PROPOSED APPROACH FOR LEBANON

As highlighted above, there is no single "best" classification system for tourism properties. Instead, each country has to find the system that best addresses its tourism goals and the status of its industry. Nevertheless, a review of international experience reveals important principles and trends that Lebanese stakeholders need to take into account in order to develop a new classification system that is efficient and productive.

#### A. Focus of Rating System

##### *Lodging*

Most countries in the developed world focus their classification efforts on hotels, with some also setting standards for some other lodging properties. In Lebanon, the backbone of the tourism industry are hotels and furnished apartments, which together account for more than 95 percent of Lebanon's lodging offerings. As will be explained in Chapter IV below, hotel rating tends to be more exhaustive than ratings of furnished apartments, as hotels are by-and-large the lodging type used by first-time visitors to a country. Chapter IV will also put forth a new lodging typology that can set the regulatory structure for inns, motels and other underdeveloped lodging types.

##### *Food and Beverage Establishments*

It is recommended that Lebanon follow the practice of most developed countries and discontinue the rating of restaurants, bars, cabarets and other food and drink establishments. Unlike lodging ratings, food and beverage ratings do not serve a tourist purpose. Experience shows that, unlike hotels, tourists are not guided by ratings when choosing food and beverage establishments, instead, an initial "walk-in" can reveal the general quality of an establishment, or tourists can receive advice from a hotel concierge or other local sources. Moreover, given that expenses at any such establishment tend to be a fraction of lodging expenses, tourists do not develop the same negative reactions toward a country if they have a disappointing eating experience as when they have a disappointing experience with their lodging. Regulations should instead focus on hygiene and security measures, and on requiring restaurants to post their menu prices, which agencies other than the Ministry of Tourism should be in charge of monitoring.

#### B. Structural Characteristics of Classification System

##### *Use Public/Private Sector Collaboration*

It will be critical for the private sector to participate actively in the formation of the classification system. Private sector participation will be required not only in the design of the new system, but also once the system is implemented. Every classification system

needs to be constantly reviewed to make sure that it keeps pace with evolving market trends and customer tastes, and the private sector is generally more in tune with these industry changes than is government. One of the most significant problems with classification systems in some countries is that ratings become quickly outdated due to lack of periodic revision. This is the case with the current Lebanese system. Changes are often also necessary to improve specifications or procedures that may be too demanding, confusing or unnecessary.

More importantly, private sector involvement in the classification system will be crucial to achieve the necessary "buy-in" from hotels and furnished apartments. When the private sector feels that it has had a say in the regulatory framework under which it operates, and understands the purpose and use classification, it tends to cooperate with inspections, making them less prone to cheating and corruption. This is particularly important in voluntary systems where hotels may opt not to be classified if they fundamentally disagree with the classification system.

International experience shows that it is important for government to play a role in the setting of rules. Government can act as an objective party and have the aim of the good of the overall industry in mind. In Lebanon, it will be important for the government to help maintain the focus on customer needs for a simple and workable system that the tourist will understand and that will encourage owners to make investments, so as to build and maintain quality properties, regardless of how they are classified. Mexico and England provide two examples where the governments had to step in and be the catalyst for improving their respective classification systems (see Annex). Moreover, Lebanon has a tradition of government involvement in tourism classification, and it appears that all stakeholders expect it to maintain its leading role. Perhaps this is the reason why no private entity has sprung up to provide a hotel certification service.

### ***Include Service Quality Criteria along with Infrastructure Criteria***

As highlighted before, one of the major international trends in classification systems has been the introduction of service quality criteria into hotel classification (though not into furnished apartments, as pointed above). In terms of the system's informational function for consumers, research shows that the most important aspect for hotel guests is service, and that they associate "Five-Star" status to luxurious service more than with any other type of facilities. The developmental implication of service quality standards is that they encourage hotels to invest into workforce training and better management techniques. Any new system in Lebanon should therefore include service quality criteria.

The fact that many of Lebanon's hotels are smaller, non-brand hotels should also be an encouragement toward the introduction of service quality standards. Such hotels are often better positioned to compete on service, rather than on facilities. A classification system that encompasses level of service will highlight the smaller quality establishments that have highly trained workers that provide world-class service.

Infrastructure criteria should remain a key factor in classification. As many new hotels are being built, and establishments destroyed during the war are being rebuilt, it will be important to encourage construction according to the most current international standards. Many of the current rules in place are an impediment to contemporary construction and need to be eliminated or changed, while new standards need to be introduced. Classification standards will help encourage a higher quality product offering. Moreover, new classification standards will help encourage hotels that operated through the war, with minimal investment into their facilities over the last twenty years, to renovate. Finally, it is expected that with the construction of international hotels, many domestic hotels will seek to reposition themselves into the two and three-star markets. Sound infrastructure criteria will be needed in place to help such hotels identify their proper niche.

### *Utilize a High-Quality Inspection Team*

In order for a classification system to work, it needs to be credible, and in order for a system to be credible to the private sector, it needs to be implemented by objective inspectors that have a deep understanding of quality factors in the hotel industry. More and more, classification personnel are not seen so much as inspectors, but rather as consultants that can advise hotel owners and managers on current industry best practices. Having highly knowledgeable certification personnel is particularly important when it comes to judging service quality and other qualitative issues.

While in some cases, namely Scotland, government inspectors demonstrate a high degree of performance, in many instances that is not the case. The international trend is clearly toward outsourcing the inspecting and monitoring of hotels to the private sector. The best set-up generally is the outsourcing of inspections to a single organization, which is allowed to charge a government-stipulated fee for the inspection service. Often, the organization receives a subsidy from either the government or hotel association. Both government and relevant business associations maintain a watch over the inspecting institution's activities, suggesting changes and improvements to the process as necessary.

#### IV. PROPOSED TYPOLOGY

##### A. Current Typology

Currently, Lebanese lodging establishments are divided into two types:

- *Hotel Establishments:* These include, International Hotels, Tourism Hotels, Residence Hotels, Family Hotels, Furnished Apartments and Studios, and Boarding Houses. Of these, International Hotels are divided into A and B; Tourism Hotels and Residence Hotels are divided into one through four stars; and Family Hotels, Furnished Apartments and Studios are divided into three categories. Boarding Houses are not categorized. This typology is confusing, with little difference among some categories such as Residence Hotels and Furnished Apartments and Studios, and is unique to Lebanon, thus serving little informational purposes for foreign tourists, the core of the country's industry.
- *Collective and Social Tourism Establishments:* These include, Chalets, which are classified into three categories, Tourist Complexes, which are classified similar to Tourism Hotels into four categories, and Equipped Camps and Youth Clubs, which are not categorized. This typology is rather dated, not including some existing lodging types such as "Bed & Breakfasts" now popular internationally, and "overspecifying" each category, thus limiting originality in product offering. The necessity of separating these lodging types from "Hotel Establishments" above is also unclear.

##### B. Proposed Typology

The new typology consolidates several existing categories and modernizes it by introducing new lodging types, and categorizes only the most important lodging types that are generally subject to classification abroad. The distinction between Hotel Establishments and Collective and Social Tourism Establishments is dropped.

###### 1. Tourist Hotels

*Definition: A commercial lodging establishment that offers rooms and/or suites for a day, week, month but that does not constitute a permanent residence for guests. It provides services according to its category, including food and beverage service, cocktail lounges, entertainment, conference facilities, business services, shops and recreational services. Tourist Hotels are generally in operation throughout the year, but a hotel can be classified as "Seasonal" if it does not operate for nine or more months of the year.*

This new definition of tourist hotels incorporates current International Hotel and Tourist Hotels, which is consistent with international practices. Categories for ratings are

simplified to the standard five stars rating system which is internationally recognized, without segmentation into "A" and "B."

## 2. Tourist Residences

*Definition: A commercial lodging establishment which operates permanently or seasonally and is comprised of furnished apartments that include one or more bedrooms, a living room, a cooking area and a bathroom, offered for hire for a night, a week or a month. Studios may combine sleeping and living areas into one room. Tourist Residences generally offer less services than hotels.*

This new definition incorporates the current "Residence Hotel" and "Furnished Apartment" categories. This term is standard in European countries such as France and Switzerland, and corresponds to the U.S. term for tourist "Apartment." Tourist Residences are classified into the standard five stars categories, although only objective criteria centered on facilities are used, without the qualitative assessment that is done for hotels, as is the world-wide practice.

## 3. Other Lodging Types

Most of these lodging types are not yet developed in Lebanon, with the exception of a very few motels, inns and resorts--less than ten between all categories--all of which are generally located outside of Beirut. Given the limited product offering of these types of establishments, it is too early to develop specific criteria for categorizing each of these lodging types. If categorizing is desired, this can be based on the hotel standards, with a focus on bedroom/bathroom standards.

Some generally recognized definitions of other lodging types are:

- *Bed & Breakfast:* Usually smaller commercial establishments emphasizing a more personal relationship between operators and guests lending to an "at home" feeling. Guest units tend to be individually decorated. Rooms may not include some modern amenities such as television and telephones, and may have a shared bathroom. Usually owner-operated, with a common room or parlor, separate from the innkeeper's quarters, where guests and operators can interact during evening and breakfast hours. Evening office closures are normal. A continental or full, hot breakfast is served and is included in the rate.
- *Condominium:* A limited service establishment that primarily offers guest accommodations that are privately owned by individuals and available for rent. These can include apartment-style units or homes. A variety of room styles and decor treatments as well as limited housekeeping is typical. May have off-site registration.
- *Cottage (Chalet):* A limited service establishment that primarily provides individual housing units that may offer one or more separate sleeping rooms, a

living room and cooking facilities. Usually incorporate rustic decor treatments and are geared toward vacationers.

- *Inn (Auberge):* A moderate service establishment, similar in definition to a Bed & Breakfast, but usually larger in size, providing more spacious public areas and offering a dining facility that serves at least breakfast and dinner. May be located in a rural or urban area.
- *Lodge:* A moderate service establishment of typically two or more stories with all facilities in one building, and of rustic decor, generally located in vacation, ski or other sporting areas. Usually has food and beverage service.
- *Motel:* A limited service establishment with guest accommodations similar to hotels but offering limited public or recreational facilities. Provides ample parking as it is usually geared toward the travelling guest.
- *Resort:* A full service establishment geared toward vacation travelers. It is a destination offering varied food and beverage outlets, specialty shops, meeting or conference facilities, entertainment and extensive recreational facilities for special interests such as golf, tennis, skiing and water sports. Assorted social and recreational programs are typically offered in season and a variety of package plans are usually available including meal plans incorporated into the rates. Larger resorts may offer a variety of guest accommodations.
- *Historic:* An establishment in a restored structure built prior to 1920, reflecting the ambiance of yesteryear and the surrounding area. Antique furnishings complement the overall decor of the property. Rooms may lack some modern amenities and may have shared bathrooms.

Current Lebanese definitions for Boarding Houses, Equipped Camps and Youth Clubs remain, although it is not clear how extensive are their offerings. These lodging types are probably not worth categorizing, even if their number expands.

الجمهورية اللبنانية  
مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية  
مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام



## V. CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS

### A. Methodology

The proposed system is the product of thorough research and evaluation of over a dozen different systems world-wide. Among the systems evaluated were those of France, England, Scotland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Mexico, the United States, Canada, Bahrain, Dubai, Syria, Jordan, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as general World Tourism Organization recommendations for hotel classification standards worldwide, and standards specifically targeted to the Middle East.

Drawing from other countries' experience in developing new classification systems, the design team developed the proposed system based on the following criteria:

- ***International Classification Practices:*** The most important trend in this area is the marked move toward the assessment of quality factors for grading, so as to encourage the native hospitality industry to invest and produce a quality product. A second important trend is the shift from detailing specific requirements (i.e. porcelain bidets) to qualitative goals (i.e. high quality furnishings). This allows more freedom for builders to be creative and allows for a more varied product offering between hotels. For a more detailed discussion of these trends please see Chapter II.
- ***International Hospitality Trends:*** The hospitality industry has significantly evolved since the current Lebanese standards were developed thirty years ago. Consumer tastes have changed, and with them the criteria for assigning property ratings. In broad terms, consumers have demonstrated an emphatic concern for the quality of their accommodations --bedrooms and bathrooms-- over other criteria when choosing a place to stay, with less emphasis on hotel size, quantity of restaurants or shops, and other factors that used to drive hotel construction of all categories thirty years ago. Other important trends are the increasing concern for workout gym facilities for younger travelers and businesspeople, and a predilection for rooms with all modern amenities, since that is where guests tend to spend most of their time.
- ***Middle-Eastern Tastes:*** The proposed system takes considerable concern to meet the tastes of Lebanon's most significant traveling market. Middle-Eastern tastes vary somewhat from that of guests from Europe, in that hotel development in the region has followed after the American predilection for large building with many amenities, particularly when considering hotels in the upper categories. For this reason, hotels in the upper categories are given extra points for facilities such as high-end restaurants, tennis courts, massage rooms and movie theaters, which are not always rewarded under European ratings criteria.

➤ **Lebanese Conditions:** Perhaps the most important factors when developing standards are the needs and condition of the country's hospitality industry. First, Lebanon's hotels currently show a wide variety of quality, even within specific categories. For this reason it is important to introduce some qualitative criteria that will encourage the industry to remodel and maintain a high-quality product across all categories and product offerings. Second, there is currently a large amount of new hotel construction and remodeling of existing hotels. For this reason, it is still important to set infrastructure criteria so that construction is based on current international market trends and Lebanon's desired position in the global market. The proposed rating criteria will help do this by, for example, place a significant emphasis on guest accommodations.

Third, utilizing international standards for what constitutes a five-star or a three-star hotel will hopefully improve the product offering at each category, so that Lebanon's price/value ratio will improve. While Lebanon continues to target the high-end and medium-high end of the tourism market, travelers and analysts point out that a \$180/night room in Beirut is of lower quality than a similarly priced room in other parts of the region. New standards will hopefully improve the quality of the product offering while maintaining the country's high average tourist expenditures.

Fourth, the system that is proposed is based on the Swiss classification system, with some quality factors borrowed from those of Scotland, England and South Africa, and some basic standards from France, Bahrain and the World Tourism Organization's specifications for standards in the Middle East. The Swiss system's main attraction is that it has a good balance between objective infrastructure criteria and quality factors. Moreover, its quality factor can be easily expanded as the Lebanese industry transitions forward. It was the judgement of the design team that Lebanon's hotels should not be suddenly required to meet the same quality standards as those of leading tourism nations. This proposed system meets this important criteria. And as mentioned, its quality criteria can be expanded upon once Lebanese hotels are more ready in a few years' time.

Finally, the proposed system is straightforward and transparent. Even the qualitative factors are carefully interpreted, and are assigned a clear weight in the overall criteria. In conversations with industry stakeholders throughout Lebanon, transparency was raised as a key factor to consider for a new rating system.

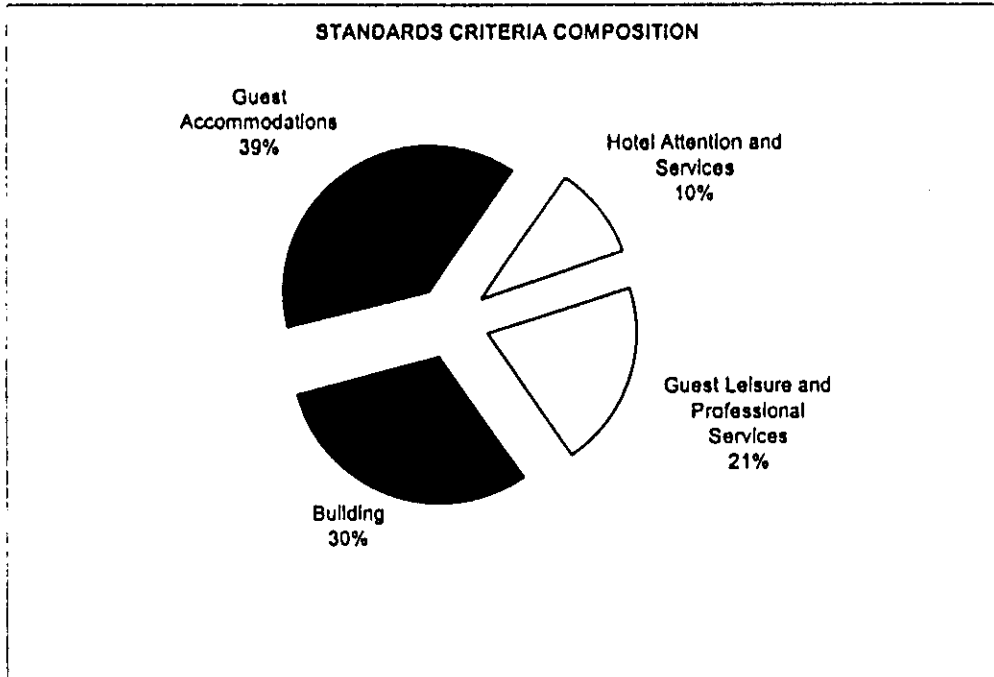
## **B. Introduction to Proposed Classification System**

The proposed classification system is composed of two parts. The first sets some basic standards according to star-rating. These standards are clear and objective, and it is the team's recommendations that they should be followed as closely as possible.

The second part consists of a point system that allows hotels to score points for amenities above the minimal standards, as well as for quality factors, such as the furniture quality and cleanliness of public premises. Hotels of all categories need to score a determined number of points in order to qualify for a particular rating.

As the chart below illustrates, the most significant proportion of weighting criteria is reserved for Guest Accommodations factors --bedrooms and bathrooms-- with nearly 40 percent of the weight, followed by factors related to the overall building, including its overall appearance and upkeep, with 30 percent of the weight. Guest Leisure and Professional Services includes work-out facilities, pools, gardens, as well as business and conference facilities, its weight is just over 20 percent. Finally, Hotel Attention and Services encompasses restaurants and bars, live entertainment and the availability of miscellaneous services such as express check-out and bed turndown.

The system was designed so as not to favor urban hotels over others and vice-versa, or business hotels over ones primarily geared toward leisure guests. It is not expected that even five-star hotels will be able to offer all the services and amenities described, but instead it allows for hotels to offer varied products. It does assume, however, that these types of hotels will have certain facilities either geared for leisure or business clients. An urban five-star hotel, for instance, is not required to have a pool on the premises, instead it only loses a few possible points. Such a hotel, however, is likely to make-up those points by offering high-quality conference rooms. Lower category hotels are only expected to collect a fraction of the total number of possible points.



**C. Proposed New Classification Standards**

The following table details minimal standards that all hotels should meet, according to each category. These standards should be meticulously enforced. Exemptions should generally not be made.

<b>MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS</b>					
	<b>**** Luxury</b>	<b>**** First Class</b>	<b>*** Middle Class</b>	<b>** Comfortable</b>	<b>*Simple</b>
<b>SECURITY</b>					
<b>General Security Standards and Procedures</b>	<p>The hotel has a security plan containing the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A 24/24 alarm plan with internal EMERGENCY telephone numbers is posted.</li> <li>2. A member of the staff should be appointed as security officer to coordinate all aspects of security and encourage vigilance among the staff.</li> <li>3. The book of tasks of the person in charge of security is complete and is signed by the latter.</li> <li>4. The hotel assistants are informed about the security measures.</li> <li>5. The hotel entrances are controlled and locked during the night.</li> <li>6. Each window overlooking a common walkway or in a ground-floor room must be equipped with a functional locking mechanism.</li> </ol>				
<b>Night Service</b>	A night concierge at the disposition of the guests, all night long.	A night concierge at the disposition of the guests or a collaborator joined directly from outside or inside all night long.	An assistant joined at any time by phone/buzzer from outside or inside (should reside at the hotel).	An assistant joined at any time by phone/buzzer from outside or inside (should reside at the hotel).	An assistant joined at any time by phone/buzzer from outside or inside (should reside at the hotel).

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	**** Luxury	**** First Class	*** Middle Class	** Comfortable	* Simple
<b>Minimal Fire Security Rules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There must be operational, single-station smoke detectors in each guest unit, regularly maintained and tested.</li> <li>From each guest unit there must be two separate means of escape to emergency exits with clearly marked signs and free from obstruction. The exits and halls must be equipped with security lighting, which must be powered by permanent energy sources/generators.</li> <li>There should be a proper type and amount of fire fighting equipment such as hose reels, portable fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems, depending on the area. Equipment must be available on every level of the building. It must be serviced regularly and staff should be trained in its use.</li> <li>Notices in all bedrooms and public areas instructing guests as to what they should do and where they should go in case of a fire or other emergency.</li> <li>Stairs and enclosed hallways must have smoke vents. The ventilation system must be controlled by an automatic fire detection system.</li> <li>All constructions and facilities must be made of incombustible materials or at least materials covered with incombustible coating, according to reasonable common industry standards.</li> </ol>				
<b>General Guest Protection</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A first-aid kit should be available.</li> <li>All sockets for electric shavers should have a clear indication of voltage.</li> </ol>				
<b>Employee Welfare</b>	<p>The establishment proprietor and management should follow all labor laws and regulations applied in Lebanon concerning staff welfare, insurance and indemnities.</p>				
<b>Posting of Prices/ Classification</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All establishments must post their classification and the prices of all of their services in a clear sign in the reception area. Prices must be in Arabic and English or French, with all taxes and service charges included.</li> <li>Prices must specify rates for singles, doubles, junior suites, suites and other room types, as well as variations depending on the number of people.</li> <li>Posting should mention the breakfast price if not included.</li> <li>A detailed bill must be presented to the customer for payment.</li> </ol>				

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	***** Luxury	**** First Class	*** Middle Class	** Comfortable	* Simple
<b>PUBLIC AREAS</b>					
<b>Front Office Service</b>	Polyglot reception service available 24/24 hours for reception, information and door keeping services.	Polyglot reception service available 18/24 hours for reception, information and door keeping services.	Polyglot reception service available 14/24 hours for reception and information.	Recognizable reception service.	Recognizable reception service.
<b>Hotel Entrance</b>	1. Independent. Separate from hotel restaurant or other establishment. 2. Separate service entrance.	1. Independent. Separate from hotel restaurant or other establishment. 2. Separate service entrance.	1. Independent. Separate from hotel restaurant or other establishment. 2. Separate service entrance.	Independent. Separate from hotel restaurant or other establishment.	Independent. Separate from hotel restaurant or other establishment.
<b>Minimum Reception Halls Size</b>	60m <sup>2</sup>	50m <sup>2</sup>	40m <sup>2</sup>	30m <sup>2</sup>	20m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Temperature</b>	Heating or cooling system that maintains comfortable temperature throughout the year in common areas.				
<b>Bathrooms</b>	Two WC (men and women's) and two sinks on the same or one level from reception area.	Two WC (men and women's) and two sinks on the same or one level from reception area.	Two WC (men and women's) and two sinks on the same level or one level from reception area.	-	-
<b>Elevators</b>	1. For buildings of more than two levels (including ground floor). 2. Service elevator.	For buildings of more than three levels (including ground floor).	For buildings of more than four levels (including ground floor).	For buildings of more than five levels (including ground floor).	-

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	<b>***** Luxury</b>	<b>**** First Class</b>	<b>*** Middle Class</b>	<b>** Comfortable</b>	<b>* Simple</b>
<b>Phone Booths</b>	Closed and soundproofed phone booth at the disposal of clients.	Closed and soundproofed phone booth at the disposal of clients.	Closed and soundproofed phone booth at the disposal of clients.	1. Closed and soundproofed phone booth at the disposal of clients. 2. One booth per floor (unless all floors have phone).	1. Closed and soundproofed phone booth at the disposal of clients. 2. One booth per floor (unless all floors have phone).
<b>Parking Lots &amp; Garages (each space =10m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	One parking space per three rooms.	One parking space per four rooms.	One parking space per five rooms.	-	-
<b>GUEST ROOM</b>					
<b>Minimum number or rooms</b>	15	15	15	10	10
<b>Dimension (including hall)</b>	At least 80% of the rooms should correspond to the minimum sizes: -double room 25m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 6m <sup>2</sup> -single room 20m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 5m <sup>2</sup>	At least 80% of the rooms should correspond to the minimum sizes: -double room 20m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 5m <sup>2</sup> -single room 15m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 4m <sup>2</sup>	At least 80% of the rooms should correspond to the minimum sizes: -double room 15m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 4m <sup>2</sup> -single room 11m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 3m <sup>2</sup>	At least 80% of the rooms should correspond to the minimum sizes: -double room 12m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 3.5m <sup>2</sup> -single room 9m <sup>2</sup> and bathroom 2.5m <sup>2</sup>	At least 80% of the rooms should correspond to the minimum sizes: -double room 12m <sup>2</sup> -single room 9m <sup>2</sup>

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	**** Luxury	**** First Class	*** Middle Class	** Comfortable	*Simple
<b>Suites</b>	Five percent of total number of rooms, consisting of two separate areas (or rooms) of at least 48m <sup>2</sup> (including bathroom).	-	-	-	-
<b>Minimum Number of Handicap Accessible Rooms</b>	Minimum 1 for every 35 rooms + 1 for each additional 25 rooms.	Minimum 1 for every 35 rooms + 1 for each additional 25 rooms.	Minimum 1 for every 35 rooms + 1 for each additional 25 rooms.	-	-
<b>Arrangement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed: doubles at least 140 cm wide; singles at least 110 cm wide</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. Desk with chair and lamp</li> <li>5. One arm chair per bed</li> <li>6. One bedside table or shelf per bed</li> <li>7. Closet</li> <li>8. Cloakroom or hat-peg</li> <li>9. Suitcase carrier</li> <li>10. Full mirror (about 40x100 cm)</li> <li>11. Radio</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed: doubles at least 140 cm wide; singles at least 110 cm wide</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. Desk with chair and lamp</li> <li>5. One arm chair/ bed</li> <li>6. One bedside table or shelf per bed</li> <li>7. Closet</li> <li>8. Cloakroom or hat-peg</li> <li>9. Suitcase carrier</li> <li>10. Full mirror (about 40x100 cm)</li> <li>11. Radio</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed: doubles at least 140 cm wide; singles at least 110 cm wide</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. Desk with chair and lamp</li> <li>5. One seat / bed</li> <li>6. One bedside table or shelf per bed</li> <li>7. Closet</li> <li>8. Cloakroom or hat-peg</li> <li>9. Suitcase carrier</li> <li>10. Full mirror (about 40x100 cm)</li> <li>11. Radio</li> <li>12. Remote control</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed: doubles at least 140 cm wide; singles at least 110 cm wide</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. One seat / bed</li> <li>5. One bedside table or shelf per bed</li> <li>6. Closet</li> <li>7. Suitcase carrier</li> <li>8. Mirror</li> <li>9. Wastepaper basket</li> <li>10. Drinking water</li> <li>11. Documentation about the hotel in Arabic/English</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed: doubles at least 140 cm wide; singles at least 110 cm wide</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. One seat / bed</li> <li>5. One bedside table or shelf per bed</li> <li>6. Closet</li> <li>7. Wastepaper basket</li> <li>8. Drinking water</li> <li>9. Price list according to the decree about price indication in Arabic/English</li> </ol>



**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	<b>**** Luxury</b>	<b>**** First Class</b>	<b>*** Middle Class</b>	<b>** Comfortable</b>	<b>* Simple</b>
	<p>12. Remote-control color TV</p> <p>13. Cable/Satellite reception</p> <p>14. Alarm clock</p> <p>15. Wastepaper basket</p> <p>16. Bag for the guests' dirty linen</p> <p>17. Drinking water</p> <p>18. Sewing kit</p> <p>19. Shoe polish utensils</p> <p>20. Stationary</p> <p>21. Documentation about the hotel in Arabic/English</p> <p>22. Price list according to the decree about price indication in Arabic/English</p>	<p>12. Remote control color TV</p> <p>13. Cable/Satellite reception</p> <p>14. Alarm clock</p> <p>15. Wastepaper basket</p> <p>16. Bag for the guests' dirty linen</p> <p>17. Drinking water</p> <p>18. Sewing kit on demand</p> <p>19. Shoe polish utensils on demand</p> <p>20. Stationary</p> <p>21. Documentation about the hotel in Arabic/English</p> <p>22. Price list according to the decree about price indication in Arabic/English</p>	<p>color TV</p> <p>13. Alarm clock</p> <p>14. Wastepaper basket</p> <p>15. Bag for the guests' dirty linen</p> <p>16. Sewing kit on demand</p> <p>17. Drinking water</p> <p>18. Stationary</p> <p>19. Documentation about the hotel in Arabic/English</p> <p>20. Price list according to the decree about price indication in Arabic/English</p>	<p>12. Price list according to the decree about price indication in Arabic/English</p>	

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	**** Luxury	**** First Class	*** Middle Class	** Comfortable	* Simple
<b>Doors</b>	1. Each door leading to hallway must have a primary lock and a secondary lock. Primary lock permits a guest to enter unit using some form of key and allows the door to be locked while unit is occupied and when guest leaves unit. Pass keys assigned to appropriate staff member will function to operate only these locks. Secondary locks are for guest privacy, keys will not be provided to general staff. 2. Each door must have a viewport. 3. Doors leading to connecting guest units or maintenance corridors must be equipped with a deadbolt lock, or similar device.				
<b>Temperature Control</b>	Central heating and air-conditioning. Quiet units with controls in each room.	Central heating and air-conditioning. Quiet units with controls in each room.	Efficient heating and air-conditioning in all room. Ability to maintain room temperature between 18 and 23C.	Efficient heating and air-conditioning in all rooms. Ability to maintain room temperature between 18 and 23C.	Efficient heating. Fans may be available to guests on demand.
<b>Safe Boxes/Security</b>	Individual safe in room or in a separate premise designed for that purpose.	Individual safe in room or in a separate premise designed for that purpose.	Safe at reception.	Safe at reception.	Safe at reception.
<b>Habitability</b>	1. Sound proofed floor covering, windows and walls. 2. Ability to darken the room.	1. Sound proofed floor covering, windows and walls. 2. Ability to darken the room.	1. Sound proofed floor covering, windows and walls. 2. Ability to darken the room.	Ability to darken the room.	Ability to darken the room.

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	<b>**** Luxury</b>	<b>**** First Class</b>	<b>*** Middle Class</b>	<b>** Comfortable</b>	<b>* Simple</b>
<b>Telephone</b>	<p>1. Telephone with direct line in all rooms, as well as a telephone switchboard. 24/24 hours.</p> <p>2. Answering machine (voice mailbox).</p>	<p>1. Telephone in all rooms and a telephone switchboard manned 24/24 hours, or direct lines and a telephone switchboard manned 16/24, with night person awakened upon calls.</p> <p>2. Answering machine (voice mailbox).</p>	<p>Telephone in all rooms and a telephone switchboard manned 14/24, with night person awakened upon calls.</p>	<p>A public booth for every 25 rooms, without private telephone. At least one public phone with emergency numbers accessible during emergencies at the reception office.</p>	<p>A public cabinet for every 30 rooms, without private telephone. At least one public phone with emergency numbers accessible during emergencies at the reception office.</p>
<b>Linen Replacement</b>	<p>1. Sheets/slip covers and pillow cases changed daily or upon the guest's demand.</p> <p>2. Bath and toilet linen daily or upon the guest demand.</p>	<p>1. Sheets/slip covers and pillow cases changed 3 times per week or upon the guest's demand.</p> <p>2. Bath and toilet linen changed daily or upon the guest demand.</p>	<p>1. Sheets/slip covers and pillow cases changed 2 times per week or upon the guest's demand.</p> <p>2. Bath and toilet linen daily or upon the guest demand.</p>	<p>1. Sheets/slip covers and pillow case once per week or upon the guest's demand.</p> <p>2. Bath and toilet linen every 2 days or upon the guest demand.</p>	<p>1. Sheets/slip covers and pillow case once per week or upon the guest's demand.</p> <p>2. Bath and toilet linen 2 times/week or upon the guest demand.</p>
<b>Laundry Service</b>	In by 9 am, returned	In by 9 am, returned	Returned within 24	-	-

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	<b>**** Luxury</b> by 6 pm.	<b>**** First Class</b> by 6 pm.	<b>*** Middle Class</b> hours.	<b>** Comfortable</b>	<b>*Simple</b>
<b>BATHROOMS</b>					
<b>Arrangement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All rooms with bath or shower/WC (a maximum of 25% with only a shower/WC)</li> <li>Shower curtains/sliding doors</li> <li>Two washstands or a double washstand one or one big washstand with a big toilet table</li> <li>One light over sink</li> <li>One razor outlet</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All rooms with bath or shower/WC</li> <li>Shower curtains/sliding doors</li> <li>One light over sink</li> <li>One razor outlet</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ninety percent of rooms with bath or shower/WC</li> <li>Shower curtains/sliding doors</li> <li>Bath or shower with WC per floor for rooms with no bath or shower/WC</li> <li>Light over sink and razor outlet for private and public bathrooms</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fifty percent of rooms with bath or shower/WC</li> <li>Shower curtains/sliding doors</li> <li>Rooms without bath or shower/WC with hot and cold water, toilet linen, soap</li> <li>One bath or one shower per floor for every 20 beds without bath or shower</li> <li>One WC per floor (separated bath ) for every 10 beds without WC</li> <li>Light over sink and razor outlet for private and public bathrooms</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hot and cold water in all rooms, toilet linen, soap</li> <li>One bath or one shower per floor for 20 beds without bath or shower</li> <li>One WC per floor (separated bath ) for every 10 beds without WC</li> <li>Light over sink and razor outlet for private and public bathrooms</li> </ol>
<b>Items</b>	1. Bathrobe (in the	1. Bathroom rug	1. Bathroom rug	1. Bathroom rug	1. Toilet linen

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	<b>**** Luxury</b>	<b>**** First Class</b>	<b>*** Middle Class</b>	<b>** Comfortable</b>	<b>* Simple</b>
	2. Bathroom rug 3. Bath linen 4. Toilet linen 5. Wash cloth 6. Cosmetic articles (e.g. shower cap, nail file, cotton tips) 7. Hair dryer 8. Soap 9. Bubble bath 10. Shampoo 11. Paper tissue 12. Toilet paper with spare roll 13. Sanitary bags 13. Waste basket	2. Bath linen 3. Toilet linen 4. Wash cloth 5. Cosmetic articles (e.g. shower cap, nail file, cotton tips) 6. Hair dryer 7. Soap 8. Bubble bath 9. Shampoo 10. Paper tissue 11. Toilet paper with spare roll 12. Sanitary bags 13. Waste basket	2. Bath linen 3. Toilet linen 4. Hair dryer 5. Soap 6. Shampoo 7. Paper tissue 8. Toilet paper with spare roll 9. Sanitary bags 10. Waste basket	2. Bath linen 3. Toilet linen 4. Soap 5. Shampoo 6. Paper tissue 7. Toilet paper with spare roll 8. Sanitary bags 9. Waste basket	2. Soap 3. Toilet paper with spare roll 4. Sanitary bags 5. Waste basket

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	**** Luxury	**** First Class	*** Middle Class	** Comfortable	*Simple
<b>FOOD AND DRINK SERVICES</b>					
<b>Breakfast Service</b>	Breakfast buffet or equivalent offer in the dining room, or breakfast menu until at least 10:30 am, and <i>obligatory</i> : Continental breakfast service in rooms.	Breakfast buffet or equivalent offer in the dining room, or breakfast menu until at least 10:00 am, and <i>obligatory</i> : Continental breakfast service in rooms.	Breakfast buffet or equivalent offer in the dining room, or breakfast menu until at least 10:00 am, and continental breakfast service in rooms.	Continental breakfast served in room, the dining room or in the restaurant until at least 10:00 am.	Continental breakfast served in room, the dining room or in the restaurant until at least 10:00 am.
<b>Drinks Service</b>	24 hour room service and a mini-bar in 100% of the rooms.	Room service 16/ 24 hours, and a mini-bar in 100% of the rooms.	Room service 16/ 24 hours, and a mini-bar in 100% of the rooms, or a vending machine.	-	-
<b>Hotel Dining</b>	Two different restaurants at the establishment, at least one of high quality.	One restaurant available.	-	-	-

**MINIMAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST-CLASS HOTELS**

	**** Luxury	**** First Class	*** Middle Class	** Comfortable	* Simple
<b>FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO GUESTS</b>					
<b>Leisure Facilities</b>	Guest access to high quality exercise facilities. In Beirut it could be off-premises.	Guest access to exercise facilities. In Beirut it could be off-premises.			
<b>Business Center</b>	Fax, telephone, internet, computer, printer and photocopier available to guests. At least one.	Fax, telephone, internet, computer, printer and photocopier available to guests. At least one.			
<b>Restaurant</b>	At least one.	At least one.	-	-	-
<b>Bar</b>	At least one.	At least one.	-	-	-
<b>Meeting/Conference Room</b>	At least two.	At least one.	-	-	-

Once a hotel meets the minimum standards detailed above, it is subject to an evaluation according to the point-scheme outlined below. For example, a hotel that meets the minimum standards for a four-star category would have to be evaluated according to the criteria below to see whether it adds up enough points to actually qualify for four-star category. If it does not meet the minimum number of points that a four-star hotel should have (115), it cannot be considered a four-star hotel.

Notice that under many evaluation criteria a hotel may be assigned negative points (-1). These negative points are subtracted from the overall number of positive points earned before arriving at a hotel's actual point total.

<b>GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS</b>		
Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
<b>I. BUILDING</b>		
<b>CONDITION OF BUILDING</b>		
View/Impression from outside:		External appearance of building will be influenced by the overall maintenance standards. Best marks should be reserved for buildings where paintwork, windows and roof are in good state of maintenance and repair. Attractive architectural features and decorations. Clear, clean signs. Poor or negative mark for poor maintenance, such as flaking paint, illegible signs, etc.
Facades	-1/+1/+2/+3/+4	
Balconies	-1/+1/+2/+3/+4	
Shutters and stores	-1/+1/+2/+3/+4	
Hotel entrance	-1/+1/+2/+3/+4	
<b>LOUNGES, RESTAURANTS AND OTHER COMMON SPACES</b>		
Lounges:		Excellent marks for attractive decor, quality of rugs/furniture/curtains, welcoming ambiance, outstanding maintenance and spotless cleanliness. Lesser remarks for evidence of neglect, furniture, rugs or curtains that do not fit into the overall decor, are badly kept or are of poor quality, and inadequate lighting.
Seating places in lounge area	-1/+1/+2/+3/+4	Number of places relative to the number of rooms: less than 10%=-1; up to 40%=+1; up to 50%=+2; up to 60%=+3; up to 80%=+4.
Lighting	-1/+1/+2	
Furniture	-1/+1/+2	



**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
Fitted carpets/rugs	-1/+1/+2	
Curtains	-1/+1/+2	
Cleanliness of public premises	-1/+1	
All other equipment properly functioning	-1/+1	
Restaurants:		See under "Lounges" above. Excellent marks for an air of quality throughout. Furniture is comfortable, with not furniture relative to room size without cluttering, coordinated interior design --curtains, chairs, etc.
Lighting	-1/+1/+2	
Furniture	-1/+1/+2	
Fitted carpets/rugs	-1/+1/+2	
Curtains	-1/+1/+2	
Clean/welcoming restaurant halls	-1/+1	
All other equipment properly functioning	-1/+1	Ventilation, heating/refrigeration, etc.
Other common places, special guests' elevator and public toilets:		See under "Lounges" above.
Lighting	-1/1	
Furniture	-1/1	
Fitted carpets/rugs	-1/1	
Guest elevator	-1/1	Size and general impression should correspond to the category and method of construction of building.
Cleanliness and attractiveness of public spaces	-1/1	
All other equipment properly functioning	-1/1	Ventilation, heating/refrigeration, etc.
<b>SERVICE ELEVATOR</b>		
For one to four-star hotels:		
Separate elevator reserved for staff/luggage	+2	

**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
<b>HOTEL PARKING</b>		
Additional parking space per room above minimum requirements	(+1 for one, +2 for two or more) or valet parking with rented parking spaces (+1)	Parking spaces in outdoor or indoor garage.
<b>II. GUEST ROOMS AND BATHROOMS</b>		
<b>SUITES/JUNIOR SUITES</b>		
For all hotels, one of the following:		
-More than 8% of the rooms are suites, including junior suites	+4	Junior suites minimum: 40 m <sup>2</sup> , including bathroom.
-More than 12% of rooms are suites, including junior suites	+6	Junior suites minimum: 40 m <sup>2</sup> , including bathroom.
For one to four-star hotels:		
More than 5% of total number of rooms are suites, consisting of two separate areas (or rooms) of at least 48m <sup>2</sup> with bathroom	+3	
<b>ROOM CONDITION AND EQUIPMENT</b>		
For excellent marks attention is needed to the quality and the condition of furnishings, wall finishing, light fixtures and their overall contribution to the room impression. Lesser marks for cheap/mass produced-looking furnishings/curtains/other, bad conditions or deduction from overall decor.		
Condition/quality of bed frame	-1/+1/+2	
Condition/quality of mattresses	-1/+1/+2	
Condition of bedding	-1/+1	
Bed dimensions	-1/+1	More than 190x80 cm for double and 190x60 cm for single, +1. Less than those dimensions, -1.
Lighting	-1/+1/+2	

**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
Furniture	-1/+1/+2	
Curtains	-1/+1/+2	
Wall paper/decorative painting	-1/+1/+2	
Fitted carpets/rugs	-1/+1/+2	
Sound proofing:		
Windows	-1/+1	
Walls	-1/+1	
Floors	-1/+1	
Doors	-1/+1	
Room equipment is clean and tidy	-1/+1	
All things (TV, telephone, mini-bar) function appropriately	-1/+1	
<b>ADDITIONAL ROOM EQUIPMENT</b>		
At least 80% of rooms correspond to minimal dimensions	+2	
At least 80% of rooms with balcony	+2	
Deck chair or table and chair on the balcony or in the garden for 50% of the rooms	+2	
Telecommunications system with check-out control	+1	
Non-smoking rooms offered (at least 20% of the rooms)	+2	
Internet plugs in 80% of the rooms	+1	
ISDN connection	+1	
Internet-PC in the room on request	+1	
For three-star hotels:		
Safe-box in all rooms	+2	
Answering machine in room (voice-mailbox)	+1	

**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
For two-star hotels:		
Safe box in all rooms	+2	
Radio in all rooms	+1	
Color TV in all rooms	+2	
Telephone in all rooms	+2	
Answering machine in room (voice-mailbox)	+1	
For one-star hotels:		
Safe box in 80% of rooms	+2	
Radio in 80% of rooms	+1	
Color TV in 80% of rooms	+2	
Telephone in 80% of rooms	+2	
Air conditioning in 80% of rooms	+2	
Answering machine in room (voice-mailbox)	+1	
<b>BATHROOM CONDITION AND EQUIPMENT</b>		Excellent marks for attractive design, quality finishes and careful maintenance. Lesser marks for stains or other signs of wear or disrepair, cheap-looking towels/shower curtains, etc.
Lighting	-1/+1/+2	
Walls	-1/+1/+2	
Floors	-1/+1/+2	
Textiles/shower curtains/sliding doors/toilet linen, etc.	-1/+1/+2	
Bathroom cleanliness, including equipment	-1/+1	
All bathroom equipment functions properly	-1/+1	Includes lighting, sanitary installations, taps, vents, etc.
<b>ADDITIONAL BATHROOM EQUIPMENT</b>		
In all hotel bathrooms:		
Telephone	+1	
Radio	+1	
Clothesline	+1	
Bathrobe (only in 1-4 stars)	+1	
Mirror with lighting for shaving and make-up	+1	

**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
Scale	+1	
Emergency call	+1	
Separate shower in addition to bath tub in 50% of the rooms	+2	
Bidet	+1/+2	Over 50% of bathrooms =+1, over 80% of bathrooms =+2.
50% of WC with automatic flushing	+2	
For four-star hotels:		
-All bathrooms with bathtubs	+2	
For one to three-star hotels:		
Hairdryer in all bathrooms	+1	
All rooms with full-baths	+2	Shower and WC or bath and WC.
<b>III. HOTEL ATTENTION AND SERVICES</b>		
<b>ADDITIONAL SERVICES</b>		
For all hotels:		
Possibility of express check-out	+2	
Turndown service	+1	
<b>ADDITIONAL CATERING</b>		
Bar with open to the public open every day	+1/+2	Agreeable ambiance and decor. See "Restaurant" standards.
Live music at least five days of week	+2	For at least 8 months out of the year.
Luxurious separate "a la carte" restaurant	+1/+2/+3/+4	See "Restaurant standards." Also evaluate culinary and service standards.
Separate restaurant with normal offer, open everyday	+2, if open 24 hours +4	
Non-smoking area in the restaurant/dining room	+1	

**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
<b>IV. GUEST LEISURE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>		
<b>PARK/GARDEN</b>		
Park/garden or terrace on the roof, well tidy and open to guests	+2	Does not include restaurants with terrace or garden. There should be no minimum consumption. Should correspond to the classification or architectural dimensions of the hotel.
<b>SWIMMING POOL</b>		
Swimming pool. One of the following:		
-Area of pool more than 1.5m <sup>2</sup> per room	+4	
-Area of pool more than 1.0m <sup>2</sup> per room	+3	
-Area of pool less than 1.0m <sup>2</sup> per room	+2	Minimum pool size 40m <sup>2</sup>
<b>NURSERY</b>		
Play room for kids fully and permanently equipped with supervision by a qualified person during 6/24 hours for a minimum of 5 days a week.	+1/+2	+2 if more than 0.5m <sup>2</sup> per room, otherwise +1. If less supervision than 6/24 for five days/week, +1.
<b>LEISURE</b>		
Direct access to private beach or ski slope	+1	
Private sauna room/vapor bath/Turkish bath/whirlpool	+1/+2	+1 for each, maximum +2.
Private fitness room with at least 8 exercise machines	+1/+2	Good ventilation. At least 30m <sup>2</sup> . Larger spaces and more exercise machines =+2.
Private tennis or squash court	One point per court, maximum +2	
Private indoor golf green or driving range	+1	
Games/Sports/Entertainment facilities	Two points per facility, maximum +4	For example, mini-golf, bowling, ice-skating, movie theater etc.
Massage room/physiotherapy with staff:	+1	At least part-time.
Reading/writing room/library	+1	

**GENERAL STANDARDS FOR TOURIST HOTELS**

Standards	Possible Points	Interpretation
<b>BUSINESS/CONFERENCE FACILITIES</b>		
One of the following:		
-Conference room(s)	+3	At least 36m <sup>2</sup> , height of at least 2.5 m. (general indication height). Conference room space can be one or several rooms.
-Conference room (s)	+5	At least 100m <sup>2</sup> , height of at least 2.75m.
-Conference room(s)	+7	At least 2.5m <sup>2</sup> , height of at least 3m.
Working group rooms	+1	At least one. Separate from the conference rooms.
<b>BANQUET HALLS</b>		
One of the following:		
-Facility for at least 50 people	+2	
-Facility for at least 100 people	+3	

1. Number of Required Points per Hotel Category

As can be deduced from the table above, the number of possible points will be different according to each hotel category. This is because something such as a service elevator is a minimal requirement for a five-star hotel, but not for other hotels. Therefore, hotels in the one through four-star categories with service elevators are awarded with +2 points.

In the same way, the minimum number of points required for hotels differs according to each category. As the table below details, five-star hotels need to accumulate 135 points for them to be actually considered five-star. On the other hand, two-star hotels need only collect 80 points.

	Min. Number of Points	Total Possible Points
Five Stars	135	158
Four Stars	115	162
Three Stars	100	166
Two Stars	80	171
One Star	55	173

2. Example of Calculating Points for a Hotel Seeking Four-Star Status

The table below illustrates a sample scoring for a hotel that meets the minimum standards for a four-star establishment, and is now being evaluated whether it accumulates enough points to be given four-star status. Were it not to collect enough points for a four-star hotel, it would have to be given only three stars, regardless of the fact that it meets the four-stars minimum standards.

The first column "Possible Points" indicates how many points a four-star hotel is potentially able to accumulate under each main category. The "+ Points" column indicates how many points the hotel in this example earned. The "-Points" column indicates negative points that a hotel may have earned under each category. It is important to understand that this column is not referring to points that were not earned, but rather to areas where the hotel actually was assigned a "-1" probably for something that was significantly below normal hospitality norms.

To calculate the hotel's total number of points, the evaluator would add the number of points in the "+ Points" column, and then subtract all the negative points. This hotel earned 119 points, but also 2 negative points, to produce a final total of 117, which qualifies it for four-star status.

**Note:** If this hotel had earned 135 points or more, which are enough for five-star category, it still would not be awarded five stars unless its minimum standards were in accordance with those of five-star hotels. **Hotels need to meet the requirements under both the minimum standards and the general point system to be given a particular rating. Otherwise, they are assigned the lower rating category of the two.**



<b>EXAMPLE HOTEL SCORING</b>			
	Possible Score	Points Earned	
		+ Points	- Points
<b>I. Building</b>			
Condition of Building	16	12	
Lounges	14	12	
Restaurant Halls	10	8	-1
Other Common Spaces	6	6	
Service Elevator (for one-four stars)	2	2	
Hotel Parking	2	2	
<b>II. Guest Rooms and Bathrooms</b>			
Suites/Junior Suites	6	6	
Room Condition and Equipment	22	16	-1
Additional Room Equipment	12	10	
Bathroom Condition and Equipment	8	7	
Additional Bathroom Equipment	13	12	
<b>III. Hotel Attention and Services</b>			
Additional Services	3	3	
Additional Catering	15	11	
<b>IV. Guest Leisure and Professional Services</b>			
Park/Garden	2	0	
Swimming Pool	4	0	
Nursery	2	0	
Leisure	14	6	
Business/Conference Facilities	8	4	
Banquet Halls	3	2	
<b>Intermediate Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>-2</b>
<b>Final Total</b>		<b><u>117</u></b>	
The final number of points (117) is sufficient for a four-star hotel.			

**D. Classification Process**

The classification process is designed to be conducted by an expert classification team with a thorough knowledge of the hospitality industry and its standards. This team should be available to answer any kind of informational questions about applied standards and their interpretation.

- **Step 1:** A prospective new hotel owner, builder or representative approaches the hotel classification team to consult about standards and their practical implications. While not required, builders will generally want to do this before they invest, for their own security. The inspection team will need to carefully answer all pertinent questions. Alternatively, current hotel owners may approach the inspection team asking for guidance regarding current standards.
- **Step 2:** A new or current hotel owner, builder or representative approaches the inspection team requesting to be classified. The inspection team creates a file.
- **Step 3:** A two-person team visits the property unannounced. Upon arrival at the property, the inspector will contact the owner, general manager or manager's representative for a brief interview. The purpose is to collect factual data about the property and to discuss changes that have been made or are being planned for the near future.

Following the interview, the inspectors will conduct a physical evaluation of the entire property including the exterior and all building areas. In addition, a random cross-section of guest units will be evaluated for types of amenities, quality, condition and decor. The inspector will also note the housekeeping and maintenance.

The property owner, manager or a representative should accompany the field inspector during the evaluation as this is an excellent opportunity to discuss specific listing and rating issues.

During the inspection process, the inspector will discuss and clarify items needing correction. The inspector will review these items with the owner, manager or representative before leaving the property. It is advisable that the hotel owner, manager or representative ask the inspector for clarification of any unclear or confusing items noted.

- **Step 4:** At the conclusion of the evaluation, the inspector will provide the owner, manager or other contact with a written summary of the inspection and the rating decision.
- **Step 5:** Once the property has been rated, it will be evaluated once a year by an inspector. Such inspections will be unannounced to ensure that they see the property just as guests would.

## **VI. CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURIST RESIDENCES**

### **A. Methodology**

The methodology employed to develop the new tourist residence standards was similar to the one used for developing hotel standards, with the difference that there are fewer countries that rate their tourist residences, and therefore less international experience to draw from. The main models used to develop the current system are those from Switzerland and the United States. The team also drew from the country analysis done by the SCORE team in 1997, which developed its proposed new standards from the French system.

The same aspects were taken into consideration as were for the hotels system, mainly the international evolution of rating systems, international industry trends, Middle-Eastern tastes and Lebanese country conditions.

### **B. Introduction to Proposed System**

The proposed system for rating tourist residences is similar in structure to that of the hotels system, with the exception that no additional factors are judged beyond the minimal ones. This is consistent with international practice, where tourist residences are not subject to the same stringent quality standards as are hotels. The system is based on the five-star system standard in the hospitality industry.

C. Proposed New Classification Standards for Tourist Residences

<b>MINIMUM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURISM RESIDENCES</b>			
	****Luxury	****First Class	***Middle Class
<b>SECURITY</b>	****Luxury	****First Class	***Middle Class
<p><b>General Security Standards and Procedures</b></p>	<p>The hotel has a security plan containing the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A 24/24 alarm plan with internal EMERGENCY telephone numbers is posted.</li> <li>2. A member of the staff should be appointed as security officer to coordinate all aspects of security and encourage vigilance among the staff.</li> <li>3. The book of tasks of the person in charge of security is complete and is signed by the latter.</li> <li>4. The hotel assistants are informed about the security measures.</li> <li>5. The hotel entrances are controlled and locked during the night.</li> <li>6. Each window overlooking a common walkway or in a ground-floor room must be equipped with a functional locking mechanism.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Night Service</b></p> <p><b>Minimal Fire Security Rules</b></p>	<p>An assistant that can be called at any time by telephone/buzzer from outside or inside (should reside at the hotel).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There must be operational, single-station smoke detectors in each guest unit, regularly maintained and tested.</li> <li>2. From each guest unit there must be two separate means of escape to emergency exits with clearly marked signs and free from obstruction. The exits and halls must be equipped with security lighting, which must be powered by permanent energy sources/generators.</li> <li>3. There should be a proper type and amount of fire fighting equipment such as hose reels, portable fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems, depending on the area. Equipment must be available on every level of the building. It must be serviced regularly and staff should be trained in its use.</li> <li>4. Notices in all bedrooms and public areas instructing guests as to what they should do and where they should go in case of a fire or other emergency.</li> <li>5. Stairs and enclosed hallways must have smoke vents. The ventilation system must be controlled by an automatic fire detection system.</li> <li>6. All constructions and facilities must be made of incombustible materials or at least materials covered with incombustible coating, according to reasonable common industry standards.</li> </ol>		

**MINIMUM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURISM RESIDENCES**

	****Luxury	***First Class	**Middle Class	*Comfortable	*Simple
<b>General Guest Protection</b>	1. A first-aid kit should be available. 2. All sockets for electric shavers should have a clear indication of voltage.				
<b>Employee Welfare</b>	The establishment proprietor and management should follow all labor laws and regulations applied in Lebanon concerning staff welfare, insurance and indemnities.				
<b>Posting of Prices/ Classification</b>	1. All establishments must post their classification and the prices of all of their services in a clear sign in the reception area. Prices must be in Arabic and English or French, with all taxes and service charges included. 2. Prices must specify rates for singles, doubles, junior suites, suites and other room types, as well as variations depending on the number of people. 3. Posting should mention the breakfast price if not included. 4. A detailed bill must be presented to the customer for payment.				
<b>Front Office Service</b>	Permanent reception attendant 24/24 and concierge 12/24, both speak English and another foreign language.	Permanent reception attendant 18/24 who speaks English and another foreign language.	Permanent reception attendant 12/24 who speaks English and another foreign language.	Recognizable reception department with attendant speaking at least one foreign language.	Recognizable reception department with attendant speaking at least one foreign language.
<b>Hotel Entrance</b>	Independent entry separate from any other establishment with recognizable reception service.				
<b>Reception Hall</b>	100m <sup>2</sup> minimum, plus 50m <sup>2</sup> more per every 100 beds over 200.				
<b>Temperature</b>	Heating or cooling system that maintains comfortable temperature throughout the year in common areas.				
<b>Bathrooms</b>	Minimum of two public bathrooms (one each gender).				
<b>Elevators</b>	1. For buildings of more than one level (including ground floor). 2. Service elevator.	For buildings of more than two levels (including ground floor).	For buildings of more than three levels (including ground floor).	For buildings of more than four levels (including ground floor).	For buildings of more than four levels (including ground floor).
<b>Telephone Booths(s)</b>	One for each 100 beds and one for each additional 100 or fraction of thereof.				

**MINIMUM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURISM RESIDENCES**

	****Luxury	***First Class	**Middle Class	*Comfortable	*Simple
Parking Lots & Garages	One car parking spot per apartment, each space = 10m <sup>2</sup> .				
<b>APARTMENTS</b>					
Minimum size (includes bathroom and kitchen/kitchenette):					
-Two-person studio	25m <sup>2</sup>	20m <sup>2</sup>	15m <sup>2</sup>	11m <sup>2</sup>	9 m <sup>2</sup>
-Per additional room/bedroom	18m <sup>2</sup>	15m <sup>2</sup>	11m <sup>2</sup>	9m <sup>2</sup>	7m <sup>2</sup>
Minimum Number of Handicap Accessible Rooms	Four accessible beds per every 100 beds, divided into at least two separate apartments. Two additional beds per every 50 additional rooms.				
Apartment equipment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed/bed-closet minimum 90x190cm</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. Desk with chair (1 chair per bed)</li> <li>5. One arm chair (1 place per bed)</li> <li>6. Closet</li> <li>7. Color TV</li> <li>8. Cable or satellite reception</li> <li>9. Radio</li> <li>10. Alarm clock</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed/bed-closet minimum 90x190cm</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading light per bed</li> <li>4. Desk with chair (1 chair per bed)</li> <li>5. One arm chair (1 place per bed)</li> <li>6. Closet</li> <li>7. Color TV</li> <li>8. Radio</li> <li>9. Alarm clock</li> <li>10. Mirror (approx. 40x100cm)</li> <li>11. Wastepaper basket</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed/bed-closet minimum 90x190cm</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. One reading lamp per bed</li> <li>4. Desk with chair (1 chair per bed)</li> <li>5. One arm chair (1 place per bed)</li> <li>6. Closet</li> <li>7. Radio</li> <li>8. Alarm clock</li> <li>9. Mirror (approx. 40x100cm)</li> <li>10. Wastepaper basket</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed/bed-closet minimum 90x190cm</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. Desk with chair (1 chair per bed)</li> <li>4. Closet</li> <li>5. Radio</li> <li>6. Mirror (approx. 40x100cm)</li> <li>7. Wastepaper basket</li> <li>8. Apartment documentation in English/Arabic</li> <li>9. Price list</li> <li>10. Refrigerator</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bed/bed-closet minimum 90x190cm</li> <li>2. General lighting</li> <li>3. Desk with chair (1 chair per bed)</li> <li>4. Closet</li> <li>5. Mirror (approx. 40x100cm)</li> <li>6. Wastepaper basket</li> <li>7. Apartment documentation in English/Arabic</li> <li>8. Price list</li> <li>9. Refrigerator</li> <li>10. Plates, dishes and</li> </ol>

الجمهورية اللبنانية  
 مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية  
 مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام

**MINIMUM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURISM RESIDENCES**

	<b>****Luxury</b>	<b>****First Class</b>	<b>***Middle Class</b>	<b>**Comfortable</b>	<b>*Simple</b>
	<p>11. Mirror (approx. 40x100cm)</p> <p>12. Wastepaper basket</p> <p>13. Apartment documentation in English/Arabic</p> <p>14. Price list</p> <p>15. Refrigerator</p> <p>16. Plates, dishes and glasses (one set per bed and additional bed)</p> <p>17. Kitchen linen</p> <p>18. Cleaning utensils/products</p> <p>19. Garbage can</p>	<p>basket</p> <p>12. Apartment documentation in English/Arabic</p> <p>13. Price list</p> <p>14. Refrigerator</p> <p>15. Plates, dishes and glasses (one set per bed and additional bed)</p> <p>16. Kitchen linen</p> <p>17. Cleaning utensils/products</p> <p>18. Garbage can</p>	<p>11. Apartment documentation in English/Arabic</p> <p>12. Price list</p> <p>13. Refrigerator</p> <p>14. Plates, dishes and glasses (one set per bed and additional bed)</p> <p>15. Kitchen linen</p> <p>16. Cleaning utensils/products</p> <p>17. Garbage can</p>	<p>11. Plates, dishes and glasses (one set per bed and additional bed)</p> <p>12. Kitchen linen</p> <p>13. Cleaning utensils/products</p> <p>14. Garbage can</p>	<p>glasses (one set per bed and additional bed)</p> <p>11. Kitchen linen</p> <p>12. Cleaning utensils/products</p> <p>13. Garbage can</p>
<b>Temperature Control</b>	<p>Central heating and air-conditioning.</p> <p>Quiet units with controls in each room.</p> <p>1. Individual safe in room or in a separate premise designated for that purpose.</p> <p>2. A second, internally operated door lock in addition to primary door</p>	<p>Central heating and air-conditioning.</p> <p>Quiet units with controls in each room.</p> <p>1. Individual safe in room or in a separate premise designated for that purpose.</p> <p>2. A second, internally operated door lock in addition to primary door</p>	<p>Efficient heating and air-conditioning in all rooms.</p>	<p>Efficient heating and air-conditioning in all rooms.</p>	<p>Efficient heating.</p> <p>Fans may be available to guests on demand.</p>
<b>Safe Boxes/Security</b>	<p>1. Individual safe in room or in a separate premise designated for that purpose.</p> <p>2. A second, internally operated door lock in addition to primary door</p>	<p>1. Individual safe in room or in a separate premise designated for that purpose.</p> <p>2. A second, internally operated door lock in addition to primary door</p>	<p>1. Safe at reception.</p> <p>2. A second, internally operated door lock in addition to primary door lock.</p>	<p>Safe at reception.</p>	<p>Safe at reception.</p>

**MINIMUM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURISM RESIDENCES**

	****Luxury	****First Class	***Middle Class	**Comfortable	*Simple
<b>Habitability</b>	lock. 1. Sound proofed floor covering, windows and walls. 2. Ability to darken the room.	lock. 1. Sound proofed floor covering, windows and walls. 2. Ability to darken the room.	1. Sound proofed floor covering, windows and walls. 2. Ability to darken the room.	Ability to darken the room.	Ability to darken the room.
<b>Telephone</b>	Telephone with direct line in all rooms.	Telephone through switch board.	Telephone through switch board.	-	-
<b>Bathroom type and equipment</b>	1. Bath tub with shower 2. WC 3. Two washstands or a double washstand 4. Wastebasket 5. Toilet linen 6. Two bath linen per bed 7. Bathroom rug 8. Spare toilet paper rolls 9. Sanitary bags 10. Paper tissue	1. Bath tub with shower 2. WC 3. Washstand 4. Wastebasket 5. Toilet linen 6. Two bath linen per bed 7. Bathroom rug 8. Spare toilet paper rolls 9. Sanitary bags 10. Paper tissue	1. Bath tub with shower 2. WC 3. Washstand 4. Wastebasket 5. Toilet linen 6. Two bath linen per bed 7. Bathroom rug 8. Spare toilet paper rolls 9. Sanitary bags	1. Shower or bath tub 2. WC 3. Washstand 4. Wastebasket 5. Toilet linen 6. Two bath linen per bed 7. Bathroom rug 8. Spare toilet paper rolls 9. Sanitary bags	1. Shower or bath tub 2. WC 3. Washstand 4. Wastebasket 5. Toilet linen 6. Spare toilet paper rolls 7. Sanitary bags
<b>Kitchen or kitchenette</b>	1. Sink with mixer tap 2. Stove with several burners 3. Refrigerator 4. Cabinets 5. Air ventilation	1. Sink with mixer tap 2. Stove with several burners 3. Refrigerator 4. Cabinets 5. Air ventilation	1. Sink with mixer tap 2. Stove with several burners 3. Refrigerator 4. Cabinets 5. Air ventilation	1. Sink with mixer tap 2. Stove with several burners 3. Refrigerator 4. Cabinets 5. Air ventilation	1. Sink with mixer tap 2. Stove with several burners 3. Refrigerator 4. Cabinets 5. Air ventilation



**MINIMUM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS FOR TOURISM RESIDENCES**

	<b>****Luxury</b>	<b>****First Class</b>	<b>***Middle Class</b>	<b>**Comfortable</b>	<b>*Simple</b>
	6. Table ware and utensils in proportion to number of beds 7. Oven 8. Dishwasher 9. Coffeemaker 10. Toaster 11. Varied types of pots, pans and general cookware	6. Table ware and utensils in proportion to number of beds 7. Oven 8. Dishwasher 9. Coffeemaker 10. Varied number of pots and pans and general cookware	6. Table ware and utensils in proportion to number of beds 7. Oven 8. Basic number of pots and pans	6. Table ware and utensils in proportion to number of beds 7. Minimal number of pots and pans	6. Table ware and utensils in proportion to number of beds
<b>Apartment cleaning and linen replacement</b>	At end of each day.	At end of each day.	At end of each day, except for weekend.	Twice a week.	Once a week.
<b>Laundry service</b>	Upon client demand, with 24 hour return.	Upon client demand.	Upon client demand.	Optional.	Optional.

**D. Classification Process**

The process of classification would be similar to that for hotels, the only difference being that tourist residences will only need to be reevaluated every three years, or upon a new request from the establishment, since in some cases properties may be upgraded to correspond to a higher rating level.

## VII. TRANSITION PERIOD

### A. Classification Team

One of the clear lessons from the review of international practices in classification systems is that property evaluations need to be undertaken by a credible, high-quality team of inspectors. Most developed countries are now moving to contract out the inspecting services to consulting firms with a specialization in the area.

In Lebanon, the benefits of following a similar path would be substantial, and the SRI team believes that the Ministry of Tourism should consider taking this now best-practice approach. This concept is also strongly supported by the Lebanese private sector, which is interested in being inspected by a firm with an international reputation to facilitate the marketing of their properties to tour operators, travel agencies and individual tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism should continue to have a strong role in the setting of the standards by which the private consulting firm will evaluate and rate tourist properties. This role will be most important in the setting of the minimal infrastructure standards for all properties, and in putting together evaluation standards for other property types (i.e. lodges, motels, etc.) as they are needed.

### B. Reclassifying Existing Hotels

The issue of how to classify existing hotels that were constructed under the current classification standards is key for the new system to be successful. The SRI team believes that the criteria for reclassifying existing hotels should be the following:

- **Provide a transition period of two years for existing hotels to adjust to all new standards, except for ones related to the structural aspects of a building.** For example, existing hotels should not be subject to the same minimum bedroom size standards, and minimum bathroom size standards set by the new classification system. However, standards that do not require structural changes to a property should be evaluated and enforced. This also applies to the quality standards.
- **Provide a transition period of five years for existing hotels to adjust to new standards affecting building structures.** This period will allow existing tourist establishments to make the necessary investments into their properties to meet new standards. It is expected that many hotels will need to make significant investments to maintain their current classification category. Other hotels will instead choose to reposition to meet markets at a lower star-rating than the one they currently target. It is expected that this development will be consistent with Lebanese market trends. As new lodging construction continues, the market will change, forcing hotels to strategically choose which segment of the overall travel

and tourism market to target. The new classification system will not be the direct cause of the market repositioning, but rather act as an aid for what a property at each category should look like, thus bringing some order to the process.

- **New lodging establishments will be subject to the new standards immediately.** Part of the urgency for developing new standards is the rapid pace of construction of new hotels in Lebanon. These new standards should help guide the investments of new construction.

### **C. Maintaining a Modern Rating System**

The current proposal for a new tourism establishment classification system is only the beginning of the what needs to be done in the coming years. Tourism regulations should always be in thoughtful evolution, seeking to best meet the needs of a shifting industry. The following are some of the factors that should aid in the continued modernization of the classification system.

- **Establish as much as possible of the system as a Ministry of Tourism regulation, rather than as a decree under the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers.** Tourism standards need to be constantly updated and improved upon. Every so often, the Ministry of Tourism and other industry stakeholders need to revisit them and make amendments. These changes will be easier to make if they do not need to go through an extensive bureaucratic and political process, but rather are kept within the jurisdiction of the Ministry. Moreover, the interpretation of the rules should be left to the inspection team, which should be required to issue a document elaborating on its practices for interpreting specific rules with the goal of making the evaluation process as transparent as possible.
- **Incorporate more qualitative criteria as the domestic industry consolidates.** Mature lodging industries are subject to even more qualitative criteria for categorization than the ones in the proposed Lebanese system. It is the judgement of the SRI team that the Lebanese industry, particularly its non-chain domestic hotels are not yet ready for the same standards as lodging establishments in England or the United States. However, these properties would benefit if at some point more extensive qualitative criteria were introduced. The current system is designed in a way that these could be easily developed.
- **Make a decision on if and how to rate other lodging property types.** At this point it is too early to develop specific standards for motels, inns and other types of lodging properties that are virtually non-existent in the Lebanese market. However, at some point the Ministry of Tourism, in conjunction with private sector stakeholders, will need to decide how to classify such properties. Many countries choose not to categorize such properties, others use hotel ratings as the basis for categorization, while still others develop standards very specific to each property type.

**ANNEX**

**INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN  
DEVELOPING CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS**

## A. Mexico

The classification system for Mexico is new (1997), and is currently being transitioned into the implementation stage. Before 1993, registration/categorization was required and performed by Sectur, the government tourism agency. In 1993, after complaints from the private sector that the rating system was full of corruption, with hotels "buying" the stars that they received, the government decided not to rate any more, in the hopes that some private sector system would develop.

After the Mexican government pulled out of the rating business in 1994, many consultancies sprung up with their own classification systems. However, they tended to be less than credible, basically selling "stars", "diamonds", even "dragons," all symbols that were supposed to connote some sort of quality standard. Unhappy with this situation, the private sector, through its associations, then asked the government certifying agency, which had authority over norms and certification for a wide spectrum of areas, including product safety, to look into tourism rating standards.

The new standards were set through the Consejo Nacional Empresarial Turístico (National Tourism Corporations Council). This is a working group that is composed of representatives from the government, the private associations, and the two private entities that have been licensed to conduct the inspections. These are "Calidad Mexicana Certificada" and the "Instituto Mexicano de Normatización y Certificación." The government gave one of the private sector certifying entities funds to conduct a study in which they looked at 18 examples of rating systems worldwide, including visits to the countries examined. As a result, they came up with a model that has both stars, which rates infrastructure, and diamonds, which rates quality of service. This is a result of the major tendency they found worldwide, which is that service is becoming an important component of rating.

In 1996, the Council approved the new standards. The system was set-up so that it was self-financed, with a small subsidy from the private sector associations. A certification of a 5-star hotel can cost US\$1000.

In 1997, the system was piloted in several hotels and since then the two certifying institutions have been busy at work trying to certify the more than 800 applications they have pending. It normally takes about 6 months for a hotel to meet the inspection norms and be certified. The inspection of a large hotel is done by two people, taking them an entire week. One observation that has been made is that domestic hotels, many of which are smaller, have not shown as high a propensity to be classified as the international hotels. It appears that managers and owners of non-brand hotels are not well educated in terms of the benefits that can be incurred by being certified as being of a certain category.

**Mexican Summary and Lessons Learned**

- Government/private partnership sets standards.
- Mix of infrastructure and service criteria, system is voluntary.
- Two private companies conduct certification.
- Positives: Private sector involvement in certification makes system very credible.
- Negatives: Expensive for companies, slow application of system, not enough participation by domestic hotels at this point.

**B. South Africa**

South Africa has gone through two major significant changes in its classification system over the past six years. In 1993, South Africa instituted a new rating system that tried to give credit to service, as well as infrastructure.

The National Tourist Accommodation Grading and Classification Scheme (NGCS) was created as a voluntary system, but it was required for all hotels that participated in the traditional stars rating program that classifies according to infrastructure, the standard way of doing it.

Plaques were awarded based on service levels and they were to reflect the warmth of welcome, efficiency, appearance of premises and staff, along with the quality of furnishings and fittings. A burgundy plaque indicated approved service. A silver plaque signified superior hospitality.

Service classification was not influenced by star grading, so it was possible for lower-star establishments to achieve silver classification. The new system was needed, it was claimed, because star grading did not give any clear indication of the type of service offered. Some highly graded hotels had provided service that was unsatisfactory. The NGCS system was consumer driven, with consumer feedback systems an important part of the process.

However, this year this system was dropped. The main reason for this is that one of the main features of the system was that the fees levied were higher than cost. Those funds were used for Satour's promotional efforts, a Hospitality Industry Training Board, conferences and training to upgrade and maintain the staff service and expertise, and other such activities. Many of the hotels that participated in the system, particularly the big brand hotels, objected to having to cross-subsidize promotional efforts for the many domestic hotels that were not participating in the system.

At one point last year, all major hotels opted out of the system, resulting in massive financial losses for Satour. As a result, Satour has decided to get out of the ratings activities altogether, to help set-up a new privately run system that it will license private sector entities to run, and, at the insistence of the international hotels, to drop the service

criteria and move to an all "objective criteria" system. It appears that the international hotels regard their service as high quality and do not want to deal with someone else's standards on top of their own internal ones.

According to some observers, the ones who will lose out will be the domestic hotels, which tend to benefit from the attention to their service provision. Moreover, the inspection process tended to inform such hotels of latest customer taste trends and of ways in which to improve their service standards.

The standards for the new system will be set by Satour and the industry stakeholders. The main lesson from the preceding years is that whatever system is adopted, it needs to have the buy-in of the private sector and be led by it. Otherwise people will try to find ways around it or opt not to participate.

#### South Africa Summary and Lessons Learned

- Current state in transition. National Grading Scheme (1993-1999) had government set standards in consultation with private sector.
- Voluntary, with fees collected for system maintenance and marketing efforts.
- Criteria based on service and infrastructure.
- Positives: Sought to address service, helping to highlight and improve the quality of domestic hotels.
- Negatives: Lack of buy-in from the private sector brought system's collapse.

#### C. England

England has had three separate hotel ratings organizations, all of which are private. Until recently, each one of these organization had its own rating criteria.

- The *Automobile Association* (AA) used to award "stars" based on hotel quality.
- The *English Tourist Board* used to award crowns, according to some national rating system. There were two parts to this system, with Standards of Approved, Commended, Highly Commended and Deluxe given according to quality reached by a hotel or a guesthouse. Crowns were awarded according to the facilities available at the hotel. Basically, the more facilities, the more crowns.
- The *Royal Automobile Club* (RAC) gave stars based on both the level of service and the range of facilities offered. Hotels could also receive three merit awards: Hospitality, awarded for outstanding "hospitality" and service; Comfort, indicating a high standard of "comfort" throughout the hotel; Restaurant, hotels with high quality restaurants serving excellent meals. Finally, a Blue Ribbon Award was issued to hotels that achieved all merit awards.



All these systems were pay-as-you-go, with the classification resulting into entrance into the respective entity's marketing materials. Many hotels were registered with two or all three of the inspecting bodies. As could be expected, this system caused a great deal of confusion for customers. Therefore, in the last year (1999), the government asked/suggested, and the three bodies agreed, to have a common categorization system. While the standards are the same, the three bodies are still the ones that do the inspecting.

The standards were set by a Joint Management Committee, composed of representatives from each of the three bodies and other stakeholder groups, such as hotel associations. The standards were approved by the government. Only inspected hotels are included in anyone's marketing materials. There has been a lot of positive reaction to this development, with customers very pleased about the simplicity of the system.

#### **England Summary and Lessons Learned**

- Private-sector standards, with government direction.
- Self-financed system, addressing both infrastructure and service.
- Positives: Simple system for consumers to understand, good private sector sensitivity to government suggestions.
- Negatives: Inconsistencies in the interpretations of the rules by the three certification organizations.

#### **D. Spain**

Hotel standards in Spain have been decentralized, allowing each of the country's regions to set its own hotel classification criteria. In one region the rating may depend on the hotel infrastructure, while in another it may depend on the quality of the service or a combination of the two, resulting in a situation where any given hotel could receive widely different classification in two different regions. In general, classification standards tend to be set by regional governments, with certification often outsourced to private consultants.

One of the most interesting developments in Spain is the shift toward certifying quality. The WTO has worked with the Canary Islands, and now with the rest of Spain, in developing quality standards for hotels. A white "Q" (for quality) appears in hotels as a sign that tourists have chosen a hotel or apartment that meets quality standards. These signs appear in brochures from tour operators and on hotel signs. The system appears to have worked, by encouraging hotels to improve their quality of service, which in turn has increased the number of tourists into the region. This has been particularly important in Spain given that few of the beach hotels belong to major-name chains. Visitors instead had to rely heavily on tour operators, travel agents and guide books. The "star" system in place only rated the type of facilities, not the quality of the property.

Hotels that apply for registration for the quality plan have to prove that over a period of at least six months they had been running a specific program of activities designed by the quality inspection team. These include the introduction of a self-evaluation system of the quality of the service provided, questionnaire forms on which clients could make comments, and sending staff to training sessions run by a government hotel quality program. Once they meet those requirements, hotels are inspected by an international consultancy, which produces a report on staff service and training, and the cleanliness, conservation and running of the property. The report is then studied by an independent panel that includes representatives from the European Hotel and Restaurant Federation (HOTREC); the European Foundation for Quality Management; and national, regional and local governments, before deciding whether a certificate should be awarded.

#### **Spain Highlights and Lessons Learned**

- Standards are set regionally, with local governments generally setting rules but outsourcing inspections to private sector.
- Canary Islands instituted a system to acknowledge and reward quality.
- Standards were developed with help from WTO, inspections are performed by a consultancy.
- Positives: System has encouraged upgrading the quality of hotels.
- Negatives: Requires high-level of competency from inspectors.

#### **E. Scotland**

The Scottish Tourist Board started grading in 1985. It was thought that the two then-current grading agencies, RAC and AA were not looking at quality and were confusing the consumer. The aim was to set standards that would help improve the quality and infrastructure of the hospitality product while providing customers with information on the type of establishments available. The Board therefore instituted a system where diamonds were given based on quality and crowns were awarded based on an establishment's infrastructure.

However, these two symbols seemed to be confusing for the consumer. The Board conducted some consumer research, with focus groups made up according to the nationality of the prevalent hospitality consumers: Scottish, English, Americans, Europeans, and Japanese (in that order). What they found was that consumers liked the stars, as the symbol, and that they wanted it to describe quality. The Board thought that infrastructure was much easier for hotels to convey (how many pools, how many restaurants, etc.) and therefore not so necessary for a grading system. They also concluded that there is no such thing as an international standard, and that when people think about how good a place is, they think about how good the service is, not the infrastructure.

Since 1996, the new system is based solely on quality. Wales has now adopted the same system and other countries are considering it. Industry has been a part of the entire process. An overseeing committee goes over each of the specific standards and how they need to evolve given changing consumer needs and tastes.

The system is not obligatory, though 80 percent of all hotels participate. The fees range from L75 for a 2 bedroom bed & breakfast to L750 for the largest type of hotel. The fees are purely used to finance the system, which receives only a 20 percent subsidy from the government, a figure that will be reduced to zero within a few years.

The Board has about 40 employees, 25 of which are inspectors. The inspectors not only inspect, but help owners by advising them on how to improve their property. Originally inspectors were head-hunted from private rating systems and hotel organizations. They all had an industry background, which is very necessary for this type of evaluation. According to observations made by the head of the Board, for countries that are not going to be able to have such highly trained individuals to conduct inspections, licensing the inspections to the private sector is a good option, rather than having uninformed inspectors doing highly complicated evaluations. However, they need to be careful with having more than one body conduct the inspections, given that consistency is key.

#### **Scotland Highlights and Lessons Learned**

- Government-led and run system, with private-sector input.
- Pay-as-you-go system. Standards based solely on service, not infrastructure.
- Positives: Simple five-star system that highlights Scotland's high quality service hotels. Consumer oriented. Has encouraged hotels to invest into improvements in training.
- Negatives: System has no reference to infrastructure amenities offered by hotels.

الجمهورية اللبنانية  
مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية  
مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام

Republic of Lebanon  
Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform  
Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies  
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