



## GLOSSARY OF SUSTAINABILITY TERMS

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| Carbon offsets             | Carbon offsets are used to reduce the amount of carbon that an individual or institution emits into the atmosphere. Carbon offsets work in a financial system where, instead of reducing its own carbon use, a company can comply with emissions caps by purchasing an offset from an independent organization. The organization will then use that money to fund a project that reduces carbon in the atmosphere. An individual can also engage with this system and similarly pay to offset his or her own personal carbon usage instead of, or in addition to, taking direct measures such as driving less or recycling. |
| Composting                 | The controlled biological decomposition of organic material in the presence of air to form a humus-like material. Controlled methods of composting include mechanical mixing and aerating, ventilating the materials by dropping them through a vertical series of aerated chambers, or placing the compost in piles out in the open air and mixing it or turning it periodically.  |
| Deforestation              | Those practices or processes that result in the conversion of forested lands for non-forest uses. This is often cited as one of the major causes of the enhanced greenhouse effect for two reasons: 1) the burning or decomposition of the wood releases carbon dioxide; and 2) trees that once removed carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in the process of photosynthesis are no longer present.  |
| Downstream solutions       | These are solutions that address a problem that has occurred, this solution reacts to a problem.  |
| Green Key Global           | Green Key Global is an international environmental certification body that offers standardized programs and resources, designed specifically for the hotel and meeting industry. Their activities and sustainable initiatives promise to help your properties and brands to increase occupancy, save money, and reduce your carbon footprint.   |
| Greenhouse gas             | Any gas that absorbs infrared radiation in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases include, but are not limited to, water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ), methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ), nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF <sub>6</sub> ).   |
| Greenwashing               | Greenwashing is a form of corporate misrepresentation where a company will present a green public image and publicize green initiatives that are false or misleading. A company might release misleading claims or even true green initiatives while privately engaging in environmentally damaging practices.  |
| Methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ) | A hydrocarbon greenhouse gas with a global warming potential estimated at 36 times that of carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ). Methane is produced through anaerobic (without oxygen) decomposition of waste in landfills, animal digestion, decomposition of animal wastes, production and distribution of natural gas, coal and petroleum, and incomplete fossil fuel combustion.  |



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| Recycling         | Collecting and reprocessing a resource so it can be used again. An example is collecting aluminum cans, melting them down, and using the aluminum to make new cans or other aluminum products.  |
| Reforestation     | Planting of forests on lands that have previously contained forests but that have been converted to some other use.   |
| Renewable Energy  | The term renewable energy generally refers to electricity supplied from renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, geothermal, hydropower, and various forms of biomass. These energy sources are considered renewable sources because they are continuously replenished on the Earth.   |
| Sustainable       | Meeting the needs of the present without diminishing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability means practices do not result in the permanent damage, depletion of the environment, ecosystems, species or natural resources.   |
| UNSDGs            | United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. Part of Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly.   |
| Upstream solution | This is a solution that works to avoid a problem by being proactive and addresses the root cause of an expected consequence or problem.   |
| Water Vapor       | The most abundant greenhouse gas, it is the water present in the atmosphere in gaseous form. Water vapor is an important part of the natural greenhouse effect. While humans are not significantly increasing its concentration, it contributes to the enhanced greenhouse effect because the warming influence of greenhouse gases leads to a positive water vapor feedback. Water vapor plays an important role in regulating the temperature of the planet because clouds form when excess water vapor in the atmosphere condenses to form ice and water droplets and precipitation. |
| Wind Energy       | Wind energy is energy collected from motion caused by heavy winds. Wind energy is collected in turbines with propellers that spin when the wind blows and turn the motion of the propeller into energy that can be used in the electrical grid. Wind energy is a clean, renewable energy source that is abundant in windy areas. Large wind farms are often located outside of cities, supplying power for electrical grids within the city.  |

The definitions here come from a variety of sources including the Yale Guide to Green Events, the EPA Terms and Definitions, [businessdictionary.com](http://businessdictionary.com) and Wikipedia