



Case Study

# ODEON Tourism



## Citi Global Beneficiary Services Payment Tracker Streamlines Hotel Booking Process

ODEON Tourism is a travel and tour operator that provides flights, hotels and services such as transfers. Its destinations include Turkey, Egypt, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Spain, Greece and Vietnam, and its customers come from multiple CIS countries, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Germany.

### The Challenge

ODEON Tourism has relationships with thousands of different hotels across almost 40 countries. In line with industry practice, ODEON Tourism must make payments to these hotels in advance of customer check-ins. Typically, cross-border transfers can take up to two days. In order for hotel rooms to be released before this, ODEON Tourism sends proof of payment (usually a SWIFT message) to the hotel detailing the transaction date, amount, currency, sender and other details such as fees.

In high season, ODEON Tourism sends as many as 1,000 separate payments to 1,000 hotels each day. For each of these payments, the ODEON Tourism finance team must individually forward SWIFT proof of payments to the hotels, imposing a significant operational burden. Hotels often contacted ODEON Tourism to inquire about payment statuses as the use of correspondent banks can result in payment delays.

Keen to reduce its huge workload, ODEON Tourism needed a solution that would automate the process of sending payment notifications to the beneficiaries and reduce payment inquiries.

**The Solution**

Citi implemented the Global Beneficiary Services Payment Tracker for ODEON Tourism. Unlike traditional solutions that only provide tracking details to the sending bank, the Global Beneficiary Services Payment Tracker sends an email or SMS directly to the beneficiary whenever a payment is made. Even if they are not a Citi client, the beneficiary can click on a link included in the payment notification/alert email and access real-time payment statuses.

Given the critical nature of hotel bookings to ODEON Tourism, it first tested the Global Beneficiary Services Payment Tracker with payments to a few of its own group entities. Once it was clear notifications arrived as anticipated and that real-time payment information was available, ODEON Tourism gave the go-ahead for Citi to implement the solution. The implementation process – which included designing a custom portal with ODEON Tourism’s branding – took just two weeks.



**The Result**

With the Global Beneficiary Services Payment Tracker fully implemented, ODEON Tourism no longer forwards SWIFT proof of payments to hotels before guest check-ins. The company now has implemented a streamlined operational process that fully automates payment and proof-of-payment notifications.

ODEON Tourism’s finance team has been freed up to focus on value-added tasks rather than forwarding proof of payments. At the same time, the hotels the company works with are able to benefit from the improved convenience and satisfaction that comes with being able to monitor payment statuses in real time. These hotels can also save themselves – and ODEON Tourism – time by resolving queries related to payments delayed in corresponding banking networks.

“Global Beneficiary Services Payment Tracker has been especially useful for ODEON Tourism as in high season, we have thousands of supplier payments and had to forward proof of payment emails to beneficiaries. Now we have eliminated this process, and the Payment Tracker does the work on our behalf.”

– **Nezih Buldu**, Senior Treasury Manager, Finance Department at ODEON Tourism