



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices in Hospitality

**Políticas e Práticas Ambientalmente Sustentáveis na
Hotelaria**

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ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE POLICIES
AND PRACTICES IN HOSPITALITY

POLÍTICAS E PRÁTICAS AMBIENTALMENTE
SUSTENTÁVEIS NA
HOTELARIA

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Abstract

Tourism has become increasingly prominent, as one of the fundamental pillars for the development of the European economy and for social wellbeing, having registered enormous growth in recent decades. But, alongside economic and social prosperity, this growth has also brought about a significant increase in the carbon footprint of this sector. In fact, the uncontrolled and unsupervised growth of the hotel industry, among other aspects of the tourism sector, had and continues to have direct negative consequences for the environment and indirect consequences for the wellbeing and health of local populations. Having had a large carbon footprint for many years, tourism is today one of the economic sectors that is under greater pressure to reverse this process and achieve carbon neutrality. Although measures have already been taken in this direction, there are still many challenges to overcome, particularly at the local level, so that tourism may effectively fulfill its potential for economic prosperity and social welfare.

The study and research work conducted within this dissertation, aimed at assessing the state of implementation of environmentally sustainable measures in the hospitality industry, whilst shedding some light on the motivations for managers of Portuguese hotels to improve their sustainable policy and on the factors that could positively and negatively impact their decisions. We wanted to assess whether factors such as regional economy, culture and legislation would affect the decision-making of hotel managers concerning Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices (ESPP) and what would be the revenues for the stakeholders.

Even though many studies have been recently conducted on the need and state of implementation of ESPP in hospitality, very few have investigated aspects related with legislation or with the beliefs, motivations and awareness of hotel managers in Portugal. Most of the so far conducted studies have been of objective nature, assessing levels and breadth of implementation of ESPP in the tourism sector. In our work, we have combined an objective with a subjective assessment, supported on a review of the emergent literature and backed by an empirical work of collecting and analysing data from relevant stakeholders. We have therefore adopted a mixed methodology approach, where we have used closed-end questionnaires towards two audience segments (hotel managers and hotel guests) and semi-structured one-to-one interviews with hospitality professionals (hotel managers).

A statistical analysis was conducted on the quantitative data collected with the questionnaires to derive descriptive statistics useful for assessing the formulated hypothesis. A grounded theory approach was implemented using the qualitative data gathered in the one-to-one interviews, leading to the acquisition of a better understanding of the reality on the field. The developed analysis was performed using both a deductive coding technique, based on concepts that were present in the previously formulated research questions, and an inductive coding technique whereby new concepts were identified during the data analysis. Such combination enabled to sustain some of the initial concepts and formulate new ones which overall contributed to the assessment and extension of the formulated themes.

Our results corroborate to a large extent the formulated theories and highlight that there is significant awareness from the involved stakeholders on the most well known aspects and factors of ESPP and their consequent impacts, as well as a great inclination to be involved. However, there is not a consistent understanding of the existence and beneficial impact of many other possible measures. Furthermore, when it comes to relevant standards and legislation, the lack of consolidated awareness and experience is more pronounced as it is concerning the breadth of environmentally friendly measures that can be adopted and the varying benefits that can be derived from their implementation. Likewise, cooperation between major stakeholders, namely governmental entities, regional and national authorities, tourism associations, and hospitality units is still insufficient to enable effective and sustained engagement of all parties. Although there is non-negligible enlightenment of the general public concerning the importance of ESPP it remains less clear how such perception influences choices and effective collaboration during hotel stays. Overall, our study suggests that hotels should embrace a more holistic approach to the definition and implementation of ESPP, clearly embedding them into the hotel's modus operandi and stimulating relationships and cooperation with interested stakeholders, including the guests.

Keywords: sustainability, environment, tourism, motivation, certification, policies, legislation, standards, strategy

Resumo

O turismo tem vindo a ganhar cada vez mais destaque, como um dos pilares fundamentais para o desenvolvimento da economia europeia e para o bem-estar social, tendo registado um enorme crescimento nas últimas décadas. Mas, a par da prosperidade económica e social, este crescimento trouxe também um aumento significativo na pegada de carbono deste setor. De facto, o crescimento descontrolado e não supervisionado da indústria hoteleira, entre outros aspetos do setor do turismo, teve e continua a ter consequências negativas diretas para o ambiente e consequências indiretas para o bem-estar e saúde das populações locais. Com uma grande pegada de carbono há muitos anos, o turismo é hoje um dos setores económicos que está sob maior pressão para reverter esse processo e alcançar a neutralidade de carbono. Embora já tenham sido tomadas medidas nesse sentido, ainda há muitos desafios a vencer, sobretudo a nível local, para que o turismo possa atingir de forma eficaz o seu potencial de prosperidade económica e bem-estar social.

O estudo e trabalho de investigação realizados no âmbito desta dissertação, visaram avaliar o estado de implementação de medidas ambientalmente sustentáveis na hotelaria, ao mesmo tempo tentando esclarecer as motivações para os gestores dos hotéis portugueses melhorarem a sua política sustentável e os fatores que podem positivamente e impactar negativamente as suas decisões. Queríamos avaliar se os fatores como a economia regional, cultura e legislação afetariam a tomada de decisão dos gestores hoteleiros sobre Políticas e Práticas Ambientalmente Sustentáveis (PPAS) e quais seriam as benefícios e retornos para todos os stakeholders.

Embora muitos estudos tenham sido realizados recentemente sobre a necessidade e estado de implementação de PPAS na hotelaria, poucos investigaram aspetos relacionados com a legislação ou com as crenças, motivações e consciência dos gestores hoteleiros em Portugal. A maioria dos estudos realizados até agora tem sido de natureza objetiva, avaliando níveis e amplitude de implementação de PPAS no setor de turismo. Neste trabalho, combinamos uma avaliação objetiva com uma avaliação subjetiva, apoiada numa revisão da literatura emergente e apoiada por um trabalho empírico de colheita e análise de dados de stakeholders relevantes. Adotamos, portanto, uma abordagem de metodologia mista, onde usamos

questionários fechados para dois segmentos de público (gerentes de hotel e hóspedes de hotel) e entrevistas semiestruturadas, um a um, com profissionais de hotelaria (gerentes de hotel).

Foi realizada uma análise estatística dos dados quantitativos coletados com os questionários para derivar estatísticas descritivas úteis para avaliar a hipótese formulada. Uma abordagem de teoria fundamentada foi implementada usando os dados qualitativos recolhidos nas entrevistas individuais, levando à aquisição de uma melhor compreensão da realidade no dia-a-dia dos hotéis. A análise desenvolvida foi realizada tanto por uma técnica de codificação dedutiva, baseada em conceitos que estavam presentes nas questões de pesquisa previamente formuladas, tanto por uma técnica de codificação indutiva, meio pelo qual, novos conceitos foram identificados durante a análise dos dados. Tal combinação permitiu sustentar alguns dos conceitos iniciais e formular novos que, de forma geral, contribuíram para a avaliação e ampliação dos temas formulados

Os nossos resultados corroboram em grande medida as teorias formuladas e destacam que há uma significativa consciencialização dos atores envolvidos sobre os aspetos e fatores mais conhecidos das PPAS e os seus consequentes impactos, bem como uma grande inclinação para o envolvimento dos stakeholders. No entanto, não há uma compreensão consistente da existência e do impacto benéfico de muitas outras medidas possíveis. Além disso, quando se trata de normas e legislação relevantes, a falta de conhecimento e experiência consolidada é mais pronunciada no que diz respeito à amplitude de medidas ambientalmente sustentáveis, que podem ser adotadas e aos vários benefícios que podem ser derivados da sua implementação. Da mesma forma, a cooperação entre as principais partes interessadas, nomeadamente entidades governamentais, autoridades regionais e nacionais, associações de turismo e unidades hoteleiras, é ainda insuficiente para permitir o envolvimento efetivo e sustentado de todas as partes. Embora haja um esclarecimento não negligenciável do público em geral sobre a importância das PPAS, permanece menos claro como essa percepção influencia as escolhas e a colaboração efetiva durante as estadias nos hotéis. Globalmente, o nosso estudo sugere que os hotéis devem adotar uma abordagem mais holística para a definição e implementação de PPAS, incorporando-os claramente no modus operandi do hotel e

estimulando as relações e a cooperação com as partes interessadas, incluindo os hóspedes.

Palavras-chave: sustentabilidade, meio ambiente, turismo, motivação, certificação, políticas, legislação, normas, estratégia

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List of Acronyms, Abbreviations and Definitions

CO₂ – Carbon dioxide

Carbon footprint - measure of the CO₂ emissions released into the atmosphere

Carbon neutrality - balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in natural carbon containers¹

DIS – Draft of International Standard

EC – European Commission

EDEN - European Destinations of Excellence

EMAS - Eco-management and Audit Scheme

EMS – Environmental Management System

ES – Environmental Sustainability

ESM – Environmentally Sustainable Measure

ESPP – Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices

ETIS - European Tourism Indicators System

EU – European Union

GSTC - Global Sustainable Tourism Council

HES - Hotel Energy Solutions

HVAC - Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning

IPAC - Instituto Português de Acreditação

IS – International Standard

ISO - International Organization for Standardization

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

TC – Technical Committee

TS – Technical Specification

UNO – United Nations Organization

UNWTO - UN World Tourism Organization

WG – Working Group

¹ According to the European Green Deal, carbon neutrality should be achieved by 2050, with an interim emission reduction target for 2030 of at least 55%

1. Introduction

1.1 Context, Motivation and Objectives

Tourism has been recognized as a key driver for the development of the European economy, and in the last years it has registered a tremendous growth indeed. But alongside economic prosperity, such growth also poses great challenges concerning the impact on the environment. Having had for many years a large carbon footprint, tourism is one of the economic sectors where significant pressure is now being made for reverting such situation.

With this dissertation, on the one hand, we wanted to have a good perception concerning the state of implementation of green measures in the hospitality industry, one of the important elements of the tourism sector. On the other hand, we wanted to understand the motivations for hotel managers to improve their sustainable policy and learn the factors that could positively and negatively impact their decisions and options towards the implementation of Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices (ESPP). Grounded on the results obtained by Khatter et. al. [1], concerning ESPP in hospitality, we wanted to assess whether factors such as regional economy, culture and legislation would affect the decision-making of hotel managers concerning ESPP and what would be the financial results for the stakeholders. Even though many studies have been recently conducted on the need and state of implementation of ESPP in hospitality, very few have looked at the problem from a legislation viewpoint or have taken into account local or regional social, cultural and economic aspects.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

Whilst being regarded as having high potential to positively impact all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the United Nations, the tourism sector still has a long way to go. To fulfill this potential, it is critical that all stakeholders are involved in the process and that all requirements and impacts are properly addressed.

One of the important elements of the tourism sector is the hospitality industry. Hoteliers and hospitality units have a crucial role in this process and they should be

properly supported by governmental entities. Access to relevant information and tools, notably regarding quality and environmentally sustainable practices criteria, should be ensured to all in a clear and easy manner. Unfortunately, even though many initiatives already exist at the European and worldwide levels, the landscape is still very much fragmented and consistent information struggles to reach every interested stakeholder. To make things harder, sustainability of tourism is very much dependent on the characteristics and culture of the region and thus guidance from local authorities would be needed for defining priorities, establishing targets and imposing measures at the regional level. Therefore, the problem of the negative impact of tourism activities on the environment is still a concern and the different challenges that need to be overcome and the solutions to adopt should be clearly identified.

Taking into consideration the stated problem and in line with the study objectives presented above, we have therefore formulated the following research questions and hypothesis based on the limited knowledge we had prior initiating this study:

- R1. Is the adoption of ESPP in the hotel industry leveraged by managers' personal convictions?
- R2. Does the knowledge on existing international standards, legislation and governmental initiatives addressing the adoption of environmentally sustainable policies and practices (ESPP) in the hospitality sector has a positive contribution towards the effective implementation of ESPP in hospitality units?
- R3. Are hotel managers adopting marketing strategies grounded on their ESPP?

Consequently, we have designed a work methodology that would allow us to assess the validity of the various hypotheses (positive, negative or null), as well as to identify the factors that would be contributing to that situation and even to uncover missing elements.

1.3 Document Structure

This dissertation is organized into 6 chapters to take the reader logically through the developed research study, according to the objectives stipulated for the dissertation. Chapter 2 presents a view on the relevant background knowledge based on a literature review, looking at sustainability in the tourism sector in different dimensions, namely, standards, legislation, and the current situation in the hospitality industry. The research methodology chapter starts by describing

alternative strategies for conducting research work, consequently presenting and justifying the approaches selected to conduct the present study. The research findings chapter presents the data collected from the online questionnaires surveys and the one-to-one interviews held with hotel managers. It also presents the analysis that was performed on that data and the assessment of the formulated hypothesis. The final chapter summarizes the obtained results, drawing conclusions and providing some recommendations.

2 Background and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the review work conducted during the course of this dissertation, addressing the current status of aspects that were identified as relevant to its development. The obtained outcomes have helped in defining in a more precise way the research questions put forward as the drivers for this research and confirm their pertinence. They have made possible to establish an up-to-date knowledge base concerning the implementation of sustainable measures within the hospitality sector.

The importance of standards and existing legislation, specifically targeting the implementation of sustainable measures within the hospitality industry, was deemed as being instrumental. In fact, the importance of standard is well-established worldwide in almost any economic vector of modern society. On the one hand, the existence of clear standards can be an extremely useful tool for players to gain knowledge of recommended practices and on how to implement them. On the other hand, they enable to define expected quality levels and ensure consistency across players within each domain. Contemporary, they provide the means to implement management and control procedures smoothly and they play a crucial role in a free-competition market. Acknowledging such importance of standards, this chapter dedicates section 1 to this topic.

Understanding the degree and breadth of implementation of sustainable measures in the hospitality market worldwide was assumed as an obvious mandatory need for the development of this dissertation and for helping clarify the pertinence of the research questions. Accordingly, a study was conducted based on scientific publications and credible online resources. The results of such a study are presented in section 2.

Marketing actions and approaches complement the implementation of quality and environmentally sustainable standards and procedures. Indeed, such implementation is expected to provide competitive advantage to hotels whilst bringing increased levels of customer satisfaction, especially when disseminated efficiently. Section 3 is thus devoted to this topic.

At the end of this chapter a summative analysis is presented and conclusions are drawn.

2.2 Standards, Legislation and Initiatives

Standards offer the basis for mutual understanding in society at large, clearly delineating guidelines and recommendations, aiming quality and safe service provisioning in a free-competition market. They consist in documented technical specifications that result from the collaborative work of any interested entity from any sector, namely, industry, consumers, public authorities and researchers, and is conducted on a voluntary basis. Such documents are approved and published by worldwide established and recognized standardization bodies. One of such bodies is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), active in many distinct areas, notably that of quality and sustainability within the hospitality domain. Relevant ISO international standards are frequently adopted as regulation by the different countries but also at the European level, becoming legally binding documents. Standards are thus instrumental towards supporting economic growth and ensuring public interest [2], [3].

2.2.1 The role of the United Nations Organization

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development² running under the auspices of the United Nations Organization, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has been instrumental in accelerating the implementation of environmentally sustainable measures across many different economic sectors worldwide. Tourism has been considered as one of the economic sectors with potential to impact positively all of the goals with emphasis on three of them: inclusive and sustainable economic growth (goal 8); sustainable consumption and production (goal 12); and sustainable use of oceans and marine resources (goal 14). Figure 1 highlights this intersection between tourism and the SDGs.

² <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>



Figure 1 - Tourism and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals³

To harness such potential, the UN has set up a specialized agency operating in the field of tourism, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)⁴, with the mandate to supporting and promoting environmental sustainability practices in tourism, aligned with the 2030 Agenda⁵. Besides being a reliable and free source of data, providing up-to-date statistics concerning tourism worldwide, private and public initiatives towards a greener tourism and identifying involved stakeholders and their roles, it acts as a point of cohesion for establishing recommendations and offering guidance on how tourism activities can help reaching the SDGs.

The newly released “UNWTO Recommendations for the Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy” [4], is the most recent example of such contributions. They have been developed in partnership with the G20 Tourism Working Group⁶, and they provide to tourism stakeholders, notably those in the hospitality sector, the

³ source: World Tourism Organization, <https://www.unwto.org/tourism4sdgs>

⁴ <https://www.unwto.org>

⁵ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

⁶ <https://www.g20.org/italian-g20-presidency/working-groups.html>

fundamental steps and lines of action that should be endorsed towards meeting the SDGs within the tourism industry, effectively deployment environmentally sustainable practices. Moreover, they also include examples of ongoing initiatives to motivate and serve as models in the introduction of similar approaches and measures.

The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme⁷ is one of the initiatives supported by UNWTO relevant to the hospitality industry. Its goal is to foster the deployment of sustainable consumption and production policies and practices in tourism. The focus is on energy and water consumption reduction and minimization of waste and pollution, involving the different stakeholders, from companies to consumers.

The UNWTO Hotel Energy Solutions (HES)⁸ project established in collaboration with European entities, targets specifically the hospitality sector in the European Union. In addition to disseminating relevant information to companies, the project offers technical support and training services to help them in mitigating their negative impact on the environment due to the intensive-energy consumption. Such services were considered as instrumental for small and medium hotels, where it is frequent to find obsolete technologies, limited specialized human resources and reduced conscientiousness of existing sustainable alternatives. This is reflected on published studies, which indicate less pro-activeness in small hotels compared to large hotel chains. Thus, the aim of HES is to support such smaller hoteliers in reducing their carbon footprint whilst reducing their operation costs, consequently increasing their revenues. To realize this mission, HES has made available a free online tool, named *HES e-toolkit*. It generates reports on the hotel's energy consumption levels, accordingly recommending appropriate mitigating measures, whilst providing also an estimative of savings the hotel might obtain with their implementation.

2.2.2 European and International sustainable tourism legislation and initiatives

Acknowledging the key role of tourism for the development of the European economy, the European Commission started in 2007 endorsing efforts to revise its policies and regulations targeting the sustainable growth of tourism. Many of such efforts target specifically the hospitality industry, which is recognized as one of the important elements in the development of tourism. Based on findings obtained by

⁷ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-tourism>

⁸ <https://www.unwto.org/hotel-energy-solution>

the special working group on sustainable tourism (Tourism Sustainability Group), the Commission has delineated a set of measures, goals and timeline known as the Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism [5]. Many of the actions proposed in that agenda were defined to try to overcome challenges directly related with environmental sustainability. Table 1 lists some of such challenges and the recommended approaches to address them.

Table 1 - Sub-set of challenges and principles of the Agenda for a sustainable tourism

Challenges	Approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preserving natural and cultural resources ● Limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations, including the use of natural resources and waste production ● Promoting the wellbeing of the local community ● Limiting the environmental impact of tourism-related transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking a holistic, integrated approach ● Planning for the long term ● Involving all stakeholders ● Reflecting impacts in costs ● Setting and respecting limits ● Practising continuous monitoring

In fact, it was recognized by the European Commission that the growth in tourism should be closely coupled with the promotion of social and environmental objectives. Tourism is one of the sectors where synergies can be established easily between economic growth and environmental sustainability. Indeed, local tourism is intrinsically bounded to the unique characteristics of the local natural and social environment and the richness of the local culture. On the other hand, tourism can bring economic prosperity to local regions, consequently fuelling the conservation and development of destinations. This in turn can potentiate new growth in tourism and thus, mutual benefits can be obtained with improvements introduced at either side.

The involvement of all stakeholders refers also to bringing the tourists themselves into the equation. Tourists and hotel customers need to be aware that their behavior is also vital for the successful implementation of environmentally sustainable measures. When involved in the process, they can be critical and take informed choices in favor of sustainable measures and actively contribute to their implementation. Such environmentally responsible behavior of customers, in turn, is likely to be a motivation for hotels and touristic entities to engage effectively in environmentally sustainable procedures.

The European Commission recommends that the adoption of the set of actions towards achieving such goals, be supported by appropriate policies and international standards so that coherent and consistent results may be achieved.

2.2.2.1 Initiatives

Since the release of the referred Agenda, the European Commission has been quite active in defining tools and initiatives, as well as regulations, to support companies and stakeholders involved in tourism activities. The goal is to promote the economic growth of tourism and consequently of local and European economies and, in the process, making sure that all requirements and impacts are fully taken into account, notably, those related with environmental aspects.

Nonetheless, efforts endorsed by the European Union in favour of a sustainable environment have been initiated many years before. A well-known and long lasting example is the EU Eco Label⁹ established in 1992 and recognised all over the world. When awarded to a company, product or service, it certifies compliance with high environmental standards. Through a set of defined criteria, it offers guidance on how stakeholders should perform to decrease their footprint and become environmentally sustainable. A section dedicated to tourist accommodations (EU Ecolabel for Tourist Accommodation Services) defines the major challenges that undermine the level of performance of hotels and other accommodations concerning environmentally sustainable practices, providing guidelines on how to overcome them. A considerable large number of criteria specific to hospitality have been specified, and the adherence to some of them is deemed compulsory for being awarded the EU Eco Label. In section 2.2.2.3 more details are provided on these mandatory criteria and the certification process.

The EC Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) system¹⁰ acts as an instrument for companies and organizations across all economic sectors to self-evaluate their level of accomplishment towards a positive contribution to the preservation of the environment. It also provides the means for managing such performance and improving it where necessary, providing guidance to identify the adequate means and paths. It thus assists tourism stakeholders in reducing their footprint and

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/>

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

promoting the quality of their services. EMAS can be seen as being both a practical tool and a EU regulation. Current version of EMAS regulations are aligned with the directives defined in the ISO 14001 (please see section 2.2.3.1) standard. This means that entities that already run an ISO 14001 compliant environmental management system will be able to use EMAS without having to invest too much effort. The EMAS defined methodology for companies to achieve their performance goals concerning their carbon footprint is based on the four key principles “Plan – Do – Check – Act” as illustrated in Figure 2.

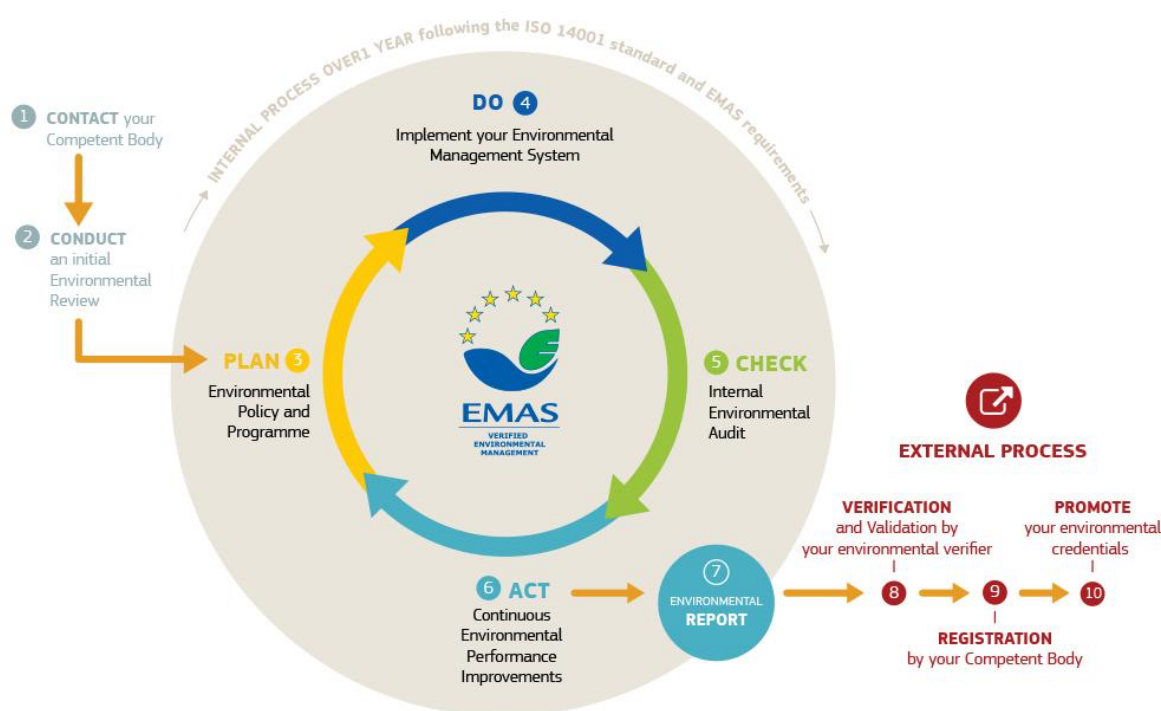


Figure 2 - EMAS methodology¹¹

Acknowledging the significant economic role of the tourism industry in Europe whilst simultaneously recognizing its considerably large negative impact on the environment, the EU has always encouraged the use of EMAS by the tourism players, notably tourist accommodations. Given that EMAS addresses all aspects of a sustainable environment, it is especially suited to the hospitality sector, whose carbon footprint spans multiple different areas. Especially within the last five years, the EC has multiplied its efforts to disseminate within the tourism industry the benefits of using EMAS towards improving their environmental performance, to try and engage more companies in adopting it. On the EMAS Web site, there is currently available diversified information, from descriptions of the expected

¹¹ source: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/join_emas/how_does_it_work_step0_en.htm

benefits, through the procedures to undertake to start using EMAS and become EMAS-registered, to success stories reporting, Likewise, the EU it has endorsed actions for promoting towards the general public, sustainable and EMAS registered accommodations, providing them more visibility. One example is the EMAS Accommodation online Infosheet, listing EMAS registered tourist companies on the official EMAS Web site. Another line of action pursuit, was the establishment of liaisons or partnerships with national tourism Web sites, to include reference to EMAS.

The European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) award¹² is an initiative of the European Commission to encourage and recompense the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices in small tourist destinations in Europe. By publicly recognizing and advertising such destinations with the EDEN award based on their environmentally responsible models, the goal is to foster change in the tourism industry operations towards the adoption of such practices, serving as raw model for others. This is seen as a contribution to foster the effective engagement of tourism companies towards the EU commitment to a climate-neutral Europe and implementation of circular economies.

The Tourism Business Portal ¹³ is an official Web site of the European Union that provides valuable information for tourism companies, notably hotels, on requirements that should be respected when operating their businesses.

The Virtual Tourism Observatory ¹⁴ developed and maintained by the European Commission, is an online tool that provides up-to-date statistics and information on trends within the tourism industry. Among such data, it offers analysis on economic and environmental impact in the sector. It also includes a user-friendly search tool to allow access to its large repository of data.

Given the important role of tourism towards the fulfillment of European and United Nations sustainability goals, the European Commission has defined a set of indicators to assess the effective level of engagement and contribution of tourist companies and players. The European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS)¹⁵ consists in a set of tools to assist them, not only in measuring their performance in aspects

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/eden_en

¹³ <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/business-portal/>

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/vto/>

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en

concerned with environmental sustainability, but also in planning their operation having in mind relevant aspects for reducing their footprint. ETIS serves as a management tool, a monitoring system and as a source of information.

Contemporarily to the described initiatives, programmes, projects and tools launched and supported by the EC, which have a permanent and continuous character, the EU also promotes and conducts discrete actions and events to raise awareness to the former among stakeholders. One very recent example of such events was the webinar held in January 2021, having as target audience the hospitality industry. The webinar was called “The EU Ecolabel for Tourist Accommodations - Engaging together in a sustainable recovery” and aimed at disseminating the role of the EU Ecolabel in the context of the European Union’s environmentally sustainable goals and to present in detail the EU Ecolabel criteria for tourist accommodations.

The Sustainable Hospitality Alliance¹⁶ is an international organization formed by a broad range of hotel companies, from world-leading chains to small local hotels. It is active since 1992, propelled by the advent of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the publication of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It has since then developed free practical tools and resources for the hospitality industry, with an emphasis on environmental management.

2.2.2.2 Legislation

In any economic and social field, legislation encompasses the set of legal rules, directives and recommendations, often supported in international standards, which govern the activities therein. Legislation specific to tourism activities exists at either local, or European and global levels. Local legislation intends to account for specific characteristics and needs of the different regions and countries and is issued by local and regional authorities and national governments.

At the European level, the EU through the European Commission (EC) is responsible for the development of legislation, which is then submitted for approval to the European Parliament and to the European Council. EU legislation encompasses distinct forms, among which, regulations, directives and decisions assume a prominent role.

¹⁶ <https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/>

Regulations are legally mandatory resolutions that should be applied exhaustively across all EU countries. An example is the Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European Parliament and Council, which defines the requirements for organizations to participate in a community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Any organization wishing to engage in such community needs to comply necessarily with all of the identified requirements.

Directives establish objectives that all EU countries should meet, without however defining the procedure that countries should adopt towards achieving those goals. An exemplification of this is the recent proposal from the EC for a directive aiming to strengthen sustainability reporting, called “Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive” (CSRD). EU legislation requires large companies to disclose information on how they address social and environmental challenges, according to the “Non-financial Reporting Directive” (NFRD) of 2014. However, there is a generalized frustration about the trustworthiness, completion and homogeneity of the information that companies usually disclose. This is mainly because the NFRD does not prescribe how companies should go about their reporting. The new CSRD recommends the use of a uniform set of standards.

Decisions define the requirements and conditions that must be observed by entities or countries when engaging in specific actions. A case in point is the “Commission Decision (EU) 2017/175” concerning the establishment of the EU Ecolabel criteria for tourist accommodation, which specifies the characteristics an hotel should have and the set of requirements it should fulfill, to be awarded the EU Ecolabel.

The Interreg Programme offers a platform¹⁷ where stakeholders may consult the existing EU legislation concerning environmentally sustainable practices in any economic field, including tourism. Whilst especially devoted to support regional policy makers around Europe, it also provides the opportunity for the interested community to be involved and stay informed.

Nonetheless, the source for the EU legislative documents is the Official Journal of the European Union¹⁸, where it is possible to find the ones dedicated to EU Ecolabel criteria¹⁹ and EMAS regulations²⁰ for tourist accommodations.

¹⁷ <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/>

¹⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

¹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017D0175&qid=1621158059212&from=EN>

2.2.2.3 Certification

Certification is the process whereby a company or an organization is officially recognized as fulfilling a number of stipulated rules or regulations. Usually, an official document is delivered attesting such level of achievement.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)²¹ is a non-profit organization that defines criteria and manages standards for sustainability applicable at a global scale within the tourism industry. The GSTC Criteria are divided into two groups, one of which is the *Industry Criteria* applicable to hotels and tour operators. They establish the goals and a common understanding of the measures that tourism businesses should aim at and implement for contributing positively to environmental sustainability. In addition to establish the baseline definition for an environmentally sustainable tourism, the GSTC plays a decisive role towards ensuring that these goals are effectively met, thus providing guarantees to all stakeholders, notably to hotel customers. This is achieved via the GSTC activities related with certification. Certification can be seen as auditing operations to assess the level of performance of involved players against the established baseline, accordingly issuing a formal confirmation of compliance. Although not performing directly the auditing, the GSTC accredits external entities, empowering them to conduct it. Accredited Certification Bodies, use the GSTC criteria to certify that tourism companies, such as hotels, do have in place and running, the appropriate sustainable policies and practices.

GSTC also recognizes standards or systems defined by various initiatives, programmes and eco-labels active in the sustainable tourism arena worldwide. This recognition is awarded when the standard or system is considered equivalent to or aligned with the GSTC Criteria for sustainable tourism. Whilst necessarily incorporating at their core the GSTC principles and criteria, some of these standards are also based on international specifications and agreements developed and published by world wide organizations, notably the United Nations and ISO (for relevant ISO standards, please refer to section 2.2.3). The complete list can be found in the GSTC Web site.

²⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02009R1221-20190109>

²¹ <https://www.gstcouncil.org/>

At the EU level, the designated *Competent Bodies*, the *Accreditation and Licensing Bodies* per country and the *Environmental Verifiers*²² are the entities responsible for the EMAS registration and certification processes and EU Eco-label verification. In Portugal, the Instituto Português de Acreditação (IPAC)²³ is the official body overseeing such responsibility. Whilst not performing directly the certification, just like the GSTC, it accredits a number of auditing companies to act as national environmental verifiers, which are the ones that perform actually such evaluation process. Their role is to assess whether a company environmental policy, management and performance comply with the requirements of the EMAS regulations.

Following the Commission Decision (EU) 2017/175, on establishing EU Ecolabel criteria for tourist accommodation, which revises a former decision from 2009, certification bodies may award the EU Eco-label to a tourist accommodation if, during the assessment process, they verify that the minimum specified conditions are effectively met by the accommodation. In addition to establish the criteria, the EU 2017/715 Decision also provides the guidelines on how the assessment and verification processes should be conducted on a criteria basis. The EU Ecolabel criteria are divided into two major classes, one of which contains a limited set of mandatory criteria that hotels must adhere to (22 criteria), whilst the other one contains a larger set of optional criteria (45 criteria). However, from these optional criteria, the accommodation applying for the Ecolabel, must comply with a minimum number. Table 2 lists the all of the compulsory criteria applicable to tourist accommodations whereas provides some examples of optional criteria. In each class, criteria are further grouped according to the environmental aspect they address. As shown in Table 3, points are assigned to the optional criteria. If, during the verification in an organization, the certification body attest that a certain criterion is fulfilled, it assigns it a certain number of points, up to a maximum, as indicated in the aforementioned Decision EU 2017/715.

²² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emas_contacts/accreditation_licensing_bodies_en.htm

²³ <https://www.ipac.pt>

Table 2 - Eco-label criteria for tourist accommodations

Mandatory criteria	Group
Basis of an Environmental Management System Staff training Information to guests General maintenance Consumption monitoring	General Management Criteria
Energy efficient space heating and water heating appliances Energy efficient air conditioning and air-based heat pumps appliances Energy efficient lighting Thermoregulation Automatic switching off of HVAC and lighting Outside heating and air conditioning appliances Procurement of electricity from a renewable electricity supplier Coal and heating oils	Energy Criteria
Efficient water fittings: Bathroom taps and showers Efficient water fittings: Toilets and urinals Reduction in laundry achieved through reuse of towels and bedclothes	Water Criteria
Waste prevention: Food service waste reduction plan Waste prevention: Disposable items Waste sorting and sending for recycling	Waste and Waste-Water Criteria
No smoking in common areas Promotion of environmentally preferable means of transport Information appearing on the EU Ecolabel	Other Criteria

Table 3 - Some Important Optional Eco-label Criteria

Optional Criteria	Maximum Points	Group
EMAS registration, ISO certification of the tourist accommodation	5	General management criteria
EMAS registration or ISO certification of suppliers	5	General management criteria
Energy efficient air conditioning and air-based heat pumps appliances	3,5	Energy Criteria
Automatic switch off appliances/ devices	4,5	Energy Criteria
Procurement of electricity from a renewable electricity supplier	4	Energy Criteria
Efficient water fittings: Bathroom taps and showers	4	Water Criteria
Efficient water fittings: Toilets and urinals	4,5	Water Criteria
Washing machine water consumption	3	Water Criteria
Durable Goods	4	Waste and Waste-Water Criteria
Waste Water Treatment	3	Waste and Waste-Water Criteria
Local and Organic Products	4	Other Criteria
Additional environmental and social actions	3	Other Criteria

The Ecolabel can be awarded to the organization only if it accumulates at least 20 points from the set of optional criteria, in addition to fulfilling all the mandatory criteria. This target number can nevertheless increase up to 34 points, depending on

the type of services the organization offers. Table 4 lists such services and additional points required.

Table 4 - Additional point requirements

Services offered	Minimum points required
Food services	3
Access to and management of green areas	3
Leisure of fitness facilities for guests	3
Leisure of fitness facilities for non-residents	5

Table 3 also highlights the important role that ISO standards and EMAS have in this certification process.

2.2.3 International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

ISO is an independent body operating worldwide devoted to the development and publication of standards in many different economic, technical and social areas. Its members are national standards organizations, but any international entity, governmental and non-governmental, can also collaborate with ISO in the development of the standards. ISO is structured in Technical Committees (TCs) with specific areas of intervention, being responsible for conducting the work towards the development of specific-domain standards. ISO standards are said to be open, because anyone can have access to them and consequently implement them (even though the documents need to be paid for).

The ISO Technical Committee 228 is the ISO section responsible for standards and technical specifications in the field of tourism (ISO/TC 228 Tourism and related services²⁴). Within this committee, several working groups have been established, one of which is exclusively dedicated to standards for sustainable tourism (ISO/TC228/WG13, Sustainable Tourism). Some of the relevant specifications developed by this committee and working group are the family of standards ISO21401, *Tourism and related services - Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements*. WG13 is currently developing a new specification (ISO/DIS 23405, *Tourism and related services – Sustainable tourism –*

²⁴ <https://www.iso.org/committee/375396.html> ; <https://committee.iso.org/home/tc228>

Principles, terminology and Model), aiming at harmonizing the currently fragmented landscape of principles, guidelines and recommendations of good practices in related to sustainability in tourism.

Besides the work of TC 228, other ISO standards published by other TCs with broader areas of application are also relevant for the tourism sectors, notably for the hospitality industry. Such is the case of the standard ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use*. This standard identifies the requirements that should be fulfilled by a system especially dedicated to the efficient management of the environmental performance of any type of organization. This standard is a part of the ISO 14000 family of standards, addressing different aspects of environmental management.

Why bother with Tourism? Well, for one it accounts for about 10% of jobs worldwide, according to World Travel and Tourism Council (*Economic Impact 2019*). It is also one of the world's biggest and developing economic sectors, due to the billions of people who travel each year. Expectations are that these numbers continue to grow by 3.3 % annually until 2030 according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization. International tourism accounts for 30% of services exports worldwide, bringing economic prosperity to many local communities, simultaneously encouraging a global connectivity and offering equal opportunities. Not only has the tourism sector been growing daily, providing jobs for millions of people (even if it came to a halt with the Covid-19 pandemic), as it is an industry that contributes to breaking cultural barriers and prejudice, establishing bounds between different races. It is also ideally placed to contribute directly to many of the United Nations' 17 sustainability development goals (SDGs).

Why bother with standards within the tourism sectors? Because they represent a combined of practices, agreed throughout the tourism industry, as the best ones, bringing a unified and consistent baseline. The above-referred benefits of the intensive expansion of international tourism for the implementation of the UN SDGs, can be jeopardized if recognized standards are not adopted at a global scale. With many countries lacking regulation and guidance, notably regarding quality and environmentally sustainable practices criteria, the role of standards should not be underestimated. Consistent worldwide contributions should be aimed at to unleash the full potential of the tourism contribution in reversing the negative impacts on the environment.

Under the umbrella of ISO, tourism industry stakeholders and national organizations have been creating standards through finding consensus on the best way to deliver tourist services without causing negative effects on the environment. So far, this effort has resulted in more than 20 international standards and technical specifications that help public and private organizations improve their tourist services in various dimensions. Standards are meant to improve sustainability, quality, reliability, and overall safety in tourism activities, spreading confidence among tourists whilst also raising their awareness for the threat that tourist activities might have on the preservation of the environment if appropriate measures would not be adopted. International standards promoted by ISO provide a solid basis for economic growth and increased welfare and play an important role in assisting any organization and the general public towards contributing to the 17 UN SDGs [6].

While tourism itself has brought a number of economic benefits, its impact on the environment has not been quite so beneficial. The resources consumed by staying in tourist accommodations are often much greater than in our daily lives. This awareness is making sustainable tourism popular, so much that what we call "alternative" today will be "mainstream" in ten years. The various industry players in the tourism sectors, from hotels and accommodation providers to travel agents and tour operators, airlines and cruise companies to chain suppliers, are all keen in becoming sustainable and eager to raising their quality levels. And this is good news for the preservation of the environment, because "sustainability in the tourism industry can only be achieved if products and services are developed with quality in mind," says Miguel Mirones, the president of the Spanish Tourist Quality Institute.

2.2.3.1 ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use*

Set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ISO 14001 [7] is an international standard for the implementation of environmental management systems (EMS). According to ISO, the standard *"was designed to help organizations improve their environmental performance through the efficient use of their resources and the reduction of waste, while gaining advantage over their competitors alongside the confidence of stakeholders"*. It also provides a practical tool to assist companies in contributing to the preservation of the environment and achieve global climate goals, notably, the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving those goals is not only valuable for preserving the natural world, but can also help companies boost their business by

enhancing brand image, improving employer reputation and employee retention, reducing regulatory and legal risks, and shaping and improving the implementation and reception of shared values throughout the supply chain.

The standard ISO 14001 was developed to meet the needs, nature and dimension of any organization. According to [8], the unique requirement is that organizations must consider the environmental impacts of all their daily activities, specifically "*air pollution, water and wastewater issues, waste management, soil contamination, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and resource use and efficiency*". As with all management systems, the key to success is continuous improvement through regular revision and adaptation to evolving business strategies and environmental concerns. Accordingly, the ISO14001 standard itself is regularly revised to ensure that it adapts and remains relevant. From its original 2004 form to the 2015 revision, the main improvements have been aimed at greater integration of environmental management practices into the strategic decisions of the organization. They have also targeted the adoption of a holistic approach to ensure that all services have a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle.

The practical benefits that organizations can expect to obtain from implementing ISO14001 include the following:

- being compliant with current and future regulatory requirements;
- increasing employee engagement;
- gaining stakeholder confidence by improving the reputation of the organization;
- achieving strategic business objectives through financial benefits due to improved efficiency and reduced costs;
- improving the performance of all stakeholders in the supply chain through integration with the organization's business systems.

ISO 14001 thus offers great potential to improve an organization's overall performance through a clear focus on sustainable practices and commitment to a "greener" environment. Accredited third-party entities are entitled to act as independent certification bodies to perform the assessment and verification of the compliance of the organizations practices against the requirements of the standard. Being awarded the ISO 14001 certification, besides ensuring to the organization itself that procedures are being implemented effectively, is a trustworthy way of letting all stakeholders to become aware of that. Nonetheless, according to ISO, accredited

certification to ISO 14001 is not a prerequisite and thus ISO encourages organizations to take advantage of the many benefits of the standard, even without the accredited certification process.

2.2.3.2 ISO 21401 - Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements

Accommodation establishments are key to the tourism industry and consequently hold colossal potential for improving their effect on the environment and contributing to local economies in positive ways. Yet, regardless of the numerous sustainable programs that have been created worldwide by a variety of interested entities for the tourism industry, there has never been a genuinely fair and impartial International Standard devoted to sustainable accommodations, until the creation of ISO 21401. ISO 21401, *Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements* [9], defines the requirements that tourist accommodations should adhere to when operating an environmental management system, covering all aspects in which their daily operations have an impact. ISO 21401 was developed by the ISO technical committee ISO/TC228, *Tourism and related services*. This standard was released in 2018 and specifically addresses environmental, social and economic aspects that can be controlled by hotels and other tourist accommodations to implement a sustainability management system.

The main difference in relation to ISO 14001, is the inclusion of additional dimensions of sustainability, notably social and economic, specifically targeting the hospitality sector. It covers social aspects related to employees and guests, notably, the respect for human rights and security. At the socio-economic level, it addresses the contribution to local economies. Manuel Otero, Chair of the ISO technical committee under whose responsibility the standard was created (ISO/TC228), stated its importance for enabling the tourism sectors to unleash their full potential in contributing positively to the preservation of the environment. Not only it provides an holistic approach, addressing the sustainability challenge in tourism from all different angles, as it is free from commercial interests, being accessible to any player in the field.

The other value added brought in by this newer standard, grounded on the fact that it specifically targets the hospitality industry, was the possibility of unifying the rather fragmented landscape of tools, guidelines, programmes and directives

available for tourist accommodations to manage and improve their environmental performance. *“The fact that there are many schemes for sustainable accommodation from different countries and organizations can make it difficult for such facilities to know what is useful and reliable and how to meet their requirements,”* according to Manuel Otero.

“This internationally agreed standard provides clarity in a confusing market, applies to all types of accommodation and can serve as a tool to improve sustainable management. It will also help to stimulate the market for more sustainability in both the accommodation sector and the tourism industry as a whole.” he said.

Alexandre Garrido, convenor of the working group that actually developed the standard (ISO/TC228/WG13), stressed that tourist accommodations that adopt ISO 21401 to assist them in managing and enhancing their sustainability, will see their reputation improved and will gain competitive advantage, as they will be able to claim that they are “tourist-specific environmentally sustainable”. They will be able to provide not only high-quality services to their guests, but will gain also the confidence and the esteem of the local community and will improve cooperation with suppliers.

2.2.3.3 ISO/DIS 23405, Tourism and related services – Sustainable tourism – Principles, terminology and Model

Work is still ongoing concerning the development of this future standard that aims at bringing uniformity to the fragmented landscape of terminology, challenges and solutions for achieving sustainability within the tourism industry. ISO 23405 [10] is currently in the stage of Draft of International Standard (DIS).

Up to present, the most consensual aspects of sustainability in tourism have fallen under the umbrella of environmental protection, namely, reducing CO₂ emissions and controlling the energy and water consumption. But there are many other aspects that can also be considered, such as preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, local community welfare and social issues, or local economy. In fact many different concepts associated with sustainable tourism exist today.

Regardless the great steps that have already been taken, both at the regulation side as well as by the accommodations themselves, diversified lines of action have been followed making it difficult for newcomers to adopt the best approaches, as well as for assessing the overall progress made within the tourism industry towards a more sustainable world.

ISO has understood that, among the many challenges faced by tourism organizations for improving their environment performance, this fragmentation and diversity assumes a critical role, as it is likely to hinder the effective contributions of tourism companies towards achieving the UN SDGs

Therefore, it recognized that establishing a baseline with the minimal principles for a sustainable tourism and a definition of a common understanding would be essential. This is the aim of this future standard, which hopefully will be endorsed by all stakeholders, so that individual efforts can positively sum up together and deliver sound results.

2.2.3.4 ISO/TS 13811:2015, Tourism and related services – Guidelines on developing environmental specifications for accommodation establishments

ISO/TS 13811 [11] is a Technical Specification (TS) and was developed in liaison with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Its purpose is to provide guidelines for the development of specifications and legislation at the country level for the hospitality sector aiming at increasing the positive impact of such sector on the environment.

Whilst many aspects of the tourism accommodation carbon footprint can be considered at a global scale, there are specificities of the habitats around the world that dictate which ones are more important to consider for preserving those diverse environments. For example, water management assumes greater importance in an hotel located in a small island when compared to one located in a northwest European city; likewise, measures to ensure the protection of wildlife should be especially considered in accommodations located in the Kruger South African National park.

Accounting for this diversity, and consequently for the necessity of having not only global, but also local specifications, adopting though common principles, ISO in collaboration with GSTC has developed the 13811 Technical Specification. Governments or private entities when defining requirements and principles the hospitality sector should comply with at a national level can therefore use this TS, ensuring harmonization worldwide.

2.2.4 Conclusions

Standards impact all aspects of human life, providing fundamental contribution to quality, economic prospects and social justice and well-being when consistently

adopted and deployed. Legislation is often based on standards and can be seen as tool to govern their enforcement, thus providing guarantees to all intervenients, from the manufacturer or producer to the final consumer.

Within the tourism industry, notably the European one, standards and legislation addressing environmental aspects rely essentially on the work being developed by ISO and the EU, the latter through the European Commission. Their work is strongly grounded on the United Nations directives, most notably the defined 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development and its agency World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which has the specific goal of supporting environmental sustainable practices in tourism.

Tourism has been recognized by these organizations as an essential piece in achieving the best trade-off between economic growth and environment sustainability.

Despite the considerable work that has already been developed by those entities, there still exists a high level of fragmentation and lack of awareness among the tourist players of existing standardized tools, initiatives and regulations. Individual actions endorsed towards improving environmental performance, many times not aligned with standards and/or legislation, still prevail. Acknowledging this situation and understanding that it hinders the effective contribution of the tourism industry to a sustainable environment, all of the three international organizations are endorsing efforts to bring the needed awareness and harmonization into the tourism landscape.

2.3 Worldwide current situation of sustainable practices in hospitality

The implementation of sustainable practices can be driven by different factors, namely: financial benefits; strategy; operational; cultural; legislation. It is also very much dependent on the management's commitment and the involvement of staff.

Having a good knowledge of the situation concerning the sustainability performance of tourist accommodations worldwide, with a focus on Europe, was considered to be an important step of this dissertation. Such understanding can be very useful to enable a consistent analysis of the data gathered in the Portuguese market and in establishing causal relationships between different aspects and occurrences. Besides, it is quite interesting to see how Portugal compares to important tourist destinations in Europe, as well as identifying possible paths for improvement, especially given

the rising importance of tourism to the national and regional economy and the preservation of the natural resources.

From our study, we have observed that it is not possible to have a unified view on the state of implementation of sustainable practices in the hospitality industry worldwide, but rather at a nationwide level. This was nevertheless expected, as we had learned while getting familiar with relevant international standards, that sustainability in the tourism sector is strongly bounded to local culture, habits, and nature. Additionally, many studies only indicate the degree of adherence to green practices and impacts on the carbon footprint. Still, based on the revised articles and online reports [12] - [23], it is clear that the hospitality industry is rapidly embracing sustainability all over the world and that the majority of units already implements a few.

In [13], based on her professional experience having as clients hospitality units, the author concludes that many hoteliers are already implementing green practices but in a loose manner, without having a clear view of the full breadth of measures they could adopt. More importantly, they do not assess such measures or the daily hotel operations and, consequently, they do not have a faithful perception of the impact they are actually having on the environment.

In a recently published study addressing the performance of European hotels of the luxury segment [14], the authors indicate that most of them are already implementing environmentally sustainable measures. However, they have realised that there is no clear pattern on such implementation or common view on what measures are the most important or effective.

Many times, associated with sustainable practices, it is possible to find socially responsible or solidarity activities, which also contribute to the protection of the environment [14], [15]. The motifs that compel companies in implementing them are often varied, presenting a higher level of subjectivity in regards to the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices, being very much dependent on the sensitivity of hotel managers. As a result, hotels have a much lower degree of adherence to socially responsible actions than to environmentally sustainable practices.

Some hoteliers have also realised that guests are increasingly eager to establish strong bonds with nature and regional culture. They are no longer expecting luxury only, but rather they want to have the opportunity to live authentic/native experiences [16]. This discovery/consciousness led to the development of a new

concept of high-quality hospitality services closely coupled/integrated with the dynamics of the local communities and natural conditions, offering a sustainable balance with the environment as a whole, right from its core.

Researchers have also investigated the use of environmental management practices and systems in hotel accommodations and the relations that can be established between such use and the company's sustainability performance and commitment to meaningful green practices [15], [22]. In [22] the authors have analysed a large number of hotels in the Italian Alps and have identified three types of units regarding their attitude towards sustainable practices. They have concluded that the two groups that were more committed to making a positive impact on the environment were the ones that invested more in sustainable management operations. In [15], the authors have conducted a study within the Romanian hospitality industry and were able to establish a direct relationship between the use of environmental management systems and the engagement in socially responsible and sustainable actions. They have observed that such use strengthens and makes more reliable interactions with all stakeholders and it contributes to a more discerning usage of available resources. Their study revealed that almost 90% of surveyed hospitality units were certified with at least one ISO standard and from those, the vast majority was using ISO 14001, the ISO environmental management system.

There are also some sources of information that provide figures concerning the sustainability performance and impacts of the hospitality industry on a larger scale. Such is the case of the Cornell Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking (CHSB) Index published in May 2021 by the UN World Tourism Organization [23]. The findings therein cover 55 countries with 20 international hotel brands and offer a view on their carbon footprint, with a focus on energy and water consumption. The study reveals that in all of the analysed countries, there was a reasonable decrease in carbon emissions, even though not in a uniform manner across them. And it ties these results directly with the decrease in energy and water consumption. Such finding indicates that the great majority of the analysed hospitality units have improved their sustainability performance, even though without providing cues on the concrete measures implemented.

Booking.com. has published the results of a research study conducted with more than 3000 hospitality units from 10 European countries (including Portugal), five

Asian countries, two South American countries, Russia, Australia, and the United States²⁵. They have observed that 75% indicated that they were implementing at least one type of sustainability practice.

Another indicator of the degree of commitment of accommodation providers in reducing their carbon footprint is the significant number of members of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance²⁶. This worldwide organization has the objective of coordinating at a global and local level, the efforts of the hospitality industry to impact positively major social and environmental issues. As of 2020, this organization counts with a large number of members, accounting for circa 25% of existing hospitality rooms worldwide. By providing guidance to its members, and facilitating the establishment of partnerships and access to tools and training programmes, it is contributing to the growth of the number of accommodations worldwide that are acting in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

The overarching aspect of finding the right balance between growth and sustainability has also deserved the attention of the research community and the hospitality professionals. In [24], the author analyses the inputs of experts coming from diverse areas (industry, consultancy and academia) concerning the priorities that should be addressed by the hospitality sector to ensure its sustainability both from an economic viewpoint as environmental.

2.4 Communication and Marketing strategies

Studies conducted to investigate the attitude and preferences of travelers towards hospitality units adhering to green practices have revealed that there is a general lack of information. Many travelers would be willing to favor those units only if they would have access to such information.

A good sustainable communication strategy is not only important for gaining competitive advantage and attract new customers. To be able to implement effectively all sorts of green measures onsite, hospitality units must have the collaboration of all stakeholders, including their guests. By appropriately communicating adopted practices and the benefits gained in favour of the preservation of the environment, hoteliers create the opportunity for their guests to

²⁵ <https://globalnews.booking.com/bookingcoms-2021-sustainable-travel-report-affirms-potential-watershed-moment-for-industry-and-consumers/>

²⁶ <https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/>

cooperate during their stay. Moreover, they may as well contribute to strengthen people's empathy with a more sustainable behaviour leading them to adopt it also outside the hotel in their daily lives. Thus, an efficient sustainable communication strategy in hospitality serves both marketing purposes and responsible social behaviour.

Booking.com in its Sustainable Travel Report 2021, indicates precisely that it is necessary to help accommodation facilities clearly disclosing to the general public the actions they are endorsing towards a positive contribution to the preservation of the environment. The travel company is endorsing efforts near the properties to incentivize them in clearly identifying all the types of environmentally sustainable practices they implement, in obtaining certifications and passing this data to it. Booking.com already displays on its Web site a large number of officially approved green certificates and labels, among which is the EU Ecolabel. Based on this experience, the travel company has observed a growing interest of travelers in eco-friendly accommodations, even though a large number indicates that the availability of such units is still reduced and/or that it is difficult to obtain information on them.

In his review article addressing communication of sustainable behaviour in hospitality [25], Tolkes observes that, even though accommodation properties are investing in such type of communication, it is often inefficient, remaining a significant challenge for hoteliers. She states that the design of such types of messages lacks theoretical foundations and proper study to investigate how they can lead to positive reactions of customers. From her research it stands out that tourists tend to value more the emotional aspect rather than objective figures conveyed in the information disclosed.

Having as a premise the lack of efficiency achieved by hospitality units when trying to communicate their sustainable practices to the general public and potential guests, the authors in [26] performed a literature review, data gathering, and qualitative analysis to identify an assertive typology and delineate effective communication strategies. Their empirical work was essentially based on the opinions shared by 30 hospitality professionals addressing the challenge of communicating sustainability in more diverse and efficient ways, without sticking to the use of old clichés and greenwashing. Data were obtained from the Web site hospitalitynet.org, which is an online platform where hospitality stakeholders share information. Their findings suggest that whereas verbal communication should be given priority, the

terminology to be employed should be consistent, precise, and positive to ensure the message is passed clearly. They also indicate that staff plays a crucial role in such type of communication and should therefore be adequately trained and motivated towards sustainability. Essential complements to this communication channel are the use and advertisement of sustainable certifications and the demonstration of the real sustainability performance of the property. Lastly, the work advocates that any communication strategy, especially when using verbal channels, should be flexible and adaptable to the guests' characteristics.

In [27] the authors have performed a study by collecting data from the Web sites of more than 700 hospitality units located in the Azores, which is considered to be a sustainable destination. The investigation aimed at assessing whether such units disseminated digitally the sustainable practices they had in place and had applied for official certification such as eco-labels. The study considered not only the information appearing on the Web sites of the properties, but also on those of booking engines such as Booking.com or Airbnb among others, and social networks. The data they have collected and analysed, revealed that only a very small percentage of the accommodations was actually communicating their green practices. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the great majority of the surveyed units consisted of small accommodations, typically owned by locals as guest houses. In the literature review of [27] it is noted that the accommodations' Website was found to be one of the privileged channels for communicating with potential guests. Nonetheless, it is also observed that most of the time, the effort invested in communicating sustainable measures is quite limited, resulting in unattractive and unnoticed data, relegated to a secondary plane [28].

In an attempt to understand the awareness of travelers on environmentally sustainable practices adopted by hotels in Cyprus, authors in [29] surveyed 400 guests of luxury hotels. Besides other observations, their study revealed that the majority of the covered conventional hotels did not publicize their sustainable practices albeit implementing them. The authors have concluded that this was partially due to the perception that such practices would harm the hotel's ability in attracting potential guests. Hotel managers were apprehensive that their guests would consider sustainable practices as simple cut measures with a pure financial profit motivation behind them, which would eventually lead to jeopardizing the quality level of the offered hotel's services. It is in fact unclear, the percentage of

travelers that correctly correlate the implementation of sustainable measures such as the one of refraining from washing the towels every day with waste management, namely, the reduction of the water, energy, and detergent consumption [26].

2.5 Conclusions on the conducted review

Sustainability in the tourism sector, specifically in the hospitality industry, has become a familiar concept unquestionably and has been embraced worldwide at different levels and depths. Nonetheless, it is a concept that can take many “faces”, as well as be interpreted with many variations. Its implementation and effects are quite dependent on many factors, especially due to the diversity of local environmental conditions, regional culture, and habits of local communities.

Another observation from our review study is that, whereas many hoteliers have embraced the green movement, most of them have a limited view on the breadth of measures they could adopt and tend to implement a few in a rather unstructured way. Moreover, they do not assess or monitor such activities and therefore have little information on the impacts made and benefits obtained.

Despite the efforts of worldwide standardisation organizations and policymakers to identify relevant sustainable measures, and to offer guidelines and tools for their implementation and management, the landscape is still quite fragmented and diverse. From our study, it became apparent that there is a need for more guidance, regulation, and control at the regional/local level. Previous studies corroborate such observation by establishing a direct relationship between a local government initiative and the implementation of good environmental practices by hospitality units [27].

Whilst being coherent with global standards, namely the UN SDGs, EU legislation and tools, and worldwide ISO standards, local authorities should strive to incentivize and offer adequate support to hospitality units in adopting and maintaining the sustainable practices more useful and effective within the local/regional contexts. Actions to be endorsed should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the different nature and levels of the hospitality units. The adherence to international standards, within the context and reality of the environment where the unit operates, should be stimulated, as previous studies indicate that such adoption is a decisive factor for obtaining a successful sustainable performance [17].

Another aspect that has not been adequately explored so far by hospitality units is the quite low level of implementation of communication and marketing strategies and actions addressing the adopted sustainability practices. As a consequence, even environmentally conscious travelers are limited in their choices.

Given this heterogeneous scenario, it is clear that any study to be made or any recommendation to be issued, must take into account that the present state of implementation of sustainable measures in hospitality units has various degrees and is compelled by different factors. When defining the course of our research, we have precisely considered these facts by distinguishing units that do not have any plans for adopting green practices, from those that aim at implementing in the near future sustainable measures and those that already implement at least part of them, investigating the motivations and benefits or performance results obtained.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology represents the strategy and procedures researchers adopt to structure, guide, and conduct their work. A careful choice of a methodology allows conducting the research work in an efficient manner, from collecting the necessary data, through analysing it, to interpreting the results towards obtaining a confirmation or rejection of the formulated hypothesis. Consequently, it creates the conditions to allow the researcher drawing conclusions and increasing his understanding and knowledge in the area of interest [29], [30]. The choice of a methodology is closely related to the field of knowledge addressed, the nature of the work to be carried out and the research question to be answered, but it is also bounded to the beliefs of the researcher and his understanding of how things happen in the real-world.

A number of well-defined methodologies are used by researchers in many different fields, from exact and technological sciences to social sciences and economics. At a higher, abstract level, they can be identified as adhering to different philosophical research streams [31], among which we have identified the following two, relevant to the areas addressed by this work [30]:

- Positivism and Behaviourism
- Constructivism

A research philosophy encompasses the principles and processes that are adopted for increasing comprehension in a knowledge field [31].

In the exact sciences, the most commonly used methodology is what is called "positivist-based research methodology," in which rigorous and reliable experiments are conducted to demonstrate facts and prove a point. In the social sciences, a frequently used methodology is that based on the "theory of behaviourism," which can also be considered positivist because it is based on the belief that human behaviour is predictable under certain situations. Nonetheless, the assumption advocated by positivist theory that human behaviour is mechanical and that all things in the world are predictable is often not true, especially in the social sciences. Facts and events in the real world often depend on the perceptions and interpretations that people make and the resulting interactions that they establish,

and are therefore based more on constructivist theory rather than in the positivist theory.

One of the essential steps in any research work is the collection of data and thus of the methodology to adopt for conducting it. In this respect, two main general methodological approaches can be identified:

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

Typically, quantitative methods are aligned with a positivist philosophy in that the intent is to collect data that can be used to assert assumptions in an objective manner. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, support the theory of constructivism, whereby the researcher believes that events and occurrences in the real world have a high degree of subjectivity and that the contextual situation is central to determining the course of action and outcomes.

Often researchers tend to adopt a mixture of both approaches, combining objective evaluation with exploratory analysis that allows them to draw conclusions according to different perspectives and contexts [32], [33].

According to [34] among the various methods to collect data, six of them are the most commonly used when developing research work within the social sciences, business and economics domains:

- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observation
- Constructed, secondary, and existing data
- Content analysis

3.1.1 Quantitative methods

Quantitative methods are used in all domains when the intention is to collect numerical data that can lead to objective conclusions. Therefore, they are used in situations where it is possible to measure phenomena such when conducting a laboratory or technological experiment (as for example, measuring the delays when downloading files from different Web servers; or, finding out how many people opt to drink tap water vs bottled water).

In the social sciences domain, quantitative research methods are used to gather numerical data from a significant number of people concerning their perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and actions regarding real world events or facts. By analysing collected data, the intention is to be able to generalize the results to larger groups of people.

Different means can be employed for gathering data when adopting a quantitative methodology:

- Questionnaires
- Experiments
- Observations
- Existing Data
- Content analysis

Questionnaires consist in a list of questions in the form of multiple-choice or ratings, to which participants reply individually. In a quantitative approach, such questions are said to be closed-end, so that no subjectivity is introduced whilst ensuring that all replies can be directly compared and used to arrive to results and asserting conclusions. Questionnaires are useful to obtain information about the viewpoints, values, behaviour and intentions of participants.

Often, the terms survey and questionnaire are used interchangeably. In reality the term survey has a more broad meaning and should be seen as a research approach, whereas the questionnaire should be regarded as a tool. Surveys use questionnaires frequently as the tool to collect data. However, other methods can be used to collect data for surveys, as for example, sending out forms by postal mail to be filled in by participants and sent back. This can happen in a census, which is a survey of the entire population.

Experiments consist of performing tests in controlled environments and collecting data from those tests. A testbed is defined and put into practice, and the main objective is to record how testbed variants and conditions lead to different results, establishing cause and effect relationships. For example, let us consider the example of the experiment to determine how many people choose to drink tap water instead of bottled water. In this case, the testbed could consist of a climatized room, containing a refrigerator with water bottles and a sink with drinking tap water. Both

room and refrigerator temperatures could be controllable and experiments could register their influence on the people's choices.

Observations are a simple way of gathering data without performing any kind of control. People's behaviours or real-world events are observed in their usual habitats or environments and data is registered.

Existing data can be used as a secondary tool and many times it is used to complement or validate findings obtained from data collected with other tools such as questionnaires and experiments. It consists in information from existing sources, namely scientific publications, books and archives.

Content analysis is a rather specific tool, used in particular cases, as for example, when analysing communication patterns in scientific articles about COVID-19. In this case, the researcher would perform a systematic analysis of the texts to record the presence of certain words or sentences.

Once data has been collected, the researcher needs to analyse it so that he/she may arrive to results and conclusions. Normally, the gathering of data is not exhaustive, and therefore the analysis to be conducted aims at generalising the results to larger samples or groups of people. Different statistical methods can be used, and the researcher has at his/her disposal different software packages that implement them, namely, Stata²⁷ or SPSS²⁸.

3.1.2 Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods are used when the aim is to obtain descriptive data and is therefore applicable to situations where only observation and not objective measurement is possible. They enable to understand people's viewpoints on different topics, how they perceive specific concepts, and also to learn their experiences in varied situations [32],[33],[34].

Different means can be employed for gathering data when adopting a qualitative methodology:

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Case studies

²⁷ <https://www.timberlake.co.uk/software/stata.html>

²⁸ <https://www.spss-tutorials.com/spss-what-is-it/>

- Discourse analysis
- Literature review

When conducting interviews, it is normal to select intervenients based on their personal, social or professional profiles, depending on the objective of the study. Usually, open-ended questions are posed verbally to the participants and their responses are recorded to be analysed a-posteriori when all interviews are concluded.

The focus groups method enables to obtain unstructured information and opinions from a group of people who is put together discussing specific topics:

Case studies consist in conducting an in-depth study of a certain subject, organization, or a even, using available sources of information.

When performing a literature review, the researcher analyses works that have been published by other authors on the topic of interest. A literature review offers the possibility to understand the current state of investigation and findings obtained so far by the scientific community, thus establishing the baseline knowledge for the topic under investigation.

Data collected using these methods is subsequently analysed to derive conclusions and advance the knowledge of the researcher in the field of interest. Depending on the method used to gather the data, on the subject addressed, and purpose of the work, such analysis can be conducted at different levels, namely:

- at a lower level, whereby the meaning of words and sentences is analysed and categorized;
- at a higher level, by inspecting the data to discover themes and patterns and also to establish their social context.

When the methods used to collect the data have been the interviews or focus groups, the normal procedure to adopt to conduct such analysis is to transcribe all interviews and discussions, possibly using a transcription software. There are also software packages that can assist the research in performing the required analysis

3.1.3 Mixed methods

Adopting a mixed method means that the researcher is collecting data using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Such strategy offers a more complete and sustained view of the situation under study as it allows to combine people's opinions

and perceptions with statistical data obtained through the objective analysis of larger volumes of data collected with a quantitative approach. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are important and useful, their choice being usually dictated by the context and objective of the work or by the researcher's convictions. However, in many situations, the choice is not clear or simple and the ideal would be to be able to combine the best of both approaches. This is precisely the aim of mixed methods research: it is not intended to replace any of the former approaches, but rather to take advantage of their strengths and minimize their weaknesses within the same research study [35]. It provides the opportunity to complement the information regarding "what people are doing" obtained from a quantitative approach, with information about "why people are doing that" [32], [34].

3.2 Adopted methods

In our work we have realized that a mixed method would be the best approach for obtaining the data needed to assess our hypothesis and draw conclusions. We have therefore opted for the implementation of a combination of questionnaires surveys with one-to-one interviews. Surveys have been extensively used in the social sciences domain because they are particularly useful for non-experimental descriptive projects that aim to understand real-world situations, actions and events. They are widely used to collect information regarding attitudes and behaviours. Table 5 presents the advantages and limitations of the questionnaire survey approach [31], [32], [34].

Interviews can adopt a qualitative approach thus being able to overcome one of the referred limitations of questionnaire surveys. Notably, that of understanding people's motivations behind their actions and behaviours. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the use of open-ended questions in questionnaires, could also provide such kind of information. However, this type of questions should be avoided in questionnaires to allow performing an objective analysis of the responses.

Personal interviews are expensive given that they are labour intensive and time consuming. However, they allow collecting high quality and more complex data than that possible with questionnaires.

Table 5 - Questionnaire survey approach

Advantages of questionnaires surveys	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● allow to gather accurate and objective data and produce findings which may be generalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● do not provide information concerning the reasons why people act or behave in a certain way. It provides information on “what people do or how they behave” but not on “why people do that or behave like that”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● are efficient and cost-effective, as it does not require a large number of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● representativeness depends on the diversity of the participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● can cover wide geographical areas 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● allow to observe ethical rules, as anonymity may be guaranteed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● are flexible, as they may be combined with other methods 	

3.3 Online questionnaires

Conducting online questionnaire surveys offers some advantages compared to conducting interviews only. More specifically:

- it allows obtaining data from a larger sample, i.e., from a greater number of hotel units;
- more information can be asked from each participant, as it is admitted that it takes less time to complete a survey than to have a conversation;
- collected data can be objectively assessed, given that the surveys will essentially have closed-ended questions.

The decision was the one of elaborating two separate questionnaires targeting two different audiences: 1) professional users, i.e., hotel managers; and 2) hotel guests, i.e., the general public with previous experience in staying in hospitality units and who are likely to have more in the future.

Conducting the two questionnaire surveys enables to gather, on the one hand, concrete data on measures implemented by hospitality units and on their impact from a business perspective. On the other hand, it allows understanding the level of awareness, appreciation, and adherence of the guests concerning such measures.

Anticipating difficulties in obtaining good quality data, initial questionnaires were designed and given to two pilot testers, as suggested in [36]. Feedback was collected from them and used to improve the clarity and objectiveness of the questions.

The two questionnaires can be found in Annex A.

3.3.1 Professional users

In this study we have chosen to obtain primary data through online questionnaires followed by one-to-one interviews to sampled respondents. The aim was to collect responses from 15 to 20 hotel managers, who have had more than five years of professional experience as such, in four- and five-stars establishments. Knowing how difficult it is to gather interviewees [37], [38], the selection process was made through direct contact to people the researcher knew personally and in turn through their own personal contacts within the hotel industry, to increase an effective participation from these intended experts. Upon gathering the contact information of the to-be participants, emails were sent, and phone calls were made, where the researcher asked for the consent and participation in this questionnaire. At this point participation in the face-to-one interviews was proposed as well. Each person concluded the survey at his own pace and delivered back the questionnaire within a previously agreed deadline.

The questionnaire was elaborated with Google Forms²⁹. It begins with personal information questions, and it ends with a thank-you note. Its core questions relate to the subject under study, i.e., those directly related with the hypothesis elicited based on the literature reviewed and the researcher beliefs, and they were divided into five main sections:

- *Introduction to the topic*, where aspects such as familiarization with green standards and brands, or general attitude towards the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices, were addressed;
- *Assessment of implemented policies*, with specific questions to determine the degree of adoption of ESPP and motivations;
- *Specialized training in Environmental Sustainability*, to determine whether the hospitality unit endorsed efforts to educate and motivate the staff;

²⁹ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fd0UrKbE4ikUXcPEZwNaiujJjeanzJirr3TpsvZyO364/edit>

- *Marketing strategies*, to learn about actions that the hospitality unit might adopt using information about the ESPP implemented by the hotel
- *Impact of policies adopted*, to determine the level of impact arising from the implementation of environmentally friendly practice

Across these sections four types of questions were used:

- *Rating questions*, adopting a 5-point Likert-type scale [39]. They allow for increased variance in measure, using anchors of 1 (e.g., extremely irrelevant or in strongly in disagreement) to 5 (extremely important or strongly in agreement)
- *Dichotomy questions* of Yes/No or Truth/False to determine if the respondent was aware of a certain topic or if something was pertinent or had occurred at their establishment.
- *Open-ended questions* with a more exploratory nature, to allow respondents some freedom without having to comply to pre-established options
- *Multiple-choice, box-ticking* questions that allowed the participants to enumerate the amount of something that was asked (e.g. number of green brands you know)

The purpose of conducting such a survey towards the professional segment, was to obtain information from hotel managers which, after analysis, would lead to the elaboration of answers to the initially formulated research questions and assessment of the corresponding hypothesis put forward but also to the identification of new ideas and thesis. Table 6 presents such research questions and hypothesis.

Whilst adopting this overall structure for the questionnaires, it was decided to develop two variants to suit both the case of hospitality units that are already implementing green measures, and those that have not yet adopted them.

Accordingly, after the initial generic group of questions (section 1), the survey bifurcates into two branches, A and B, and the evolution through branch A or B depends on the answer to the last question in the initial part, which is the following:

“Is your facility currently implementing environmentally friendly practices or is it planning to do so soon?”

In case a positive answer is detected, the questionnaire proceeds to branch A, which contains sections 2, 3, and 4 as described above. If the answer is no, it would proceed to branch B which contains only a group of questions (some of which are identical to those of branch A) to assess the degree of knowledge about existing environmentally friendly practices applicable to the hospitality domain, benefits of conducting marketing actions that take advantage of those practices, and the justification for not implementing them. This, however, did not occur, as all respondents affirmatively answered the previous question.

Table 6 - Research questions and hypothesis

Research Questions	Hypothesis
Is the adoption of ESPP in the hotel industry leveraged by managers' personal convictions?	H0: no H1: yes H2: partially
Are the hospitality professionals aware of existing international standards, legislation and governmental initiatives addressing the adoption of environmentally sustainable policies and practices (ESPP) in the hospitality sector? Can such awareness have a contribution towards the effective implementation of ESPP in hospitality units?	H0: negative influence H1: positive influence H2: null hypothesis
Are hotel managers adopting marketing strategies grounded on their ESPP?	H0: no H1: yes H2: partially

Table 7 identifies the questions more pertinent to assess the validity of the different hypothesis formulated.

Table 7 - Hypothesis and relevant questionnaire questions

Research Questions and Hypothesis	Questionnaire Questions
<p>Is the adoption of ESPP in the hotel industry leveraged by managers' personal convictions?</p> <p>H0: no H1: yes H2: partially</p>	<p>[It is important that my establishment adopts ESPP]; [I have a great decision-making power over the ESPP in my hotel; [I am concerned about and try to understand ESM]; [Which Green marks do you recognize?]; [What are the reasons for implementing ESPP?]; [Indicate your degree of agreement concerning the validity and impact of the following ESM]</p>
<p>Being aware of existing standards, legislation and governmental initiatives helps hotel managers in adopting environmentally sustainable policies and practices (ESPP) ?</p> <p>H0: negative influence H1: positive influence H2: null hypothesis</p>	<p>[My establishment seeks to remain at the forefront of implementing environmentally sustainable measure]; [Please indicate how familiar you are with the following standards and initiatives]; [Is your establishment currently implementing ESPP?]; [Do you have a clearly defined ESPP plan?]; [Have you implemented a EMS according to ISO standards?]; [Select all of the sustainable measures that your establishment implements]; [do you have an official responsible for the ESPP?]; [do you provide dedicated training to your employees?]</p>
<p>Are hotel managers adopting marketing strategies grounded on their ESPP?</p> <p>H0: no H1: yes H2: partially</p>	<p>[Do you implement marketing strategies based on the ESPP?]; [Do you disclose ESPP-related information through an app and Web site?]; [Do you advertise ESPP-related information on online booking platforms?]; [what % of resources do you allocate to ESPP-awre marketing actions?]; [Which of the following marketing actions do you implement?]; [How important are the guests' comments and suggestions?]; [Is your hotel listed with a dedicated green-conscious tour operator / travel agency?]</p>

3.3.2 Guests (general public)

Whereas it was felt that the questionnaire survey applied to the professional audience would lead to valuable information for clarifying the research questions and drawing generalised conclusions, at a certain point of the study, we have realised that it would also be important to understand the perceptions, opinions and intentions of the general public towards sustainable hotels. A modified questionnaire was therefore prepared, composed by closed-ended questions, aiming at assessing the level of knowledge of the general public about the implementation of sustainable measures in hospitality units and the impact that such measures have on them and their choices, as customers.

The access to the survey questionnaire was disseminated via Facebook to two personal networks of contacts with distinct average ages (26 and 50), thus ensuring diversity of audience. Although the potential sample size was substantially larger than that reported in previous studies [30], the number of actual responses collected was in the same order of magnitude (220) and thus considered to be a statistically acceptable sample size. The questionnaire was available during the period of May-June 2021.

3.4 One-to-one interviews

In addition to online questionnaires, it was decided to conduct interviews with the goal was of shedding some light on the motivations for adhering to a greener management attitude and implementing environmentally sustainable measures. We also wanted to understand the perception hotel managers have regarding the current state of environmentally friendly practices in the hotel industry and their vision for the future. Another aspect was to learn their perception on the degree of awareness that exists in the Portuguese hotels concerning the importance of defining a sustainability policy and on the impact this may have to attract customers. Finally, we wanted to give them the opportunity to report success stories, to obtain their opinion on the research questions formulated and get feedback on the survey.

As previously stated, it is always very difficult to get people motivated and willing to participate in questionnaires and even more so when it comes to interviews [37], [38]. Due to its scheduling problems, face-to-face time required with someone else who might be in a different time-zone, balancing a day's work to make it happen, having to spend a longer period without interruption. In contrast, with questionnaires the participants may take a few days or even more to finish them, whereas in interviews they only have the one-shot opportunity to start and finish it. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, it was agreed to conduct the interviews remotely and to ask the prospective interviewees their consent to record the conversations. Interviews were elaborated based on a semi-structured format, aiming at achieving some commonality across them whilst proving sufficient freedom for each interviewee's to express openly their opinions and ideas.

A qualitative grounded theory approach was adopted for analysing the responses obtained from the semi-structured interviews held with hotel managers. Typically, when conducting qualitative analysis based on the data collected through one-to-one

interviews, the focus is on elaborating concepts from analysing and understanding concrete realities expressed by the interviewees, in particular the implicit meaning or consequences of their experiences and viewpoints. Grounded theory provides the means to accomplish such goal through the use of systematic methods and explicit analytical strategies [40], [41], [42], [43]. Coding is the central step for analysing the collected data when supported on a grounded theory approach. Coding is the procedure through which themes or concepts are identified and segments of data are sorted and consequently assigned codes. It is the underlying step that enables to actually start the analytic comparison and interpretation [44]. Assigned codes are intimately related with the raw data segments and they may illustrate actions and viewpoints, retain events or propose contexts. When conducting a comparative analysis on the raw data, concepts that repeatedly appear will be those that will prevail in the emerged theory. Concepts may also be grouped into categories, if they relate to the same phenomenon. By adopting an analytic comparison procedure on the concepts (on the coded data), similarities and differences may arise between them thus potentiating their aggregation under the definition of higher-level constructs (the categories). Categories and possible relationships between them, lead to the elaboration of a theory [41].

In our study we want to understand if hoteliers are adhering to environmentally sustainable policies and practices (ESPP), the reasons for their positioning towards ESPP and the influence that some phenomena have on them. If adherence is predominant, it will emerge as such when conducting the described process. In relation to this important objective, we want to investigate various phenomena:

- 1) whether being aware of existing standards has an influence on hoteliers' attitudes. That is, whether such knowledge helps hotel managers in adopting ESPP;
- 2) if the attitudes of hoteliers as professionals are conditioned by their own convictions as individuals. Also, what are their perceptions concerning the cost-benefit compromise regarding the adoption of ESPP;
- 3) how representative are the implemented ESPP on the marketing strategies adopted by hoteliers. That is, to what extent hotel managers adopt marketing strategies based on their ESPP.

Therefore, we have adopted the grounded theory methods on the data collected through interviewing and followed the coding and sampling principles as described in [41], [44]. The coding process is divided into three steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Figure 3 illustrate these steps. Some authors apply the grounded theory methodology by combining the two last steps, thus dividing the process into two phases, an initial open step followed by a focused phase [42].

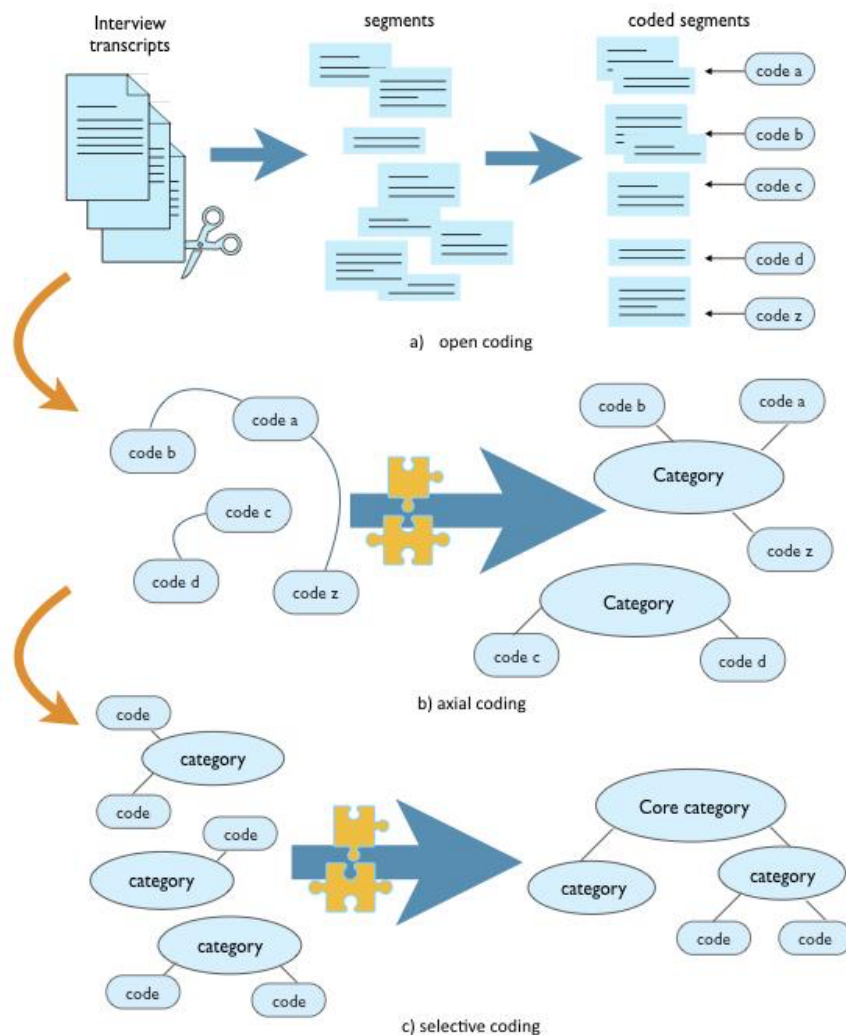


Figure 3 - the three coding steps of the Grounded Theory approach

Open coding involves dividing the collected data into discrete segments and creating codes to label them. This process is called "open" precisely because it aims to reveal new meanings and theoretical possibilities from the obtained data. It enables to identify the data and to start having an idea of the meaning. When conducting this step, the researcher should remain open to any possibility.

Axial coding is already a focused procedure, whereby the most significant or frequent codes assigned in the first step are used to sort and organise the data. During axial coding, relationships are established between codes and, consequently, categories are defined. A category may be defined based on a recurrent code (a one-to-one relationship where the category assumes the name of the code) or a more abstract category may be defined to encompass several codes among which a relationship was identified.

Finally, selective coding is the process of analysing and comparing the defined categories and prevailing codes to understand the connecting line between them and consequently unify them under one single core category. This core category will provide the basis for the seek theory. Eventually, it may correspond to one of the already defined categories or it may be a new one obtained by melting the meaning of existing categories and codes. This process is performed when data saturation is reached [45]. In our study, we concluded that saturation had been achieved when the analysis and comparison processes did not lead to any further modifications in our coding and connections.

4 Research Findings and Discussion

Collected data was subjected to an analysis to allow finding patterns, assessing the hypothesis and drawing conclusions concerning the research questions.

As referred in chapter 3, two different segments of audience were targeted in our study, namely, hospitality professionals (more precisely, hotel managers) and general public or hotel customers. Accordingly, we present separately the gathered data, their analysis and results obtained. The latter segment was approached using only online questionnaires whereas for the former both questionnaires and interviews were used.

Answers obtained from the respondents to the online questionnaires were statistically analysed to generate descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode and standard deviation) and frequency distribution. The goal with such procedure was to enable assessing the formulated hypothesis and formulate generalisations.

A grounded theory approach [40] was adopted for analysing the transcripts from interviews, i.e., responses obtained from the semi-structured interviews held with hotel managers. The intention was to formulate theories or themes.

4.1 Collected data from hotel professionals

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from hospitality professionals in the course of our dissertation work. As we have explained in chapter 3, we have adopted a mixed method strategy for collecting data from the professional segment. Accordingly, collected data was divided into two groups and different approaches were used to analyse it. Such data consists in quantitative and qualitative data, gathered from online questionnaires and transcripts from one-to-one interviews.

4.1.1 Questionnaires

As explained in Chapter 3, a link to an online questionnaire developed using Google Docs was sent via email to prospective respondents. From a total of 20 hotel General Managers and heads of Departments who were directly approached, we have obtained a total of 12 responses. On average, it took 17 minutes for each respondent to conclude the survey. The position of the person responsible and the organization they represent are listed in Table 8. For privacy reasons we have omitted their names.

Table 8. List of Questionnaire Respondents

Organization's Name	Respondent designation	Position at Organization
Montebelo Vista Alegre Ílhavo Hotel	Manager 1	General Manager
Tivoli Ecoresort Praia do Forte	Supervisor 1	Environmental Supervisor
Douro41 Hotel & Spa	Manager 2	General Manager
Sheraton Porto Hotel & Spa	Manager 3	General Manager
Grupo JASE Hotels	Owner 1	Partner-Owner
Hotel Dom Henrique Downtown	Manager 4	General Manager
Six Senses Douro Valley	Manager 5	Sustainability Manager
Monchique Resort & Spa	Manager 6	General Manager
Vila Foz Hotel & Spa	Manager 7	General Manager
The Yeatman	Supervisor 2	Standards & Quality Supervisor
Pestana Palácio do Freixo	Manager 8	General Manager
Azor Hotel	Manager 9	General Manager

A statistical analysis was performed on the data gathered from the questionnaires to generate basic descriptive statistics (min, max, mean, median, mode and standard deviation) and frequency distribution. Additionally, we investigated whether there were correlations, i.e., whether responses to some questions had an impact on the responses to other questions. Such analysis was performed using the software package Excel.

In the remainder of this section we present the main research findings obtained from the conducted statistical analysis.

High, intrinsic commitment in implementing ESPP but not fully structured

All establishments were implementing or planning to implement ESPP and most of them (83%) had a clearly defined ESPP plan as we can see in the graphics presented in Figure 4 and in Figure 5.

How long have you implemented Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices in your establishment?

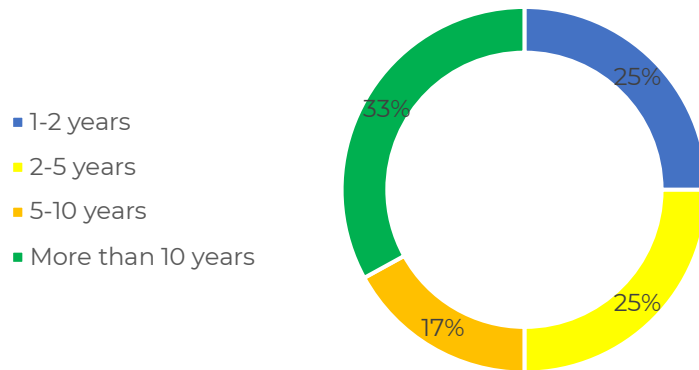


Figure 4 - question concerning the time implementing ESPP

Do you have a clearly defined ESPP plan for your establishment?

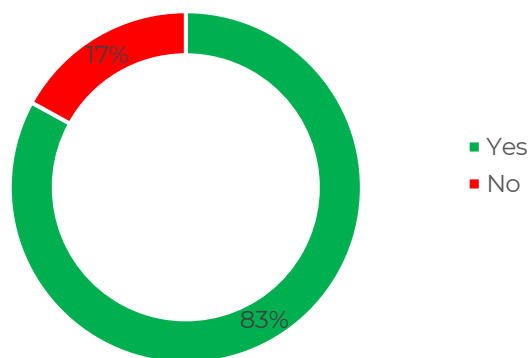


Figure 5 - question concerning the definition of an ESPP plan

However, despite the positive answer concerning the definition of a clear ESPP plan, most of the respondents indicated that they were not using a specific environmental management system (EMS) to be able to monitor the effective deployment of ESPP and derived benefits. As we can see in Figure 6 only 25% of hoteliers had in place an EMS. These results suggest that although hotels are effectively implementing ESPP, this adoption is not yet carried out in a structured way or fully incorporated into the management of the hotel unit.

Have you implemented an environmental management system?

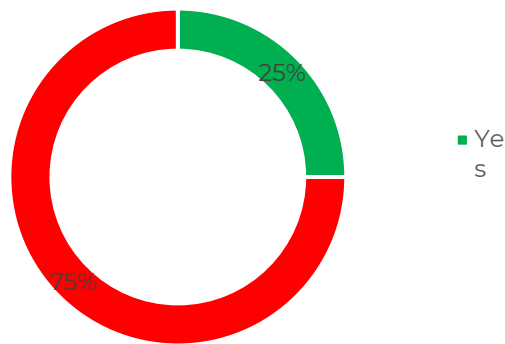
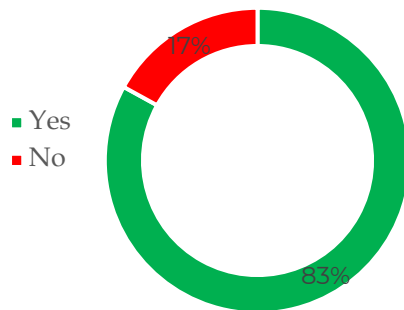


Figure 6 - use of an Environmental Management System

Likewise, although 83% of the establishments had an official responsible for implementing and monitoring ESPP, the majority (75%) had not hired someone with specialized training in the area as revealed in Figure 7.

Do you have an official responsible for the implementation and monitoring of ESPPs?



Did you feel the need to hire someone with specialized training in the area?

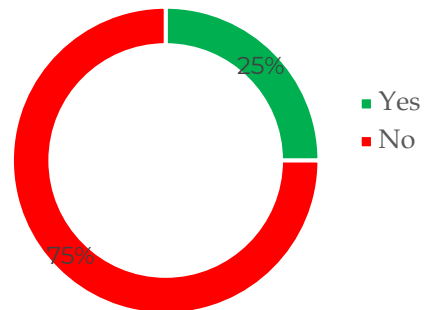


Figure 7 - person responsible for the adoption of ESPP

It was also observed that establishments that had implemented an environmental management system were 22% more likely to having an official responsible for ESPP (Figure 8). As we will see later, this can also be seen as connected to the limited awareness that hoteliers have of existing standards and their effective use.

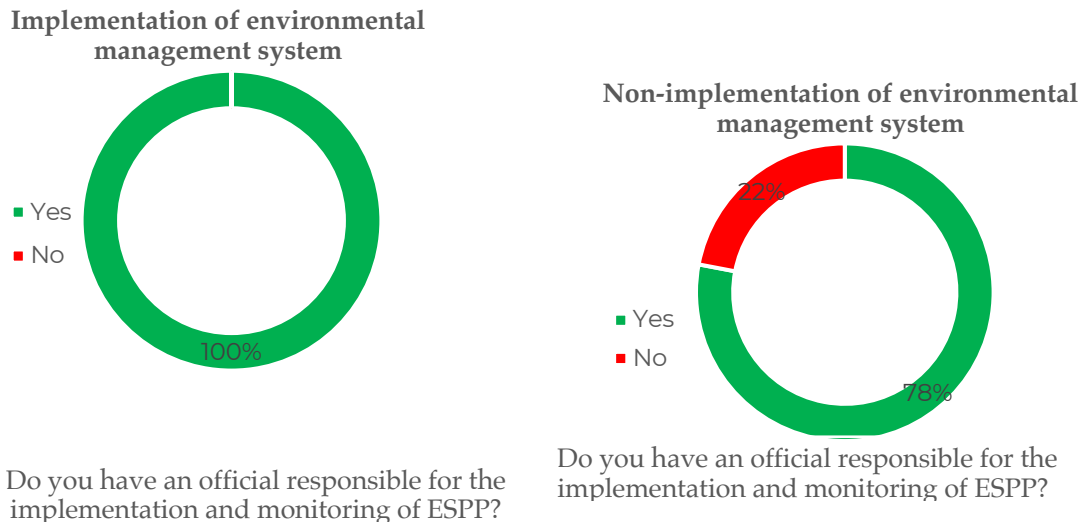


Figure 8 - relation between EMS and responsible for ESPP

Regardless of this absence of a fully delineated policy to deploy environmentally sustainable practices, the determination, and conviction of hoteliers is clear, given that the vast majority of managers consider the adoption of ESPP in their establishments to be extremely important and most of them (83%) try to understand what those measures are as it can be observed in Figure 9.

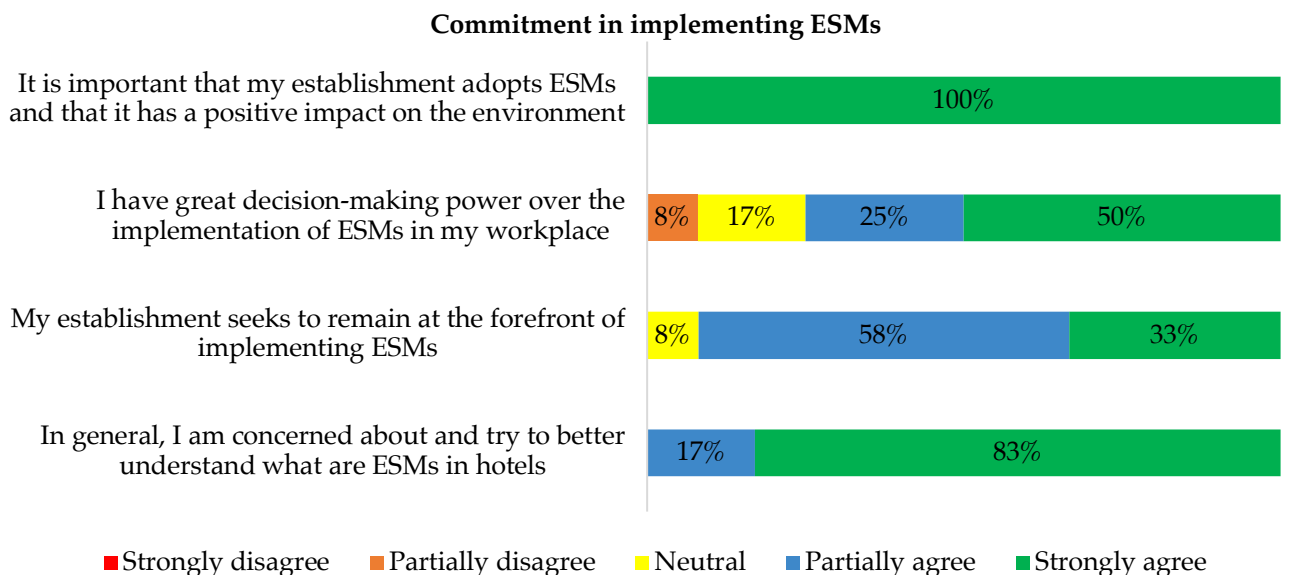


Figure 9 - Commitment of hotel managers in ESPP

In fact, the commitment in implementing ESPP was reflected on the number of measures adopted or planned to be adopted by the hotels as shown in Figure 10. Out of the 15 measures presented to the respondents, 10 of them were indicated by most of them as being currently implemented or intended to be. Nonetheless, it is clear that the focus is placed on the best known measures, namely water management, whereas measures less publicized by the media, but still referred in the standards and studies, seem to attract less attention.

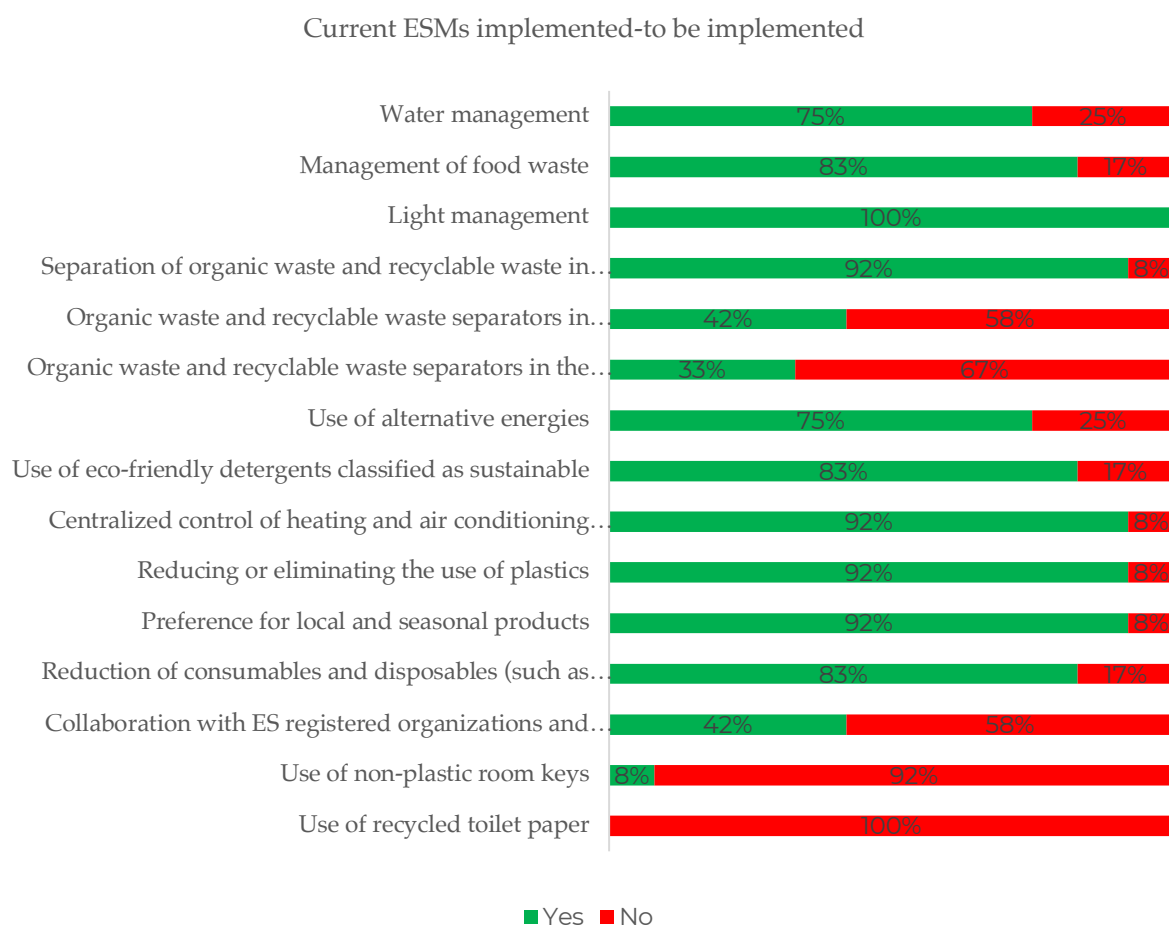


Figure 10 - ESMs implemented or planned-to-be

The feeling that hotels make an effort to adopt ecological measures based more on a sense of civic and social duty rather than on economic aspects, is reinforced by the responses received, as we can see in Figure 11.

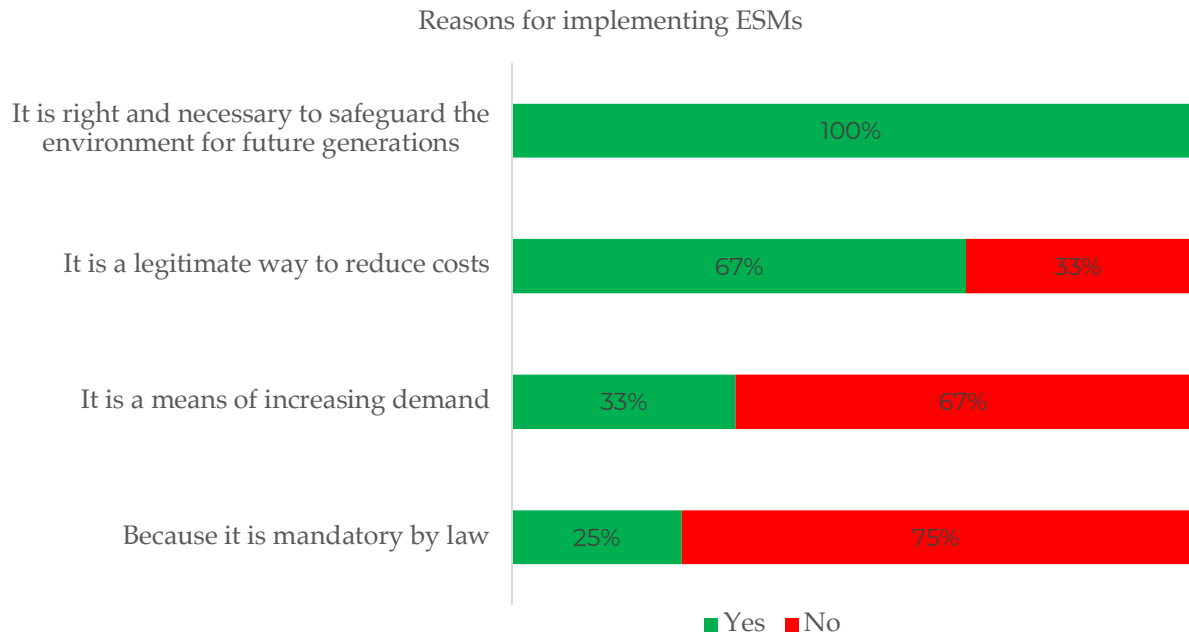


Figure 11 - Reasons for implementing environmentally sustainable measures

Finally regarding standards and worldwide initiatives relevant for the fulfillment of ESPP within the hospitality industry, it was not a surprise to see that most of the hoteliers had only a partial understanding in these matters (Figure 12).

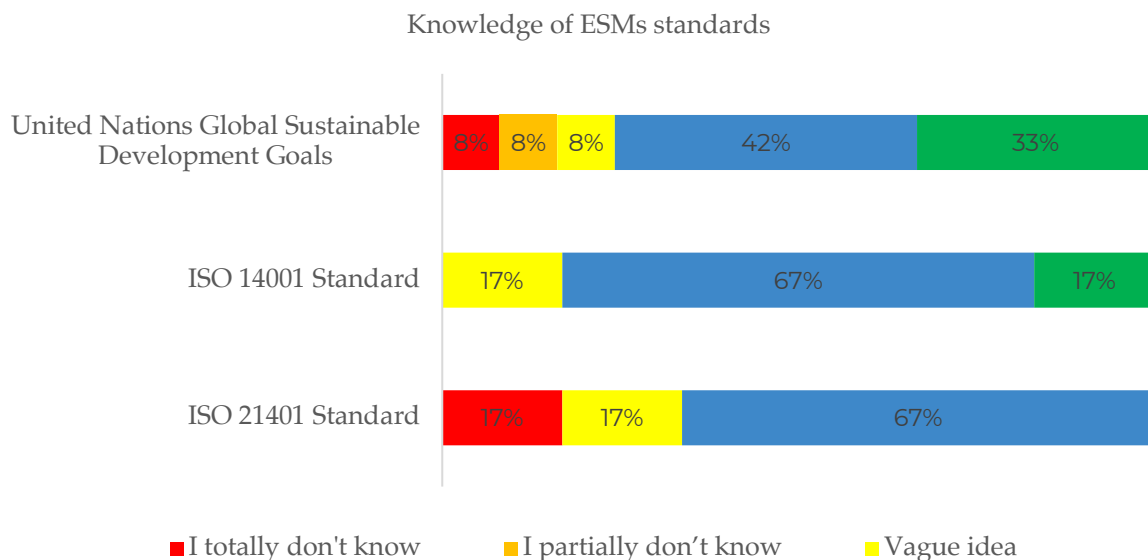


Figure 12 - Acquaintance with ESMs standards

Dedication in employee training

It was quite gratifying to see that there is a concern on the part of hotel managers to educate their employees in matters related to the execution of ESPP. Almost all establishments (92%) had administered or intended to administer employee training in environmental sustainability as revealed in Figure 13. Also, more than half of them (58%) had created or thought of creating a committee of volunteers among their employees to address aspects related to environmental sustainability.

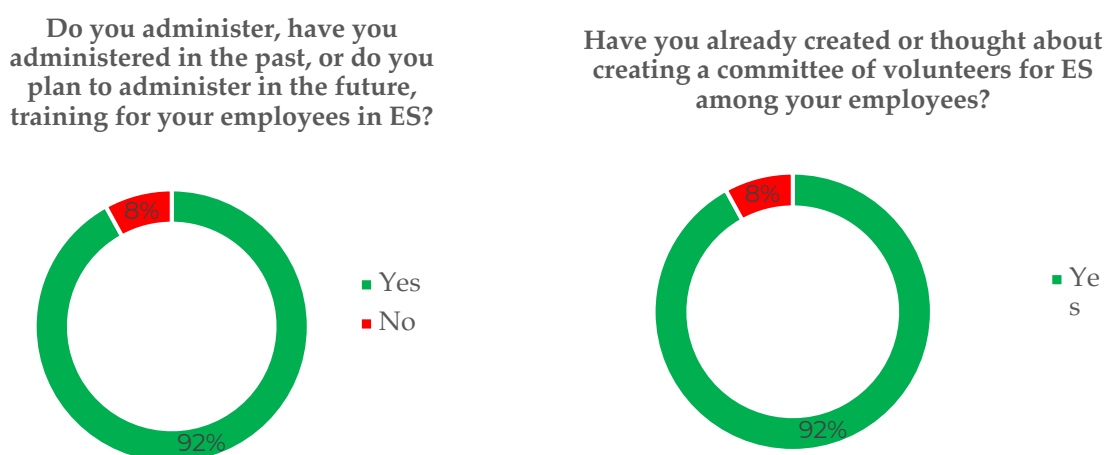


Figure 13 - Employee training

Still, the type of training actions that were reported suggests that in many cases they consist on ad-hoc, internal talks, based on existing experience rather than on workshops or sessions organised by dully recognised experts or entities as it can be appreciated by the responses provided to the apposite open question and show in Table 9.

The single establishment that did not minister any kind of specific training to its employees reported a lack of means or experts (Figure 14). This can be understood as an indication of a possible lack of support from local and responsible entities operating in the tourism sector and which could play a relevant role in the ecological education of interested stakeholders.

Table 9 - Training actions carried out

"Pestana says no to plastic"
Environmental Management and Sustainability Action with a focus on sustainability in Tourism. These actions began for the management and supervisory elements, followed by actions for the other employees.
In previous projects, I managed training on good environmental practices and certified the first resort in Africa to implement responsible tourism measures.
Internal training and in partnership with AHRESP and AHP.
Lectures on the actions implemented by the hotel.
On admission of employees, training is always given in this area.
"Plastx" Talks.
Sustainability, climate change, recycling, compost.
Training actions on recycling, waste separation, plastic disposal, composting, zero waste.

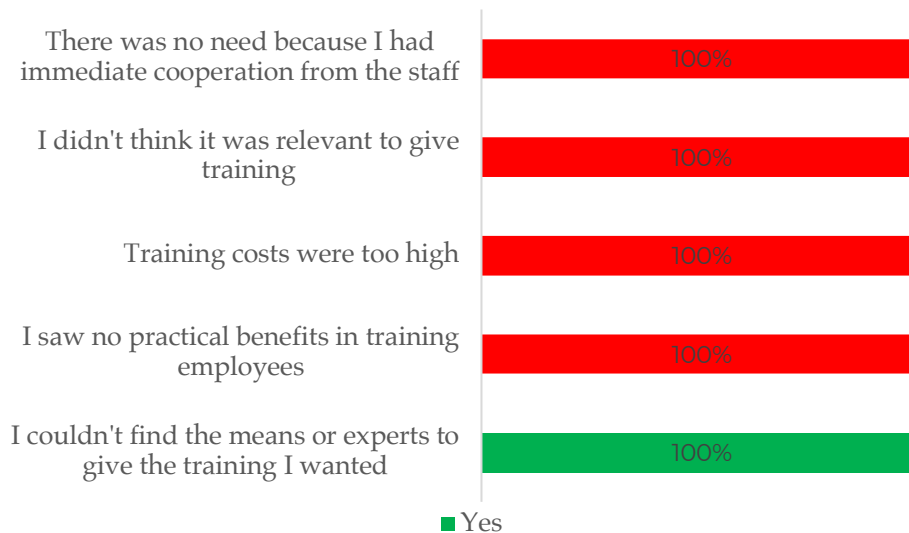
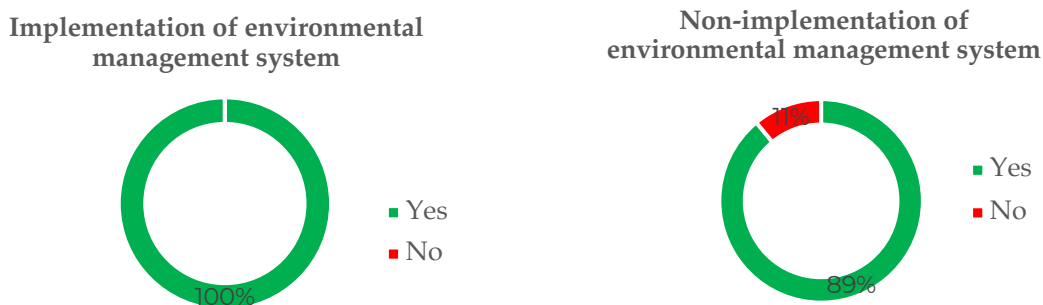


Figure 14 - Reasons for not providing specific training

Finally, it is possible to find some connection between using an environmental management system and providing training to employees so that they become proficient in handling ecological aspects within the establishment. Units that had implemented an environmental management system were 11% more likely to administer or having administered employee training in environmental sustainability as reported in Figure 15.



Do you administer, have you administered in the past, or do you plan to administer in the future, training for your employees in ES?

Figure 15 - Relation between EMS and training

Relation with guests and perceptions on the guests' attitude

The vast majority of the establishments tried to inform their guests on the actions taken by the hotel towards contributing to reduce the carbon footprint. The preferred channels include the Web site and verbal communication during the check-in process. Responses to the open question concerning the way the hotel communicated its green practices to its guests are found in Table 10.

Table 10 - Information for the guests

All info is in our DHM Green. We promote the use of e-bike within the city, providing electric bicycles for this purpose. An APP is available for the use of these e-bikes. At check-in, we inform General measures of our DHM Green Policies.

By email and on the Web site.

Flyer, QR codes.

Information in the room for the rational use of bathroom linen.

It is an area that stood out in this post confinement and it is a priority for us to develop and apply. What we do at the moment is still limited and we want and will be more ambitious in being able to consolidate these practices.

Posted on the Website, check-in information, disposal of non-reusable plastic bottles at the resort.

There is information available on our website. There may still be this reference at check-in, but most of the sharing is made during the visit to the Earth Lab, by the sustainability team..

Verbally at check-in.

Web site, directories, reception, among others.

Information available on our website and on the TV in each room. There is also a folder at Reception, available for consultation.

As it can be seen, except for two references to specific actions (stimulate the use of electric bicycles and foment the rational use of towels), responses are quite generic. Accordingly, they reveal that this is an area that is still rather under-explored and that the benefits that could be derived from the adoption of a more consolidated and aggressive “guests’ green enlightenment” campaign have not yet been fully considered. Nonetheless, in some cases, there seems to be a genuine interest in informing the guests.

ESPP not yet fully incorporated in the Marketing strategy

As evidenced by the responses received to the survey and in the analysis presented so far, there is generally a strong motivation to put in place environmentally sustainable measures. However, how hotel units could monetize such commitment in contributing to the reduction of the ecological footprint is yet to be explored at large. In fact, as it can be observed in Figure 16, hotel professionals are less likely to adopt relevant marketing actions, with less than half of them (42%) doing so. Also, from those implementing ES marketing strategies, all of them used less than 20% of their total budget on them and 80% of them devoted less than 20% of their working time for this purpose.

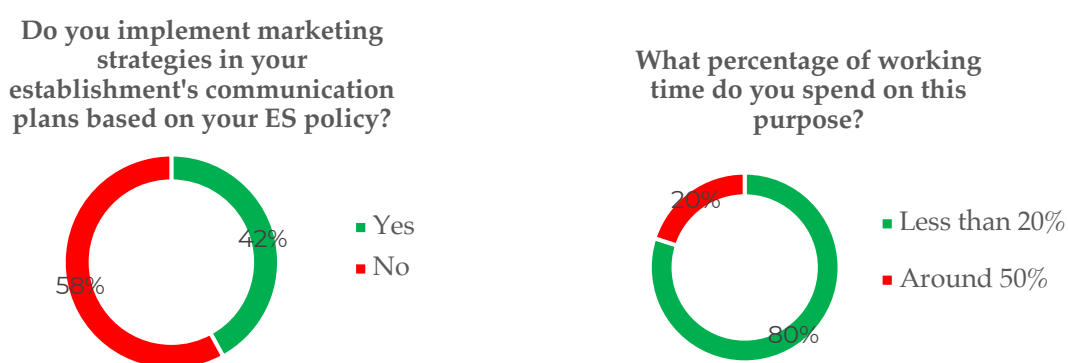


Figure 16 - Adoption of marketing strategies

Likewise, the connection to well-established players in the tourism arena, namely tour operators or travel agencies, especially devoted to green-conscious consumers is not generalised, as only 25% of the respondents indicated to be listed with such players (Figure 17).

Is your hotel listed with a tour operator or travel agency especially dedicated to green-conscious customers?

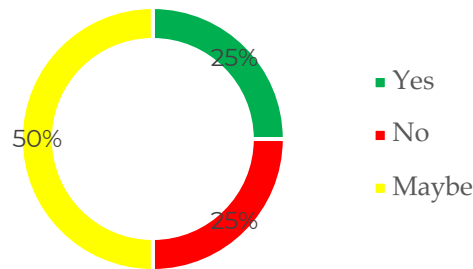
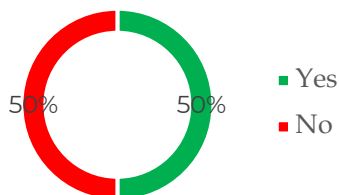


Figure 17 - Connection to third-parties

In the same vein, only half of the professionals provide ESPP information to guests through an app or on their website, whereas 58% of the establishments did not advertise information about their ESPP on online booking platforms (Figure 18).

Do you provide information to guests about ESPP through an app and/or provide this information on your website?



Do you advertise information about your ESPPs on online booking platforms?

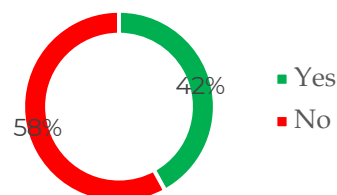


Figure 18 – use of IT for marketing purposes

In any case, as would be expected, some data concerning the involvement in environmental practices are already being used in the units' marketing strategy. The figure presents the main means and channels that incorporate this type of information to promote the hotel. The graphic in Figure 19 indicates that most establishments use on-site hotel printed material, namely menus and flyers (75%), relying also heavily on online media, namely by disclosing green brand logos on their website (67%), or advertising current ESMS practice on their website (67%).

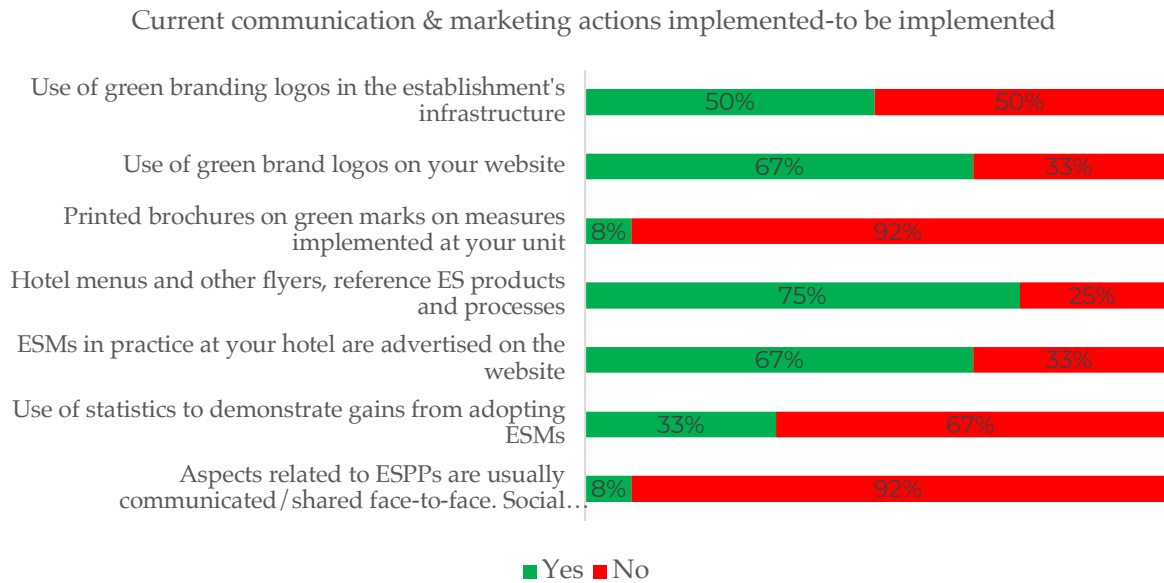


Figure 19 - Communication and Marketing actions

Also, as revealed in Figure 20 the majority of hotel professionals take into consideration the feedback guests leave on online booking platforms and systematically address ESPP-related feedback.

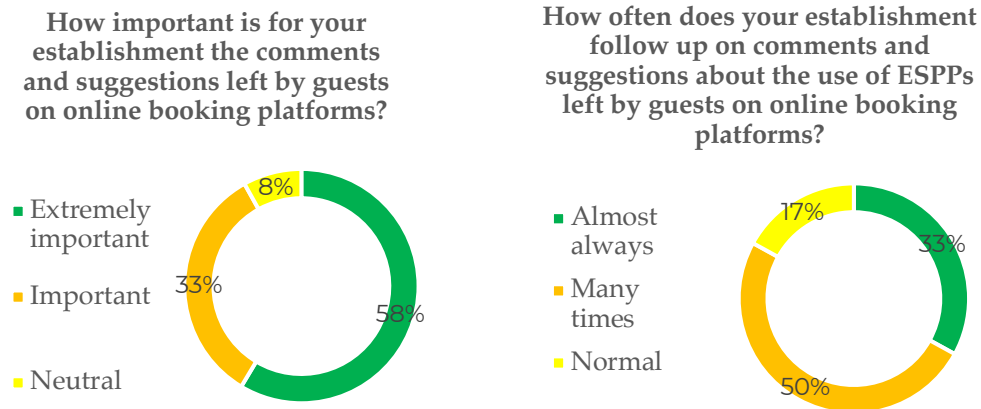


Figure 20 - Feedback from guests

ESPP are perceived in a positive light

Although the analysis carried out on the previous responses did not point to the existence of clear and formally established links between the adoption of ESPP, marketing strategies, and expectations for increased business, the fact is that most hotel professionals expressed positive attitudes regarding the adoption and benefits

of ESPP, including an increase in employee satisfaction, client demand, and return on investment. Such information is presented in Figure 21.

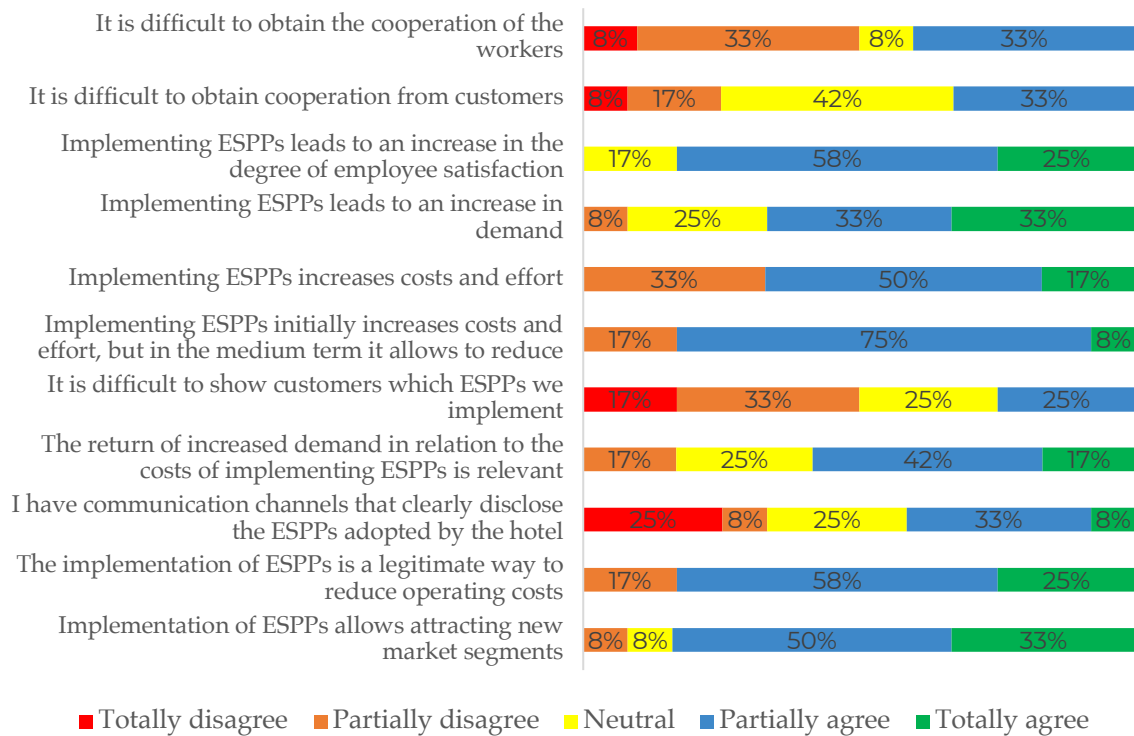


Figure 21 – Perception and consequences of implementing ESPP

Particularly, based on the results presented in Figure 22, hotel managers were satisfied with the enhancement of their image (83%) and the positive attention and advertising received from the media (75%), as well as with the more efficient use of natural resources (67%).

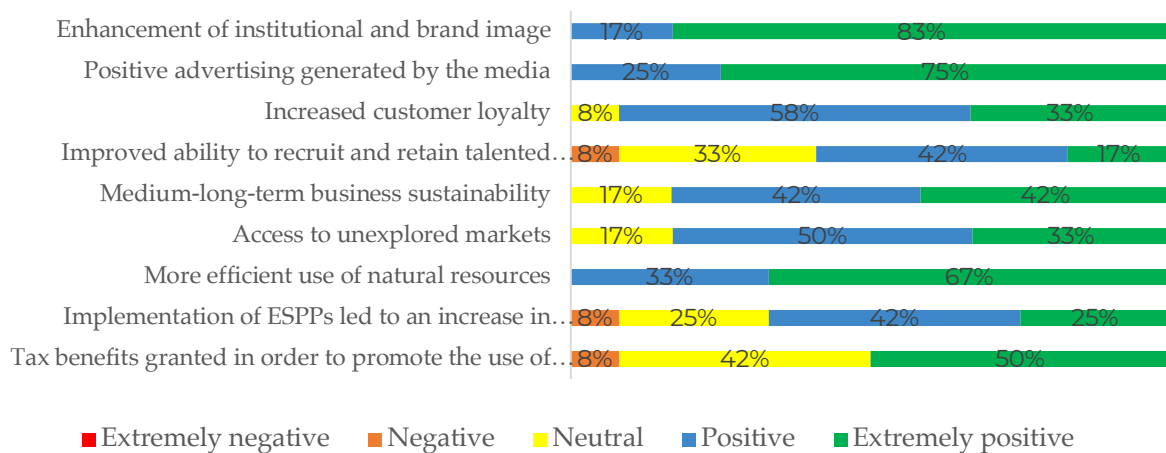


Figure 22 - Impact of implementing ESPP

Accordingly, when asked about the potential impact of not implementing ESPP, most respondents expressed concerns about the increase in the ecological footprint of their establishment and lack of adaptation to current and future industry trends (Figure 23).

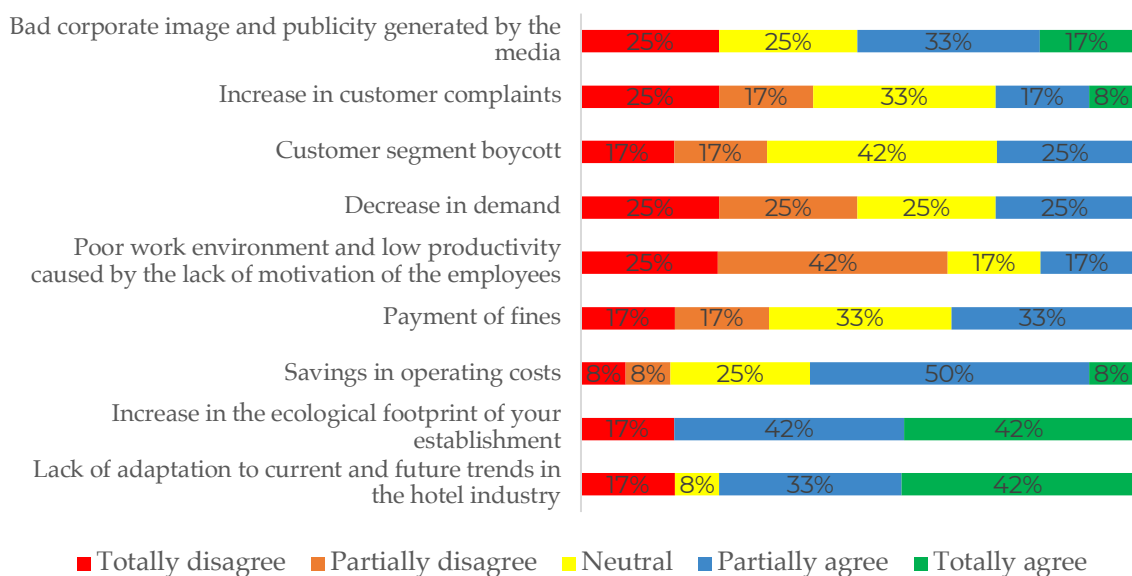


Figure 23 - impact of not implementing ESMPs

Nevertheless, as revealed in Figure 24, only a small percentage of establishments had been recipients of tax benefits (33%) or government incentives (17%) for the adoption of ESPP. On the other hand, none of them had been taxed or legally sanctioned for not adopting certain ESPP.

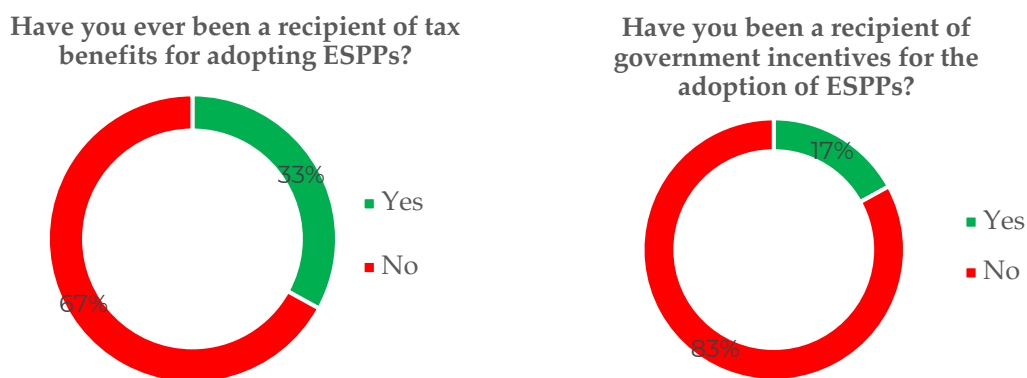


Figure 24 - economic support and sanctions

Respondent Demographics

Finally, we present here some basic demographic data about the respondents. Most hotel professionals were working in 5-star hotels (83%), located in a big city (58%) and were primarily general managers (33%) or hotel managers (17%). The mean age of respondents was 44 years. This information is summarised in figures Figure 25 and Figure 26.

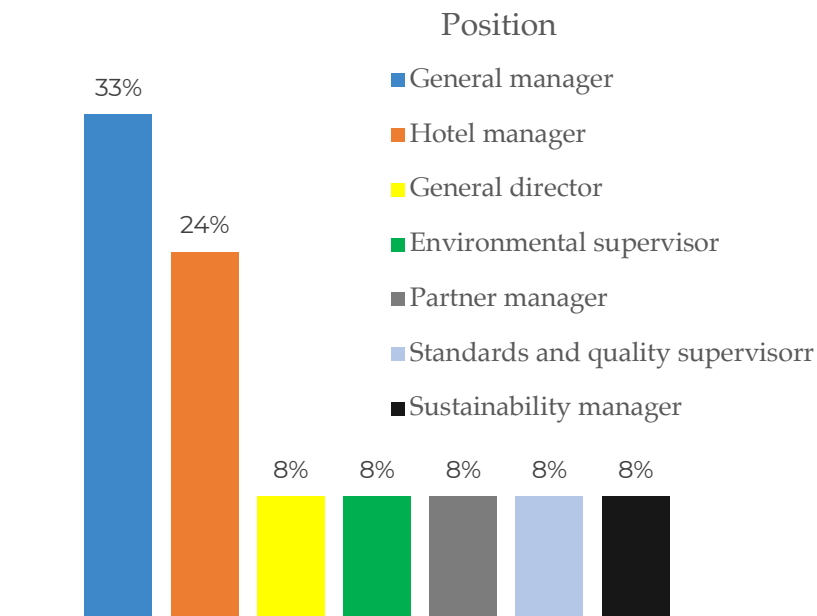


Figure 25 - Respondents' positions

Is your hotel located in a big city?

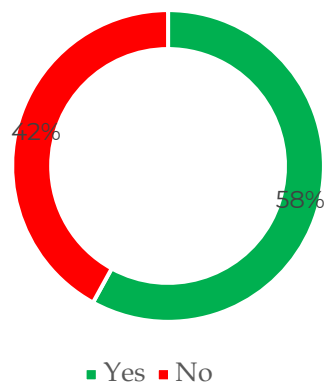


Figure 26 - Location of hospitality units

4.1.2 Interviews

From the 12 questionnaire respondents, 8 agreed to participate in one-to-one interviews. All interviews happened via the platform Zoom with face-time online calls. They were recorded upon acceptance of the interviewees and *a posteriori* verbatim transcript was made of each session. The interviews were conducted more in the form of a guided conversation supported on a semi-structured format, where the interviewer tried to follow a line of thought common to all interviews. Questions were all open-ended questions allowing for each interviewee's ideas and beliefs to come forth as naturally and as unbiased as possible. This approach generated quite unstructured responses from interview to interview, but at the same time it contributed to enrich the gathered data and enlarge the breadth of concepts and ideas addressed and to reveal "hidden thoughts". Most of the interviews took around 40 minutes and were audio-visually recorded in the interviewer's personal computer.

The second step performed, targeting the deployment of a grounded theory approach, was to create an initial codebook. The coding step of a grounded theory towards building themes and theories can be approached in different manners. Some authors claim that it should not have any influence, or have a minimal one, brought in by a literature review or the researcher beliefs [40]. However, other authors indicate that it is beneficial that the researcher is previously exposed to a literature review and establish research questions, so that the range of the study may be more clearly delineated and be more focused [41]. In this work, we have followed the latter stream and have therefore elaborated an initial codebook based on the defined research questions. This route for coding allows applying a deductive technique, i.e., to employ a top-down approach with codes being pre-defined based on previous knowledge or assumptions. At the same time, it does not prevent the researcher to come up with new codes or themes as analysis and coding of the data is being conducted, thus enabling also the implementation of a bottom-up approach. This is, whilst offering a pre-established basis for coding and therefore the possibility of clarifying prior assumptions or hypothesis (deductive technique), it also enables the possibility for the researcher to discover or induce new themes from the data being

analyzed (inductive technique). Figure 27 illustrates the practical principles of these techniques.

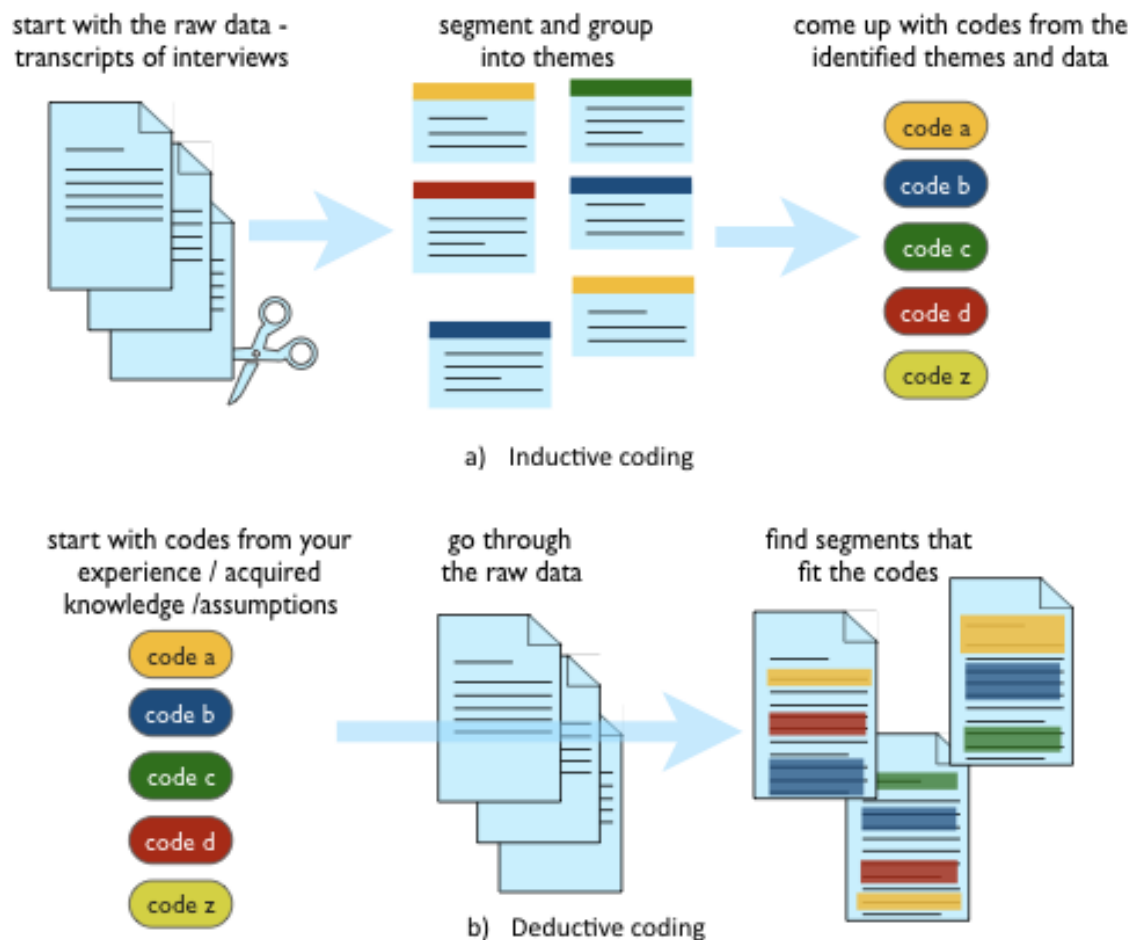


Figure 27 - Principles of inductive and deductive coding

Table 11 provides the list of the codes used in the initial codebook, which were derived from the knowledge gained by the researcher through the conducted literature review and the research questions. The codebook contains both the code designation (a keyword) and a brief definition with the meaning of such codes.

Table 11 - Initial codebook

Code designation	Code definition
Capacity	hotel's management capacity to plan, control and enforce the implementation of ESPP
Responsiveness	the attitude of hotel's employees and adherence to the management's decisions concerning ESPP
Collaboration	the attitude of hotel's guests and adherence to the hotel's ESPP
Governance	role that governmental entities play in assisting the hotel sector in implementing ESPP
Knowledge	knowledge on environmental management related standards and initiatives
Awareness	knowledge on environmental management policies
Impact	impact of implemented ESPP in the local environment and society
Revenue	impact in terms of visibility, image and ultimately in financial terms

During the qualitative analysis, other recurrent codes emerged. Table 12 presents such deduced codes.

Table 12 - Additional deduced codes

Code designation	Code definition
Opinion	hotel's manager personal proclivity for perceiving ESPP's benefits
Legislation	governmental guidelines, incentives and laws for the implementation of ESPP
Expectations	ability to maintain high quality standards while implementing ESPP
Implementation	current state of implementing ESPP
Organised	structured vs loose ESPP management
Geographical location	the local environment and natural resources at the hotel disposal
Year of construction	adequacy of built-in facilities for the implementation of ESPP

Finally, it was possible to associate codes, derive categories and formulate themes. Such data is presented in Table 13. The themes were in fact the major aspects that were recurrently addressed by the interviewees and therefore were considered as the

three pillars that can decide the effectiveness of ESPP implementation in the hospitality sector. These reveal what are the major hurdles and potential catalysts for a successful ESPP deployment within a hotel unit.

Table 13 - Final codes, categories and themes

Recurrent codes	Category	Theory
capacity, geographical location, year of construction	physical barriers	The hotel's infrastructure and location can be a major constraint or driver for the implementation of ESPP
revenue, impact, governance, legislation	economical incentives	ESPP are not sufficiently supported or incentivised by governmental entities
awareness, knowledge, governance, opinion, collaboration, capacity, responsiveness	personal will	Effective deployment of ESPP is grounded on personal motivation and conviction of all stakeholders

4.2 Collected data from guests

This section presents and discusses the results of the statistical analysis of the responses collected from the general public, which were provided based on the respondents' experience and beliefs as hotel guests. As we have explained in chapter 3, a link to an online questionnaire developed using Google Docs was disseminated via Facebook to two personal networks of contacts with distinct average ages (26 and 50), thus ensuring some diversity of audience as it can be observed in Figure 28.

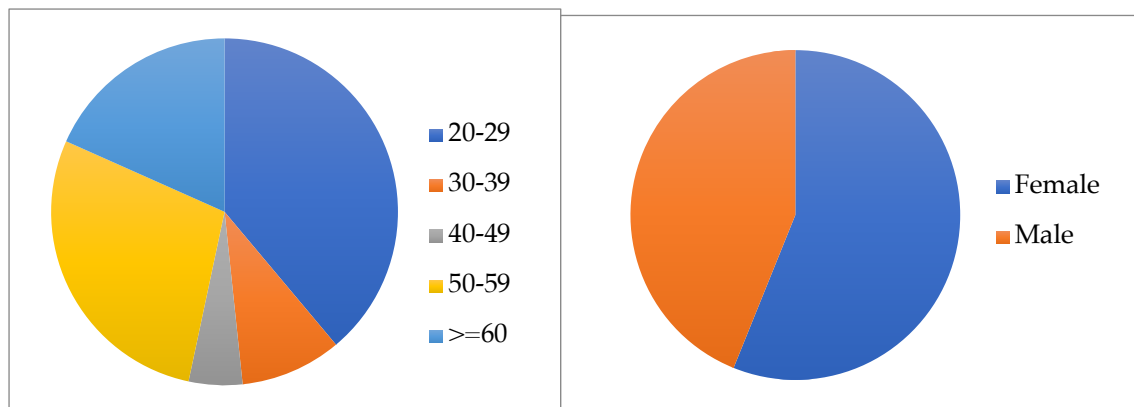


Figure 28 - Characterisation of respondents

In the remainder of this section we present and discuss the main research findings obtained from the conducted statistical analysis. Such analysis was performed using the software package Excel.

ESPP interest does not translate directly into booking intention

As it can be appreciated by the data presented in Figure 29, almost 60% of the guests were interested in the environmental policy and practices of the hotels they go to. However, such interest was not totally reflected in their choices when selecting the accommodation given that for only less than half of the respondents (38%) such policy was a decisive factor. Most participants tend to choose accommodations with the best punctual rating and reputation (65%), instead of accommodations with the most effective communication about their ESPP (30%).

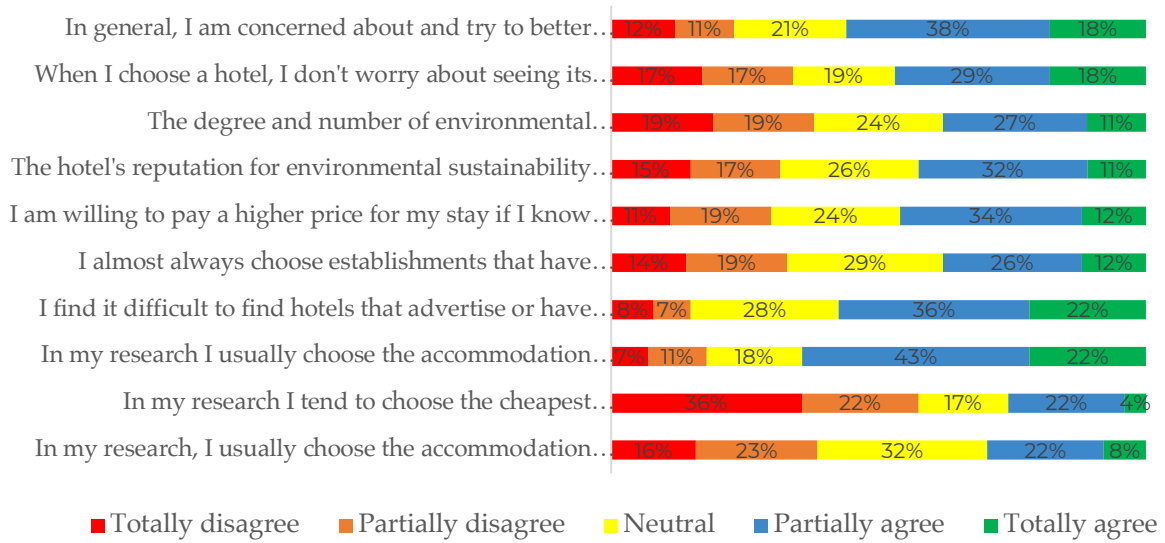


Figure 29 - Attitude of guests towards hotels with ESPP

Expectedly, guests who are more concerned about and try to understand the ES measures of the hotel they go to, are significantly more likely to consider the ES measures and reputation of a hotel as a decisive factor in their choice and be willing to pay a higher price for ES hotels. Consequently, they are less likely to choose the cheapest accommodation, regardless of other factors. These findings are illustrated in Table 14.

We have also found out that men were significantly more likely than women to choose accommodations with the best punctual rating and reputation [$r(177) = -.16, p = .036$], as well as the cheapest accommodations [$r(177) = -.19, p = .013$]. This can be seen in the data presented in Table 15.

Table 14 – Relations of attitude of hotel guests concerning ESPP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. In general, I am concerned about and try to better understand, what are the measures of ES of the hotels where I go.	1							
2. When I choose a hotel, I don't worry about seeing its ESPP.	-.17*	1						
3. The degree and number of ES measures that hotels have in place is a decisive factor in my choice of accommodation.	.72*	-.14	1					
4. The hotel's reputation for ES is a deciding factor in my choice of accommodation.	.69*	-.13	.80*	1				
5. I am willing to pay a higher price for my stay if I know that a particular hotel is more environmentally friendly sustainable.	.57*	-.15*	.55**	.59**	1			
6. I almost always choose establishments that have ES measures in place.	.67*	-.11	.77**	.74**	.57**	1		
7. In my research, I tend to choose the cheapest accommodation, regardless of other factors.	-.18*	.20**	-.095	-.063	-.14	-.14	1	
8. In my research, I usually choose the accommodation with the greatest and most effective communication about its ES measures, regardless of other factors.	.53*	-.074	.65**	.64**	.53**	.69**	-.081	1

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

Table 15 - Comparison of male (M) and female (F) attitudes

	Totally disagree (%)		Disagree (%)		Neutral (%)		Agree (%)		Totally agree (%)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
In my research I usually choose the accommodation with the best punctual rating and reputation, regardless of other factors.	6	8	6	14	13	22	49	39	26	18
In my research I tend to choose the cheapest accommodation, regardless of other factors.	28	41	17	26	23	13	27	18	5	3

When analyzing the data, we have discovered that older individuals have a more coherent approach and thus overall can be seen as being more environmentally conscious (Table 16). In fact, responses from the higher ranges of age revealed that individuals from those ranges were significantly more likely to value hotels with ESPP, as indicated by their interest in the ESPP of a hotel, as well as the importance of ESPP in their decision to choose an accommodation.

Table 16 - Age influence on choices

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	1								
2. In general, I am concerned about and try to better understand, what are the measures of ES of the hotels where I go.	.35**	1							
3. When I choose a hotel, I don't worry about seeing its environmentally sustainable policies and practices.	-.16*	-.17*	1						
4. The degree and number of environmental sustainability measures that hotels have in place is a decisive factor in my choice of accommodation.	.32**	.72**	-.14	1					
5. The hotel's reputation for environmental sustainability is a deciding factor in my choice of accommodation.	.24**	.69**	-.13	.80**	1				
6. I am willing to pay a higher price for my stay if I know that a particular hotel is more environmentally friendly sustainable.	.18*	.57**	-.15*	.55**	.59**	1			
7. I almost always choose establishments that have environmental sustainability measures in place.	.40**	.67**	-.11	.77**	.74**	.57**	1		
8. In my research, I tend to choose the cheapest accommodation, regardless of other factors.	-.29**	-.18*	.20**	-.095	-.063	-.14	-.14	1	
9. In my research, I usually choose the accommodation with the greatest and most effective communication about its sustainability measures, regardless of other factors.	.27**	.53**	-.074	.65**	.64**	.53**	.69**	-.081	1

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

On the other hand, a larger percentage of younger individuals prefer accommodations with the cheapest rates. This is not quite a surprise considering that mature individuals are more likely to have a better financial situation.

High willingness to cooperate with ESPP

The guests' responses revealed that the majority was willing to cooperate with most the hotels in the execution of their environmental policy as it can be seen in Figure 30. Turning off the air conditioning (78%) and using the same towels for more than one day (74%) were the measures most guests expressed their cooperation. In contrast, only a minority was willing to use the bathroom amenities provided daily (26%).

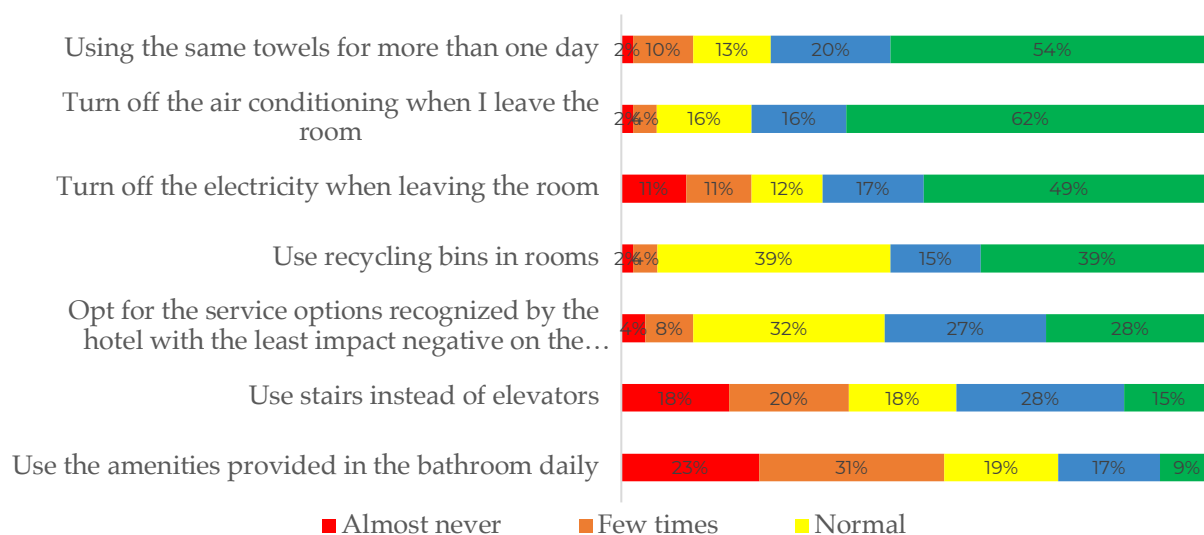


Figure 30 - Cooperation with the hotel's ESPP

Data obtained by analysing the above responses, has also shown us that environmentally conscious guests “go the extra mile”, being willing to make some sacrifices. Respondents who are more concerned about and try to understand the ES measures of the hotel they go to, are significantly more likely to opt for ES service options and use stairs instead of elevators; measures that only half of the guests are willing to adopt, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17 - Relation between environmental consciousness and cooperation

	1	2	3
1. In general, I am concerned about and try to better understand, what are the measures of ES of the hotels where I go.	1		
2. Opt for the service options recognized by the hotel with the least impact negative on the environment	.32**	1	
3. Use stairs instead of elevators	.24**	.51**	1

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

Derived from the data presented in Table 18, it can be stated that women were significantly more likely to use the same towels for more than one day [$r(177) = .18, p = .016$], turn off the air conditioning when leaving the room [$r(177) = .15, p = .048$], and opt for ES service options [$r(177) = .23, p = .002$].

Table 18 - Men versus women degree of cooperation

	Almost never		Few times		Normal		Many times		Almost always	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Use the same towels for more than one day	3%	2%	15%	6%	14%	13%	24%	17%	44%	62%
Turn off the air conditioning when leaving the room	4%	1%	5%	3%	17%	16%	22%	11%	53%	69%
Opt for the service options recognized by the hotel with the least impact negative on the environment	6%	3%	10%	7%	41%	25%	24%	30%	18%	36%

In addition, according to the statistics extracted and presented in Table 19, older individuals were significantly more likely to turn off the air conditioning while leaving the room, as well as opting for ESPP service options, and use stairs instead of elevators.

Table 19 - Influence of age range and cooperation

	1	2	3	4
1. Age	1			
2. In general, I am concerned about and try to better understand, what are the measures of ES of the hotels where I go.	.15 [*]	1		
3. When I choose a hotel, I don't worry about seeing its environmentally sustainable policies and practices.	.23 ^{**}	-.17 [*]	1	
4. The degree and number of environmental sustainability measures that hotels have in place is a decisive factor in my choice of accommodation.	.19 [*]	.72 ^{**}	-.14	1

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

ESPP are greatly appreciated

The majority of guests considered important or extremely important all the possible 11 environmental measures presented to them as it can be observed in Figure 31. The most valued ones were the use of alternative energy and light management (92%), whereas the use of partner green brand logos in the hotel structures and on the hotel's website were the least appraised (67%).

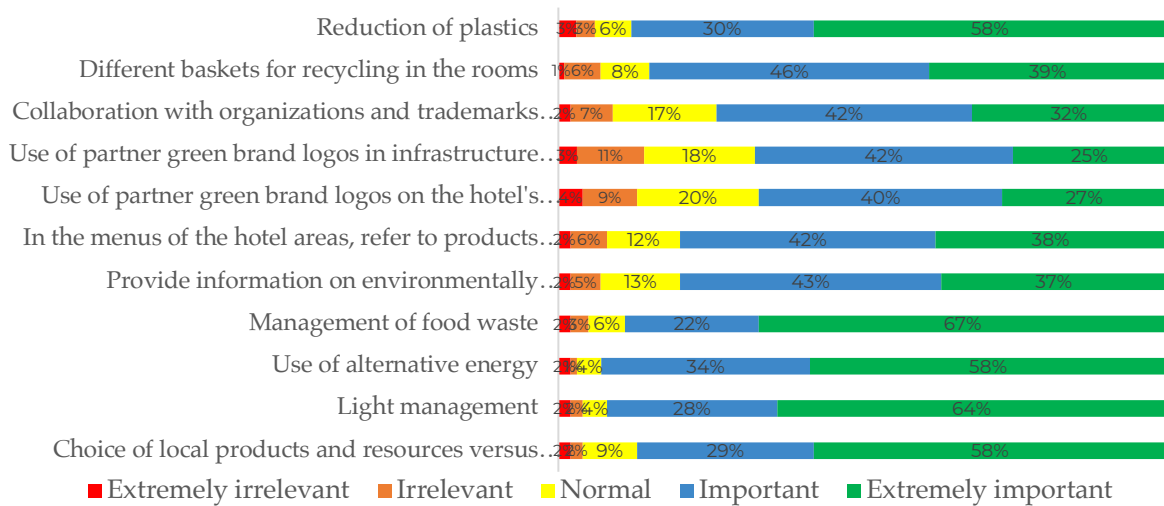


Figure 31 - Importance of ESMs

Based on the results presented in Table 20, it is fair to say that ESPP are especially important for guests who are more concerned about and try to understand the ES measures of the hotel, as they significantly consider more important all the ESPP listed than guests who are less concerned about ES hotel measures.

Table 20 - Relationships between importance to ESMs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. I am concerned about and try to better understand, the ES measures of ES of the hotels	1											
2. Reduction of plastics	.34**	1										
3. Different baskets for recycling in the rooms	.40**	.67**	1									
4. Collaboration with ES organizations and trademarks	.39**	.72**	.66**	1								
5. Use of partner green brand logos in infrastructure hotel structures	.35**	.55**	.57**	.76**	1							
6. Use of partner green brand logos on the hotel's website hotel	.41**	.53**	.56**	.74**	.90**	1						
7. In the menus of the hotel areas, refer to ES products and processes	.30**	.61**	.55**	.65**	.58**	.54**	1					
8. Provide information on ES measures in practice	.36**	.65**	.61**	.73**	.65**	.65**	.76**	1				
9. Management of food waste	.29**	.59**	.54**	.57**	.47**	.44**	.62**	.64**	1			
10. Use of alternative energy	.36**	.66**	.64**	.63**	.52**	.49**	.56**	.64**	.75**	1		
11. Light management	.31**	.66**	.68**	.61**	.50**	.48**	.57**	.64**	.73**	.83**	1	
12. Local products and resources versus imports	.28**	.61**	.62**	.59**	.48**	.47**	.58**	.63**	.65**	.76**	.77**	1

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

The analysis also indicates that women were significantly more likely to appreciate ESPP, based on the figures provided in Table 21. Among others, highly appreciated measures include the reduction of plastics [$r(177) = .17, p = .023$]; collaboration with ES organizations and trademarks [$r(177) = .21, p = .005$]; information about ES products and processes [$r(177) = .21, p = .005$]; information about ES measures in practice [$r(177) = .26, p < .001$]; and management of food waste [$r(177) = .15, p = .045$].

Table 21 - Comparison of attitudes between men and women

	Extremely irrelevant		Irrelevant		Normal		Important		Extremely important	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Reduction of plastics	4%	2%	5%	2%	8%	4%	35%	27%	49%	65%
Collaboration with ES organizations and trademarks	1%	3%	13%	2%	20%	13%	42%	43%	23%	40%
In the menus of the hotel areas, refer to ES products and processes	1%	3%	10%	2%	18%	7%	42%	42%	28%	46%
Provide information on ES in practice	0%	4%	11%	0%	22%	5%	42%	45%	24%	46%
Management of food waste	0%	3%	5%	2%	11%	1%	26%	18%	58%	76%

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, we have presented and analysed the data collected through different means from the hospitality professional segment (hotel managers) and the general public (in their role as hotel guests).

The questionnaire for the professional segment was filled by 12 hotel managers out of the 20 who were approached by the researcher. A statistical frequency analysis was performed and the results were discussed and presented. Given the reduced sample size, it was not possible to conduct inferential analysis and, consequently, the inspection for potential relationships was limited, even though some significant relationships were possible to detect.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were held with 7 hotel managers, who were the ones that agreed to participate. Interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis. Based on the formulated research questions and knowledge gained from the literature review, an initial codebook was developed to perform a qualitative analysis adopting a grounded theory approach. From that analysis, some common concepts emerged to complement the findings obtained with the quantitative analysis of the questionnaires' data.

The statistical analysis conducted on the data collected from the public produced basic descriptive statistics (min, max, mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) and frequency distribution. Additionally, inferential analyses, particularly Pearson's correlation analyses, which evaluate the relationship between two variables, were also performed. The strength of the relationship was examined to determine the statistical significance, as well as the direction of the relationship (using the p and r values). This helped to understand whether responses to some questions had an impact on the responses to other questions.

Collected data demonstrated overall, a strong consciousness of the participants for the importance of ESPP, as well as their willingness to become more engaged. Among the general public, it also pinpointed some differences in the attitude according to genre and age range. Within the professional segment, despite clearly indicating that good initiatives are already well established, it revealed that generally, there is not yet a consolidated, holistic approach to ESPP, perfectly embedded within the management and *modus operandi* of the hospitality unit.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The study carried out in the course of this master's dissertation, intended to examine the state of implementation of sustainable measures in the hotel sector. The goal was to understand to what extent hotel professionals were motivated to establish environmentally sustainable policies in their establishments and, if possible, the basis for this motivation, or lack of it. Among other aspects, it was considered important to identify the degree of maturity, depth and consistency of the implementation of such a policy, the knowledge of relevant legislation and standardization, the relationship with guests and the existence of intersections between the sustainability policy and the hotel marketing strategy.

This study started with the premise that there could be implications between the personal convictions and/or prejudices of each professional regarding ecological and economic aspects, as well as their interconnection, toward the sustainability approach adopted by the respective hotel. But there was also the expectation of understanding whether hotels, regardless of the reasons that led them to adopt environmentally sustainable behaviors, were trying to take advantage of this same behavior, namely in their relationship with guests and in marketing actions. We started out curious to learn if possible ecological behavior was based on loose initiatives or if, on the contrary, there was a policy for environmental sustainability well-founded and integrated into the general management policies of the hospitality units.

We have then initiated our study by surveying the literature to have a better understanding of the current situation worldwide and also of the existing relevant legislation, initiatives and standards.

After evaluating the different possible methodological strategies, we have decided to adopt a mixed methods approach. Accordingly, we have prepared a questionnaire directed to hotel managers, consisting mainly of closed-end, multiple choice, and Likert-scale questions to obtain comparable data. Subsequently, we have delineated semi-structured interviews to collect more subjective information and therefore have the opportunity to better understand motivations and beliefs. Transcribed interviews

were analysed using both an inductive and deductive coding technique. Such combination enabled us to evaluate some of the initial concepts and formulate new ones, overall contributing to identifying important common aspects and formulating or asserting theories.

Meanwhile, given our interest in investigating the relationship between the eventual ESPP of hotels, and the perceptions and attitudes of guests, we have also developed a questionnaire presented to the general public, on its role as hotel guests. We also suspected that the data collected from such questionnaires would be of potential interest to hospitality professionals.

5.2 Main findings

Responses to the questionnaire directed towards the professional segment revealed a clear commitment of enquired hotel managers towards ESPP. All of them had implemented or were planning to implement ESPP. In addition, most of them had appointed a responsible for ESPP, even though this manager did not have a specific profile or curriculum in the area of environmental sustainability. Still, they had adopted a variety of ES measures and had provided or were planning to provide ES training to their employees. Concerning this last aspect, the responses received did not demonstrate the existence of a concerted approach, alluding to punctual and essentially informative actions and without referring to periodicities.

It was clear that the majority of enquired hotel professionals were highly motivated to better understand ESPP and were satisfactorily aware of the existence of ES standards even though it was not evident that they had consolidated knowledge and experience on their use. Nonetheless, we detected positive influences of the existence of knowledge of standards in the positioning of hotels concerning environmental sustainability. It was observed that those with greater knowledge were more likely to invest more resources in ecological measures.

Overall, hotel professionals considered ESPP highly beneficial, especially in terms of reputation. Still, the reported marketing and communication actions involving data on the ESPP were limited, despite recognizing that guests appreciate these practices. Responses also indicate that legislation, government initiatives, and incentives are likely to be still limited or poorly disseminated, as only a minority of hotels were

recipients of such benefits or were aware of their existence. Accordingly, our study suggests that the aspect of achieving economically sustainable growth or resilience has not been yet sufficiently considered hand-in-hand with environmental policy. Likewise, it also insinuates that the defined measures endorsed by the hotels have a scarce liaison with the local society and governmental entities.

The findings of assessing the transcribed interviews held with hotel managers corroborate some of the conclusions deduced from the quantitative analysis. Particularly, they emphasize the theory that the environmental behaviour of hospitality units capitalises on the personal convictions and will of their managers (theme 3). In fact, it emerged from the responses that hotel managers many times felt frustrated by not having the capacity to enforce fully the desired ESPP, due to the lack of required conditions provided by the hotel. Often, as captured in the first deduced theme, the obstacles come from the infrastructure itself, which has not been built taking into consideration the necessities for implementing certain ESM. These finding are aligned with the positive hypothesis for the first research question formulated at the beginning of our study.

Likewise, the hypothesis that the awareness of standards, legislation, and governmental initiatives could have a partial influence on the implementation of ESPP in the hospitality sector was also asserted. Adding to some indication in that sense provided by the questionnaires' data, interviewees expressed their concerns and disappointment toward the role of government and local authorities. As enclosed in the deduced theme 2, one of reported difficulties in adopting ESPP is precisely the limited institutional support. Managers feel that a top-down approach from the government and legislation side toward finding alternative solutions that facilitate the implementation of ESPP in hospitality. Also the discussion on standards raised minimal interest among the participants, although the majority agreed on the importance of following standards.

Finally, the analysed data indicated that the negative hypothesis for research question 3 was the prevailing one. In fact, the reported activities on marketing did not reveal a clear usage of ESPP-related information, nor the setting up of specific campaigns or liaison with dedicated entities to publicize the hotel taking advantage of its ecological behaviour. Moreover, as captured in theme 3, there is still much room for improvement concerning communication and dissemination. Just as hotel managers suggest a top-down legislation reform, a similar approach would be

appreciated in this regard. Efforts in a strong and clear communication of the hotels' intended ESPP, their benefits, and impacts, could be a motivational force for guests to adopt a more environmentally sustainable attitude themselves in regards to their accommodation choices.

Our analysis of the data received from the public indicates that the majority of respondents are aware of the importance of the general environmental sustainability of the hospitality sector. However, such awareness does not consistently translate into a decisive preference and selection of the most ecological hospitality units. This suggests that there is not sufficient information provided to the public concerning benefits derived from the adoption of a conscious sustainable behaviour nor of the significant negative contribution to the carbon footprint that tourism may have. A more specific communication of each hotel's environmentally sustainable policies and practices, at every point of interaction with the clients, is lacking (such as online reservation, on-site, restaurant menus, etc). Moreover, it also insinuates that there may be some misconceptions regarding ecological hotels, associating them with higher prices and less comfort. This result is consistent with the rather modest investment hotels make in marketing actions that use information concerning their ESPP as reported above.

The computed statistics also revealed that, in general, women attach greater importance to ecological aspects and that older age groups are likely to give more priority to ecological aspects over the economic factor when selecting the hotel. Not surprisingly, we have learned that younger individuals are more likely to prefer accommodations with the lowest rates.

Most guests revealed to be interested in the ESPP of the hotels they go to and to be willing to cooperate with most ES practices, with a clear appreciation of measures such as the use of alternative energy and light management. As expected, guests with a greater interest in environmental sustainability are more likely to choose ES hotels, value the hotel's ecological efforts, and even follow the ES measures that other guests feel reluctant in following.

However, it seems clear that the aspects related to sustainability, even though highly appreciated, do not yet overcome consistently other aspects such as price or comfort and public opinion, when selecting a hotel. In fact, our study indicated that the rating and reputation of a hotel bear more significance in the guest's choice of

accommodation. Also, as indicated above, depending on the age range, the economical factor may have a substantial influence.

Overall, the collected data did not provide discernment into the existence of a consistent holistic approach. It is therefore our understanding, based on the data collected and its analysis, that the ecological behavior of hotels is currently largely conditioned and leveraged by the conviction, beliefs, and will of their own managers and that there is not sufficient involvement of all stakeholders who could play an important role, namely local and governmental authorities. The role of ESPP in the marketing strategy of hotels is still under-explored and again it was noticed that involvement with relevant stakeholders is limited. The role of guests can also be determinant in the ecological performance of hospitality units, by taking evermore green-conscious decisions. Accordingly, given the detected general interest of the public in environmental sustainability issues, it seems to be worth investing more effort in bringing this consciousness into their role as hotel guests. Attaining a balance of maintaining quality and comfort standards (especially for 5-star hotels), while putting in place environmental sustainable solutions without raising prices, was revealed as pertinent by hotel managers.

5.3 Recommendations

Hotels should try to use tourism/hospitality associations and mechanisms to put pressure on governments and local authorities for wider dissemination of existing measures and incentives and rewarding units with better environmental performance. Existing funding programmes and initiatives from the EU, as well as documentation and tools, should be made easily accessible to all interested stakeholders. Governmental authorities together with relevant associations should promote workshops, dedicated training and sessions for hospitality professionals.

Hotels should embrace ESPP from a holistic viewpoint, making sure that the necessary conditions are met for a successful environmental performance of the hotel. This includes having clearly delineated guidelines and hiring staff with specific profiles and expertise in environmental issues (or facilitating access to specialized educational programmes). But they should also ensure that the necessary infrastructures and equipment are in place. Moreover, they should follow existing

standards and legislation, both to facilitate effective implementation of ESPP, as well as to certify that their role is according to expectations, positively contributing to the defined goals of carbon neutrality.

Another essential aspect is the investment in enlightening guests, to increase the chances of having their full cooperation. New, personalised and attractive forms of communicating environmental issues and the actions implemented by the hotel should be devised, clearly referring to the derived benefits on a global scale, and possibly focusing on the welfare of local communities and the guests themselves, highlighting their own individual contribution to European and worldwide ecological goals. In other words, efforts could be endorsed to try to involve the hotel guests actively and responsibly. One thing is the general beliefs and convictions of an individual and another thing is to what extent it translates into his behaviour when acting as a hotel guest. Hotel stays many times are of short duration and thus the sense of guilt for not embracing totally a green-conscious attitude may become minimal. However, as we saw, such manner of thinking is changing, even though at different paces and ways according to genre and age range. Taking also into consideration the heterogeneity of people and the growing expectations of travellers to be treated as unique individuals, hotels should try to personalise their marketing campaigns, as well as their offers and treatment provided to their guests.

Finally, to contribute to the economic sustainability of the hospitality unit, the hotel's marketing strategy should be revised, trying to incorporate as much as possible ESPP-related information, and cooperate with different types of travel agencies and green brands, namely those targeting green-conscious travellers. The above recommendation regarding the relationship with guests can obviously have a significant impact toward the economic sustainability.

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7 Annex – Transcripts of interviews

Transcript of the Interview with Manager 2 – General Manager - Douro41 Hotel & Spa

[A: António; D: Manager 2]

A: Very well.. I saw that in the survey you replied that

D: Hmm..

A: Douro41 has an environmental management system defined by the ISO14001 standard, which is called Environmental Management Systems.

D: Yes..?

A: Can you tell me what kind of factors were decisive for that decision?

D: No, we have a program here called DHM Group Green, and therefore we took a series of measures here.. we were not audited.

A: Oh, OK.

D: Let's say here there are several, how do you say, several norms we rely on, several documents mainly European, and then we apply in each hotel the solutions that we think can be easily implemented, because many of these aren't, and after that they can have a positive impact on both the customer experience and in terms of cost. What I can say is that there must be an environmental concern here, but what we believe is that this is normally always good business. But once again we were not audited as such and we do not have this certificate but we rely heavily on these standards.

A: Very well. Will there be a consensus or a general decision for all DHM hotels or does each delegate have the autonomy to decide?

D: No. The guidelines are general for everyone.

A: Very well.

D: Depending on when the hotels opened, were they were renovated or the type of product cycle they are in, you can make one option or another. Hm, so here in the case of Douro41, for example, this law that came out that ended the single use plastic, I mean for us it had no impact because we no longer had it. Apart from the garbage bags in the kitchen, because neither in housekeeping nor in the laundry room we use plastic, everything is absolutely cloth and even our amenities will now all be recycled cardboard, so for us it was a relatively smooth transition. Because as we opened it two years ago, there are already a lot of these things, many of the initial standards were already defined that way.

A: Very well. And in terms of hotels, for example Douro41 and others from DHM, do you know if they have a sustainability department or a responsible colleague with specific training in the field?

D: Yes, we have a project, as I was telling you, called DHM Green, which is led by Miguel Castelo Branco at headquarters who is our operations manager, and then in each unit there

is a responsible person in each team. He is a person responsible for having a little more environmentally conscience initiatives...

A: I'm hearing you a little bad sorry, I stopped hearing you there.

D: Is it better?

A: It's failing a lot, I don't know if it's on my part or...

D: Is it better?

A: Yes yes, better.

D: Ah, nice was leaning here my arm over the microphone.

A: Hhmm.

D: Hm, and so I was telling you that there is a person responsible for the project at the DHM level, at the level of all hotels, and then each hotel has a green keeper, so to speak, who is responsible for implementing some initiatives. The general manager has a very important role here because there are measures here that have relatively important impacts on the operation. I can tell you that for example here in Douro41, we are currently building an installation that will allow us to have zero water costs. So reuse the river water here with filters and everything else all done in-house, as I was saying normally these measures are good business so the less public line water you consume is better for the hotel but it also allows for a reuse of the flow here of the river, which usually is because there is a potable water storage here and we filter the same water here. Things like bottling our own water because we install water filters to serve customers, so things like that, we do a lot. Nowadays the plastic bags in the rooms are not plastic, they are not plastic bags, they are garbage bags that are not plastic, they are paper and therefore unfortunately at this stage of covid we had to go back. With simple things like using plastic to protect the television controls obviously the use of masks for us for the employees are masks made part of the uniform so they are reusable and washable, for customers it is obvious that we have to have some disposables here fo. So we took a few steps back here but sooner or later we have to restructure..

A: To restructuring yes..

A: Very well. Here's a question to ask, can you see what I'm sharing or not?

D: Yes, yes, I can do it.

A: Alright very well. For the structure of the work, I designed the work in analyzing the norms that exist..

D: Hm hm.

A: ..See what marketing strategies are implemented; and then look at the impact, try to gauge the impact they've had..

D: Hm hm..?

A: And that's it and I used these international ISO standards, because they have a reputation for creating..

D: And this here, then depending on the units or depending on some of these standards are obligatorily have to be audited. I know that I have already worked on projects that had

European support and here it is mandatory to have this audit and all that... in our case we are not obliged to have these audits but what we do is, we base our procedures to apply all these rules I then I can send you all the SOP's we have so that you can see them in more detail. Okay, but it has to do with a lot of things since finally abolishing plastic completely, there are no plastic bottles, there are no plastic bags, that's the big one, it's one of the big impacts, the separation of garbage is obviously important hm, reuse of water in some units. In our case of the Douro we don't use solar energy but for example I know that our hotel in Monchique has, hm and therefore depending on when they were built, the buildings may be more advanced or less advanced. In our case, we also have centralized energy management systems here, so they consume less electricity than would be normal, to have exactly the same comfort, we have here in the guest rooms we have water consumption regulators too so as not to waste water, we encourage obviously at the level we are, we always want to provide the maximum level of comfort but we warn guests "listen to the laundry that has an environmental impact therefore"..

A: Warn them about towels..

D: ...If you can use the same towel twice, you can. We can't oblige but we make those notes.

A: Very well. Okay, in relation to these ISO standards, this was even created this initial base was created and developed by a Brazilian, I know that many Brazilians are at the forefront of environmental sustainability hm and here the chair of the committee, he makes a statement that it is said that at the international level programs and schemes for environmental sustainability are very fragmented and that these norms help to implement this type of measures.

D: Hm hm...?

A: Do you agree that having such international standards facilitate and guide, serves as a guide for implementation..?

D: Yes yes, anything supportive is always positive. And therefore not all of us are specialists in the subjects and therefore if the information and some procedures are accessible to everyone, then each group each company makes a conscious decision to apply them or not. What we feel strongly about, as I told you, is it's good business so in terms of everything from marketing costs to getting new customers and then obviously environmental impact.

A: Do you feel that there was, is it... is there economic, financial benefits?

D: Yes, yes.

A: Alternatives...

D: The clearest economic benefit is utility costs, energy costs. Therefore, the smaller our footprint, the less energy we use, the less water we use, and therefore in this sense it is always good. Of course, there are other solutions, for example, abolishing plastic at the moment could mean a higher cost, but I think it is a temporary issue that will be resolved, in the next year and a half, everyone starts doing this according to market rules, suppliers with more competitive prices will appear and therefore this is all a matter of time. Where it is noticed, it is really in the utilities is in terms of cost. In terms of revenue, what I can tell you is that if we act locally, therefore, we buy local ingredients, if we use local gardens, butchers, or whatever, even if it is a little more expensive than buying at Makro for example, hm, that price at this level, at the Douro41 level and at the level we want to position ourselves, can be reflected in the sales price and the customer generally accepts this differentiation as long as it is mentioned and therefore visible. The customer doesn't mind paying a little more for a salad of organic vegetables, for example, local ones, and it shows and we have a lot of that.

A: Well, what could be a slightly increased value is paid for awareness, isn't it, and...

D: The end customer must be aware of this, so normally it's a little 50/50, so companies have to give up a little bit of their margin here, and the customer has to understand nowadays, unfortunately, being sustainable is it's more expensive than buying products in bulk, so this is pretty obvious. Because this has everything to do with it, it's not just helping the lady who has a vegetable garden and plants organic tomatoes, it's not. Very very very important impact on several levels. It's not just if I'm going to buy leek that's grown in Alicante, it all counts. If I can spend a little more and buy it next door, explaining to the customer that this price difference is for that reason, it is usually something that is very well accepted.

A: Because it minimizes all these extra components that are often overlooked.

D: In the end, one of the big impacts, at the level of those who are in this tourism and hotel services industry, transport is the big problem isn't it? So it's obvious that the more you reduce the better. So here in Douro, for example, we have a philosophy based very much on slow food in proximity to local species, for us this is important.

A: Very well. Now changing here just slightly from, in our approach..

D: Hm hm..?

A: I put it together, I found some Booking studies from 2019 that showed that almost 75% of all accommodation searches, hm... Sorry, let me read it here. "According to a study,...

D: yes yes yes..

A: ..In 2019, the percentage of sustainable accommodation has been growing, reaching almost 75% in 2019. Did you have any idea that these values were that high? That the percentage of accommodations, were sustainable accommodations, on Booking? Do you think this might have some preponderance for hotels in the..?

D: I have a very personal opinion. In other words, there's talk the talk and then there's walk the walk, so it's one thing to say that I'm going, another thing is to be. And in this case, some companies that are really pointers in this part, at this point. Six Senses is one of them, we want to be but we're not at that level yet. There are others, man, they say they are, but then it doesn't really happen, isn't it..? So no, hm, and this is one of the things that.. How can I explain..? Ensuring the seal is relatively easy. Therefore, I think it has more to do with the commitment that the company or the hotel, in this case, has with these, in short, this theme of environment and sustainability, rather than having the seal of being able to say that I am eco-friendly. This is a bit in the Clean&Safe line of tourism of Portugal, I mean. It is obviously important but it depends on whether the hotelier complies or not because this is basically going to the internet and filling out a survey. So it has to come from us, to fulfill. Hmm, so it's a little bit like that.

A: Well, I have it here, for example, I have a local accommodation here in Porto and I also filled out this document to have Clean&Safe and I mean, there wasn't one..

D: Nobody ever went to inspect, nobody ever went to see. Then. I think it's a lot of us. In that sense, it's obvious that sustainable wins, so everyone wants to be green. But between saying that I am and being myself, it is a different thing.

A: This also leads us to another question I had here, which was about Green Washing, which was exactly that, it was companies clinging to a seal and not having a structural change or finding sustainable alternatives for the matter; raw materials or for the production processes..

D: My opinion is that the small steps have the impact they do. They are relatively small. There are other things that have big impacts. Man, whatever it is, we have investments in utilities reduction, and this has a relatively short payback, so 4/5 years a little longer, this has an impact on the bottomline and therefore, and this has an impact on the footprint of a certain company. So we started to consume X of energy to consume X minus 25% or minus 30%, and that's what really impacts. Hmm, now there are others that of course have an impact, but it's more for "Englishman to see" as I usually say. Garbage separation is important, of course it is important, and now the straw drama. Man, because you saw a turtle with a straw stuck in its nose... That's not the drama. The drama is do we sort the garbage or we don't sort the garbage. Because if it's garbage, if it's well sorted, it should be being treated well and it should be well recycled. The theme is this. Obviously if we can avoid using plastic, we will. But if we use, the topic of disposables, we're going to separate and we're going to make sure that either it's going to be reused or it's going to be recycled so that's what I think is a little bit there. This Covid thing has been a drag, because now everything has to be individualized. The packages are individual, people can't touch the same thing, um, and so this has been a step back here with this theme. But there are absolutely extraordinary solutions to take advantage of resources that are free, that are non-polluting, I'm talking about solar energy, geothermal energy, I'm talking about taking advantage of water from the river's flow, so all these topics. And this really has a much bigger impact, both on the footprint and on a company's own income statement.

A: Of course I do. Well, and the Douro41's positioning, it would make perfect sense to use the force and energy of the water of the river, you are on top of the river..

D: Completely. I mean, when I'm here, if I don't enjoy the water, it goes to the sea.

A: Yes yes.

D: I take advantage of this, it's shovel is minus hm, it's anything but. So it's something that's here. Irrigation water the way we plan our gardens. We have almost no grass, so and we do drip irrigation, it all counts, and so I think these are the big steps. And if there were real support for companies to be able to make investments of this kind I think it would always be super positive hm.. Now because a bag of 500 recyclable disposable straws costs a euro or two more than plastic ones.. it's obvious that It's an important step, I'm not saying it's not, I think

A: is that in the long run..

D: It has a completely different impact. It's more advertiseable, so to speak, if I take a picture with a straw of dough or cardboard and post it on instagram. Than to take an investment of 20 thousand euros that I made to reuse the water and not be using water from the mains to irrigate hm, or people understanding that I plant local bushes and don't plant grass because the impact is completely different, that I have a ecosystem inside the hotel that allows you to precisely nourish the soils, use less water for irrigation, create shaded areas, so there are a number of things here that have a much greater impact, but we need to go a little further on the topic let's say so.

A: I also said, I had an interview yesterday or the day before yesterday with your colleague Filipa do E

D: Yes.

A: Do Évora Farm Hotel

D: She has a cool project. She will be able to do a lot

A: And he said that, for example, they were going to use rainwater for irrigation, which perhaps was not a difficult thing, palpable for customers to understand the hotel's sustainability practice..

D: You see, I mean, nowadays if you make a hotel from scratch, you can work with two completely different water lines, I mean. One that is reused from baths is filtered and then can be used in irrigation or sewage water, so to speak, and then a network with clean water for example. This reduces it by half. Things like investing in calibrating our dishwashing and dish disinfection or laundry machines have an absolutely brutal impact on chemical consumption. So that's less chemical that goes in than goes into the sewers and everything else. Hm, and so that's it, because the volume is small actions, but the volume in these small actions is brutal isn't it.. But it's like I was saying to you, we here at the hotel haven't put a straw in coke for two years now. Ah but the little child wants a straw... Teach your daughter to drink coca-cola without a straw because that's no longer used. And so it's a little bit like that, and we try to touch the customers here. Obviously it's funny but it's a little bit like that, like that. Now, there are hotels that offer a service or sell a product, let's say, at a level of luxury, and comfort is now a choice. That's why I say a lot that it depends on each one, it depends on each company, it depends on each client, what choices they make, in order to have that impact. I mean, I have bathtubs in my hotel, of course if the person is a little conscientious, they'll be here for a week and they won't take baths every day, but if they want, I'm obliged to provide that service. So I think that once again it starts with the individual and then, hm, finally having a more important collective impact.

A: It could be a double-edged stick here, in quotes, for hotels like that with 5 stars and if they want to position themselves in a luxury segment, at the same time they may have more possibilities and greater investment to change all production processes and find alternatives sustainable but on the other side of the medal there is the will of customers who will always have to be..

D: But that's why I think the important thing, luxury nowadays is choice, and we have to give the customer the choice. And so hm, the vast majority of people we receive today already have this notion, are already aware of it. And so you might prefer to pay another 4 or 5 euros for a steak that is made from meat that comes from next door and that is not Brazilian meat made in meadows that are a consequence of deforestation in the Amazon etc etc, people are very informed. Little by little we got there. But again, it depends on each one is not. It's silly that I'm serving salmon from Norway here, so I mean, it's all a little bit, it's all a little bit...how can I explain to you, we have to be a little rough in this analysis, I mean.

A: Yes yes, I understand perfectly.

D: We Portuguese are a fantastic example of this, I mean, our main dish our main ingredient is fish from thousands of kilometers away. But, well, cultural changes happen with time, it's not overnight, but I think it's a little bit around. It's working to have the least impact possible, day after day and one day at a time so to speak.

A: Very well. Here in relation to partnerships with green brands or hm or integrating the local economy and surroundings to the hotel, do you have any examples you can give?

D: Yes. With green brand partnerships we don't have it so far, but it's not something that we completely rule out. And here local partnerships we do a lot. So since, for example, all our sausages are from a butcher's that has pasture for pigs and the butcher and smokehouses here 10 minutes from the hotel. So, we work a lot with an organic farm called Verdiágua and basically what we tell them is I need 10 boxes of vegetables every week and what you bring is what I cook. For example, everything that is strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, is from a company that has an ecological organic red fruit plantation here, which is 20 minutes away in Serdoura, whenever possible, whenever possible, we do. Now there are other products that are harder is harder.

A: Regarding the process,

D: The person who says the person, the companies who say they are 100 100 100% local and everything, no no..it's a little..that's what I was saying so it's better to be honest with what we have than properly going to sell and then really we are not.

A: Yes, there will always be a part of the production process.

D: There is always and the consumer is used to it. And he still doesn't have that one, he still wants to have these little day-to-day comforts, I mean. Everyone likes pizza, but pizza is made with mozzarella, and mozzarella in Portugal doesn't exist, so you have to be a little bit.. You can make tomato sauce, but not mozzarella anymore. So you have to be a little coherent. In that sense, now I'm not going to stop serving pizza, of course, but if I can, I'm going to try to make my tomato sauce and tomatoes from here and be more so, so if I can't make it on one side or make it on the other, it depends a little bit give for example what each one is willing to do.

A: Now just for your perception in relation to the national market...

D: Yes..?

A: Do you believe there to be many hotels in Portugal that have these ISO certifications or in the image of ISO, even if they don't..

D: The topic of certifications I don't know I couldn't tell you. Now I know that there are many doing great practices, that's right. There are more and more trying to look for differentiation and there are more and more hotels with their own gardens, there are more and more hotels to buy locally, there are more and more hotels to decorate their rooms with local things and local producers is super important, I don't think so. I have doubts. In this sense, I think comparing, we started working in Spain, I think we are light years away.

A: Back says?

D: No no no, ahead.

A: Would you say we are, is there a greater awareness..?

D: There is greater awareness in Portugal,

A: And growing would you say?

D: Yes, there is a compromise in saying hey man, maybe I won't get twenty maybe nineteen. But I have to do it and therefore I think it exists more and more.

A: And above all, the motivations come from the customers come from..

D: You have to go from both sides.

A: In governmental and legal terms, there are benefits and incentives from the state.

D: There are very few. There are very few. There really is some support for investment but it is very short.

A: Even in terms of implementation, do you believe that it would be advantageous for the government, almost as an obligation to put in na nas, as it is said na na, in hotel legislation,

that it was mandatory to have these at least in the image of these ISO certifications that they fulfill the international parameters and that..

D: Mandating certification I think is always a mistake. Because each product is a product and each property is a property, it had its beginning times, its renovation times, and therefore, it is not fair to ask a business owner that was designed 50 years ago, to fulfill the rules of a new construction.

A: But maybe if it was built now..

D: Now, there are rules that if we can all abide by I think so, it could be in the law.

A: Very well

D: What you have to do for people, these people that really or these businesses that were really conceived in an older way, is to give them opportunities to improve, right? Unless they are completely, how do you say, outdated. But it's a little like that. I mean, if I have a hotel that opened 50 years ago, why can't I have support to buy solar panels, for example? Do you understand things like this...?

A: So, do you have something like that in mind, an example that has marked you of a measure that has been implemented in a hotel in Portugal that is out of the ordinary in terms of sustainability? A deep measure that you have, any example that you have in mind?

D: Hmm... One thing that is very profound, look, I was the General Manager of the hotel in Monchique, I think we did something very very funny, and that's it, we took the first step now, obviously the investments were values that they really weren't affordable that at the time we proposed to do this over time, but it was a hotel that after a deep energy study, we realized that it could be a positive hotel. That is, with a positive impact, we could produce more energy than we spent. And hey, this is fantastic. Now, of course, this was not done at the beginning at the time of construction, this would imply another 1 million euros of investment now but if they had used geothermal energy, solar energy, insulation, intelligent climate control processes at the time, it was a hotel that would produce more energy than it used to spend and we are talking about a hotel with a monster of a hotel with 200 rooms, 200 apartments, something absolutely huge is fantastic it has beautiful views over there to the mountains, but really and the interesting thing was that maybe not all measurements were still taken but the interesting thing was to understand that a building of that size..

A: It has that ability.

D: You have that ability, so if they have it, why can't others have it? So I think there and that things are different. I have a friend of mine who has a rural accommodation, made a geothermal investment and spends 0 on electricity. Now, she's had the initial investment, so it's a little bit there. But it starts from a variety of situations. Who can we say is very sustainable..? I mean, we at DHM have this example. We have the furnas, where all the heating of the hotel is done with the thermal waters of the furnas and therefore this is super interesting. Here the idea is to eliminate the consumption of mains water, so everything will be reused with our own pumps and our own filters, hm, and so all these are examples that are super positive.

A: Without a doubt.

D: That's why I was telling you, the example of Ah I don't put plastic straws anymore.. for me of course it's important I won't say no, but if we can attack the ones where the pointer really moves, where it really has impact. So I think, I think there are two types of measures. One is more of an image, and the other is really the ones that later have an impact.

A: Maybe to finish, in relation to communication, advertising, maybe the way the ads are placed in the different OTAs and online booking platforms, Douro41 emphasizes the need to emphasize the environmental responsibility that the hotel carries or. .?

D: Yes, at the moment we when hm, communication allows it, yes. In other words, I have a Spa brand that is completely eco-friendly, animal-friendly and therefore we advertise that. Now, it makes no sense for us to advertise that we reuse all our water, it has little commercial appeal, for example, it is once again a commitment on our part, its good business, as I just said, we have to make an important initial investment here, hm, but It is a commitment on our part, saying that we are plastic-free is perhaps a more important commercial attraction. It depends on a case-by-case basis, but that's how it is, we made a very big investment in 2019 to communicate that DHM hotels were on a path to being increasingly sustainable. And this in the DHM Green campaign, what was it like..ah! At Earth No Hotels, that's what we used to say. Hm, and so we made a great communication effort, I remember that in 2019 we lived based on this one, anyway, this catch-phrase, let's say.

A: Maybe I can take away from this, there is also the idea that, at least in terms of communication, the importance of two types of measures. The ones that are palpable, the ones that are easier to advertise and maybe those that go a little under the radar but that are..

D: Yeah, I think these measures are equally important, I don't say no, I don't think they are everything. In terms of environmental impact, they may even have a lower percentage. Hm but then there is another part of these measures and that we as companies that communicate and that serve and that are with people every day is also part of our obligation to say, You don't need a straw in this cocktail or talk to the bartender himself and oh man, don't put this decoration on because for this decoration I'm going to have to have a straw and I don't want to have a straw, we're not going to create garbage so let's be creative otherwise, change our habits a little. These simple steps are where people's chip changes in the way of thinking and being in their day-to-day lives. Then there are more powerful, more impactful actions, which may not be of much interest, but are equally important.

A: Yes sir, yes for my part I think we filled in all the questions I had. I don't know if there was anything that I think is relevant that I failed to mention..

D: No no, I think we touched on everything a little bit more or less. I think it depends on each one, it's not enough to say what I am and not do it, there's a lot out there. It's not worth saying I'm a super hero when I'm really here little by little trying to be sustainable, I think it's just that you have to be honest and get better, do more things, invest more, change mentalities, I think this is the way . With the tools that exist nowadays, I really think that just doesn't do it who doesn't want to.

Interview Transcript with Manager 4 – General Manager - Hotel Dom Henrique Downtown

[A: António ; L: Manager 4]

A: With your permission I will record it and then transcribe all these answers.

L: Okay okay.

L: By the way, just tell me your master's degree, what is a master's degree in?

A: In Marketing..

L: In Marketing? Oh good..

A: I took the Hotel Management course in Vila do Conde,

L: Well then..

A: And then when I finished, I started a local accommodation business in Foz with the help of my parents, and it's been going well. However, at Vila Foz, I had that hotel that opened

L: Yes, yes!..

A: I had it there until it opened until August 2019 and then in September, I thought I was missing something else, and I decided to

L: Oh great, you did well, you did well..

A: It was a great experience, and I am now finishing this dissertation. The only problem was that with the pandemic I couldn't give the university as much as I would like to, but that's it.

L: Yeah, it was good, that's always good.

A: All right, according to the chair of the ISO technical committee responsible for standards in the tourism sector, Manuel Otero, "there are many initiatives available that can help the hotel industry to improve its Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices, but none that integrate social and economic dimensions or which is free from commercial interests. Does Luís agree that it is difficult for hotels to implement environmental sustainability measures?

L: It's not easy, it's not easy. Now if it's impossible, no, it's not. Now it's not easy either. Now I'm not going to say, "no, this is very simple, it's put into practice and it's very simple". I have a parallel here that I can put, I remember perfectly here a few years ago, many years ago, many years ago, there was a problem here in accounting terms, which was that when hoteliers got together nobody understood each other, for example, when if he was talking about the occupancy rate, I would say it had 80% and another with a hotel similar to mine in the same city said it had 90%, but he said it had 90% because he put in all the complements and I said it had 80% because I didn't counted them. So nobody got bored because we were talking about different things. And here a few years ago in the last century, they came together in the United States and created the Uniform System of Accounts. They clearly defined that when talking about the occupancy rate, it is without complementarities without VAT without taxes without this without that other and it was perfectly defined. Here in the environment and sustainability, it is more difficult. I cannot say that when I speak of liters of water per night of guest, which is a reference for measuring consumption by hotel, I cannot say that it is in a single room or in a room for a whole family. Liters per guest, but is the guest in a single room or with the whole family? It is much more difficult to put this into practice. But it's not impossible.

A: So maybe if there was a standardization of knowledge of the application of these ISO standards, if there was a diffused knowledge within the hotel community, would it be easier?

L: That's what I think was ideal, it was that these rules weren't made by non-hoteliers, but hoteliers sit down at the table and let's put the rules into practice. What is consumption of energy, water, paper recycling; is the paper all wrapped? is it compressed? damp?; the towels, are the towels dry? the wet ones?; and set it up. Because I can say that I spend I don't know how many kilos of towels, but is it wet or dry?, how can I measure one thing and then another? It is necessary to standardize this, a uniform system of the environment as there is

the uniform system of accounts. It is easy, but sustainability and the environment have not yet been standardized, which makes it difficult to put into practice.

A: Would you consider that it is common for the Portuguese hotel community to have a delay in the consensus on the application and awareness of environmental systems within hotels, compared to other countries, do you think we are further behind?

L: No, but that's not why. We are late because this is now starting to be fashionable. Sustainability in Portugal is in fashion. Nowadays, if we go to a Webinar, if we go to anything that is done about hospitality, what will hospitality be like in the post-covid?, everyone talks about sustainability. But there's not a lot of information yet, there's not a lot of sensitivity yet. Regarding being late, it is a fact that the Nordics have by nature an ecological spirit much more advanced than us, we don't need to tell them or instill ecology and sensitivity because they have much more respect for nature than we do. For example, Brazilians curiously also have a very strong ecological spirit, and they have implementations and sometimes there are many seminars. I have already witnessed Webinars given by Brazilians. Here in Southern Europe, we clearly lag behind on sustainability and the environment.

A: Good thing you speak in Brazil because one of these ISO standards aimed at sustainable tourism was based on a system that a Brazilian created. Therefore, Brazil is, so far, implementing international standards, which, despite not being mandatory, serve as a guide.

L: An exact pillar script.

A: And it was based on an initial idea, of a sustainability system for hotels, created by a Brazilian.

L: Well, it was because it was exact.

A: Moving forward a little, there was a study by Booking from 2019 that has been showing that it has gone up a lot, also as Luís has noticed this of the current fashions and trends, a number has always been growing in relation to the demand for sustainable accommodation, which was almost 75% of all trips Booking took in 2019. Were you aware of these numbers that were that high?

L: No, no..

A: Do you think...?

L: No no..

A: Oh sorry force

L: Don't finish finish later I answer.

A: And if, within your establishment, you have noticed that there are also customers who are looking for you with a great growing concern about the measures that you have implemented in your hotel in relation to environmental sustainability and if you have had, or maybe even a lack of customers if perhaps choose other establishments, has it been a decisive factor in demand?

L: Regarding the first question, I was surprised by these numbers from Booking, I think the percentage is very high. We don't notice that here, they look for it and then ask these questions about what are the conditions, what are the criteria and what are the standards that the hotel has. I was actually surprised. And I was surprised because, in relation to sustainability, I'll give you a concrete case, that there are two very different issues. For

example, the case of towels in bathrooms. We have an indication there that for environmental reasons we don't wash towels every day we don't change towels, but if you want please put them on the floor otherwise leave them hanging and we don't renew them. Most people don't care, throw towels on the floor, leave towels somewhere, and therefore we are forced to renew towels. Those who want and take precautions in this, are extraordinarily demanding in this. If there is a small error there, if you notice any that did not take place, immediately come to let us know. It doesn't really come to complain to say this seems impossible, no, they come with a very positive spirit...'look at what you didn't do, look at you're not careful, you're not respecting, look at you are consuming too much and washing too much, spending detergent water...'; warn us that there has been a failure and that we are harming the environment. They are very careful and cautious whenever they notice that something that we penalize the environment and do not respect what in principle we were prepared to respect. But it's a small percentage and that's why I'm surprised by these numbers that Booking announces.

A: I was also surprised when I was collecting this data. And then in relation to guests, it could be said that the fact that some measures depend on them will always be difficult to implement; how do we guarantee that a guest for one reason or another uses two towels instead of one is always difficult. Perhaps it would be easier, for these guests who think that the establishment is being negative for the environment, would be to have an online booking platform that was specific to establishments that were Green-Conscience, in which the guests who were looking for them already knew to what were they going. It was almost like skipping a step here, as far as the guest was concerned for the implementation of these measures. If we did all the work and they already knew what they were coming for, maybe things would progress further, I don't know, maybe there would be greater adherence to the rules

L: Maybe, maybe...

A: Does Luís have any, are you aware of the green brand certification that has a partnership with Dom Henrique?

L: Us for many years, father in 1992/93. We belonged to a group of hotels, whose headquarters were in Germany, Stagenberger. And they partnered with Green Globe. And we went in, and started and affiliated with the Green Globe. But a bit in response to point number one, it had paltry costs, it didn't cost anything. And we started to have it, and that's when we woke up to the spirit of sustainability and the environment, and we used the title of the Green Globe, because they demanded that something be done and it was nothing like that. But I don't know why, from one moment to the next, it started to have some impact on visibility, etc., and their costs started to skyrocket and became unbearable. And we said well, these guys are no longer environmentalists, they've become old-fashioned commercials here, and we left the Green Globe. Then I stopped hearing about the Green Globe because I was a little disappointed, and I was surprised when I saw the Green Globe emblem the other day in your survey because I thought it didn't even exist anymore, but it still exists.

A: Others emerged, but...

L: The Green Key I know too, and there are one or two that I also know. We are now, but it is not exactly an organization, it is an entity that has supported itself in several organizations, which has granted us a certificate as a green hotel. That an operator is an OTA competitor of Booking, HRS, which made us a series of inquiries, and forced us to demonstrate what our consumption of water, electricity, air renewal of the AC's were, what were the kilos of garbage that we sent for slaughter, etc., a series of information. We sent it there and then they classified it as a green hotel. And then they gave us a label and we are now using that logo and the classification they use. But HRS is not an environmental entity. It hired an environmental entity that supervises and accredits the hotels. But ready.

A: Promoting hotels on the platform..

L: Promoting hotels. Whoever enters HRS, sees who are the green hotels, which are green hotels or not. And whoever has these precautions makes reservations on these or not. Okay, it's a nice situation, and we're there at this hotel.

A: Going back here a little bit to something that Luís has already said, which is in fashion and that in any Webinar there has been talk of environmental sustainability. There is a term that is green washing, which is that establishments advertise that they implement these environmental sustainability measures to gain a head start on the competition, but it is easy and misleading sometimes, they advertise in an untrue way without making major changes to show that they are better than competitors and sometimes this creates widespread disbelief in the population; as they hear so much about the subject and don't see major changes, they start to believe...'these say they are environmentalists but you don't see much difference'...

L: Well then..

A: Are there any barriers in the hotel's communication regarding environmental sustainability? Did you have any input? Did you feel any lack of customer participation because of this green washing barrier, because they think it's suspicious or don't believe it because it's a fad?

L: No, no. In that aspect I didn't see anything, I didn't find anything, any kind of opposition to this path to this path that we are trying to carry out and we are trying to continue. As I told you, the hotel already has a history of this. Although this hotel has some drawbacks, these things are much easier to implement when it's a new hotel. If I start building a hotel and I open it, it comes with all that and it's a lot easier. We are a hotel that is practically 50 years old, we are 48 years old. It's not easy to turn you into these things, it's not easy at all. But we never saw anyone's opposition, not even criticism...'ah this is in fashion and you arranged it there to make it too'... we never saw it pejorative in that sense, all the measures we disseminated and implemented were always cherished.

A: Very well. But perhaps in terms of this infrastructure perspective, the biggest challenge will have been there, right? Perhaps a hotel that is a few years old has a lower cost-benefit than a traditional production process. I don't know if I changed it now instead of gas using any other energy, the infrastructure wouldn't allow it because they're old, right..?

L: Of course, without a doubt. The big obstacle we have here is the hotel's infrastructure.

A: Changing here a little..do you have a range of norms and environmental measures diffused by all employees? Is there an official guide?

L: Yes. Every time we hire an employee, we assign him a guide and a welcome manual; that you cannot smoke, that the entrance door is there, that you have to mark the time etc etc etc, and there is a part there that has to do with the environment. And he knows that he has to be very worried that, for example, in the changing rooms, if he notices that in the bathroom on the toilet the water runs out every time he empties the toilet, he has to be concerned about immediately calling the employee because this is wasting water; if the faucets are dripping, he cannot leave whatever it is, either in a bathhouse or in a room or in the kitchen where he is working, he cannot leave dripping faucets; the lights, he has to be worried whenever he has to change a light bulb, he cannot use any light bulb, the light bulbs must be LEDs, so this whole area of the environment, there in the manual, there is how he has to behave in here in relation to the environment. We give you some training in writing there. Then in the training we give, with the engineer we have for maintenance and the engineer from HACCP, the environment part is always linked to the staff to always make them aware.

A: If we compare the cooperation of the guests with the cooperation of the staff, the fact that they are almost instilled in receiving these instructions is internal policy, is it easier to have the cooperation of the staff than the guests?

L: It's easier, it's easier. And then there are even some who really like to be proactive. Who bring us solutions here and try to educate others, colleagues and who are very active partners in this area of the environment.

A: Well, in the survey, I had a question more or less along those lines, which was whether there would be a monthly meeting to have a green moment, which allows people with ideas about sustainability to pass on to others and if this concern is promoted within the hotel within the staff. And here, as Luís said, some come up with good ideas..

L: Yeah, there are some who come up with some ideas and we've already put some into practice.

A: Now in relation to Luís' perception of the Portuguese hotel market, he believes that most hotel units are aware of and have these ISO certifications and these brands mark labels such as Green Globe; Do you think that most of them do or that there is a general lack of knowledge?

L: Hm, most with ISO certifications no. In particular, for example, in the Dom Henrique hotel we do not have it. And I even know very few. When you ask me there to list hotels there with certifications, I find it difficult to know. I know three or four I don't know anymore. Now knowingly, I think because it's trendy, there are many many many who are working on it and concerned about it. Hotels that are clearly distilled by actions related to sustainability here 3 or 4, which was one of the first and this one is certified with several certifications, I think it has 14000 and 21401, I think it has both, which is Vila Park in Santiago from Cacem. If it wasn't the first hotel in Portugal to be certified, it was one of the first. He was even a former student of mine from the Hotel School who certified the hotel as such. Hotels... in terms of sustainability it's very funny it's a hotel that opened later closed and now reopened but with fantastic conditions and actions in the area of sustainability that is SixSenses in Douro, right there in Régua just across from Régua, this hotel has excelled in terms of sustainability. And there is a hotel, which has been in this area for a few years because it opened as soon as it is the Areias do Seixo there in the north of Lisbon, which is a very famous hotel, a very exclusive hotel and what is more of their brand is definitely sustainability. It is a hotel that is the envy of anyone. So there are two or three examples that I always give as, if someone asks me about Sustainability, I talk about these three hotels. Vila Park, in terms of service and hotel itself, is nothing special, these two, SixSenses and Areias do Seixo, in addition to being fantastic hotels as hotels excel in terms of sustainability, so they combine one thing with the other.

A: Good. This I already had in SixSenses, I know and agree...

L: Oh yeah?

A:...I share your opinion. I think the service is excellent and I won't be in the know, Luís will know better for sure, what production processes they have implemented that make them at the forefront of sustainability, but you can see that is everything, there is extreme care, I finally agree.

L: Yeah, it's a hotel very thought out in terms of sustainability.'

A: Regarding Dom Henrique, did Luís ever feel the need to hire someone specialized in the area of sustainability to streamline the production processes, find alternatives or would it not be justified in your case?

L: A few years ago we thought about it then I'd say we got sloppy and now, now I'd like to, but if there are any bad times to hire it's now...

A: Well..

L: With this tragedy that we are in. But now honestly I think it was, even because of this reopening, I think if the hotel reopened with a very strong sustainability image, it would be fantastic. But this is so difficult for us to be able to hire someone, and to have more investments that we are doing internally a work of sustainability among all of us. The last meetings I have had here with my management colleagues, it has been precisely, it has been this one, we cannot continue to tell customers that they are going to enter us now in the future and that they will ask us and then in terms of sustainability what is what did they do?; we can't go on saying that we have all-of-the-range elevators that are fantastic in terms of sustainability because we buy the best elevators in terms of energy consumption, speed, etc etc, and that when they ask us...' Oh yes? and then if they were installed when?'...and we say they were installed in 2004. We can't say that is not, it's 2021. and they were highly polluting and that we changed them to gas and that now it is not necessary to clean them, it is not necessary for the truck to come here to unload the tinfoil to the deposit and then for the tinfoil to burn in the boiler when this was done in 1998, no we can. We are already in 2021, we cannot continue with this speech. Our speech has to be that we have a vegetable garden up there and that most of the mint is produced by us and that we are thinking of increasing the garden; we have to think in environmental terms, in social terms in economic terms, and talk about these three major areas, which are called the mainstay of sustainability, which is the environmental, social and economic part. We have to talk about this, we have to talk about what we do with our waste, what we do in social terms of those around us, we have to talk about a collaboration with Lipor in the Embrulha project, we have to talk about these things all. We have a situation that annoys me a lot, we have something here that is the dishes, whenever there is a small crack in a dish in the restaurant, be it as small as possible and visible, we immediately put that dish aside , and then every month we throw away dozens of dishes. To the garbage I mean, we put it aside. Here some time ago I approached several social works and the social works say they don't want the dishes for anything because they don't want them for themselves either. I find it strange, we do this because we have obligations and responsibilities here, and an image before our customers. Me at home if a dish of mine has slightly faded, I have no problem, I continue to eat it. Now I find it strange why in a social work they are as demanding as 4 and 5 star hotels, and it hurts me and my soul not being able to give these things to a social work. And monthly they come to Lipor, by the way it's not Lipor it's the Chamber and they come to collect the dishes and it's a pain in the soul to throw dozens of dishes monthly but that's all we have. But well, these are social issues, but on the other hand the blankets and etc all go to the social works and they go to help and to be able to recycle, and there is no other destination to be able to recycle and help those who need blankets and other things of that kind. So, as I say, these three areas are what concerns us the most, the environmental, social and economic part, is what concerns us the most here at the Dom Henrique hotel.

A: Very well. Maybe to finish with one or two more questions, hm, in relation to, for example, raw material for the restaurant, is it easy to opt for local producers?

L: We have our own policy here, and we also have an advantage. Well, maybe if we also had it outside Porto, we would also have more advantages to resort to local producers but we have an advantage here that we are here next to the bolhão, therefore, we privilege our suppliers of vegetables here, most of the vegetables come here from our suppliers of the saleswomen here in Bolhão, so it's a manual delivery they come here to deliver to us by hand, there are no cars; and then we also have another question, without the fact that we are talking about delivery but which is not from local producers, we also concentrate all purchases in just one supplier, which is, in principle, Makro, to avoid having several transports and several different cars delivery situations here at the hotel. So, in principle, it's

hand deliveries from suppliers all around the hotel, namely Bolhão to be delivered by hand, and Makro to be a delivery of a single car or a means of transport by hand. We had a van that we didn't need, the hotel had a transit van, which has only one car, which is mine that, if necessary, does the service of the hotel. My car is already 6 years old so it's still petrol, but the future will naturally be a hybrid or electric car for the hotel, we have no doubt. But in relation, by the way, a curiosity, in relation to products of a characteristic that the hotel has, for example if we go to our wine list, our wine list sometimes we are criticized for that but it is our policy, the wines that we have many Douro wines, some Verde wines and very few wines that are outside the Douro and Vinhos Verdes. We are in the Vinho Verde region and in the Douro Wine region so it is these wines that we have to promote, the other wines we regret but little or nothing we have. Few wines from Alentejo, few wines from Bairrada, few wines from Dão, we have few wines from Lisbon area of Lisbon and the Tagus valley, so we have many Douro wines, many wines from Verdes and the rest we don't promote as much because they are not wines of our region are not wines from our area, so we do what has to be done and it is up to us.

A: Hm, yes for the promotion of local products and promoting the region.

L: Exactly, to promote the region.

A: And that's it, that's the last question. You talked about all these topics, which was, what would Dom Henrique's marketing strategy be for the implementation of new or environmentally sustainable policies and practices? Maybe that was all that you were enumerating now, hm, not using the company's transit car, opting for regional and local products, hm all these changes he's been making, even these partnerships with waste treatment, and and and, waste management, hm showing that you have a vegetable garden and that you use these products, and that the wines are local, would be the whole strategy.

L: Yeah, that's it.. in addition to being our sustainable policy, it can work as well as it can and it works as marketing of course. Yes, that's it, that's it.

A: For my part, I think the questions are all, I also don't want to take too much time from you.

L: No no, it's a pleasure, is a pleasure.

Transcript of the Interview with Manager 5 - Sustainability Manager - SixSenses Douro Valley

[A: António ; R: Manager 5]

A: ISO, International Organization for Standardization, is a technical committee responsible for standards in the area of tourism: ISO/TC 228 Tourism and related services. Within this committee there are several working groups, one of which is dedicated exclusively to standards for sustainable tourism. Some of the standards developed by this committee and work group are in accordance with ISO14000 and ISO21401 standards (Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements); so I named as relevant to my project. According to the chair of this technical committee, Manuel Otero, "there are many initiatives available that can help the hotel industry to improve its Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices, more than one that integrates the social and economic dimensions or that is free from commercial interests" -> Do you agree with this statement? Can you give me examples of initiatives you know?

R: I agree partially. It is true that when sustainability is generally referred to as an environmental part, it is the one that stands out the most, being or thermos easily confused

with the concept of ecology. Now sustainability is more encompassing, and its definition is not always consensual among specialists. In my opinion, I want the support given to local institutions, educational activities in the community and internally, they are examples of measures that work in the social and economic dimension. There are, of course, many other measures that can be taken. There are no examples in hotels, but there are already companies that have infrastructures such as kindergartens, for example, or that are adopting measures to reduce the number of working hours, which in my opinion are aligned with the social dimension of sustainability. Relatively to being "free from commercial interests" I think that although there is no focus on the actions taken, there are always repercussions. We do not case, for example, the actions we take and the support we give are not the focus of the marketing strategy and these contents are not used regularly. However, when the actions taken are true, I also do not see any problem in disclosing them and have some positive benefit with that. On top of all the hotel units are a business, it is optimal that through the prosperity of the business it is possible to reduce the environmental impact associated with the activity and have a positive impact through support in the community.

A: I also agree with this specialist, the situation of directives, aids, schemes on this issue of sustainability in our hotels, is very fragmented at the international level, or that makes it difficult for hotel managers to know which are the best and most useful options to take. And that the existence of international standards helps in overcoming such difficulty ("This internationally agreed standard provides clarity in a confusing market, applies to all types of accommodation and can serve as a tool to improve sustainable management. It will also help to stimulate the market for more sustainability in both the accommodation sector and the tourism industry as a whole."). Do you agree with this view?

R: I agree. The fact of being such an extensive and relatively recent issue makes it very difficult to adopt measures. The existence of international guidelines and monitoring tools are important for benchmarks to exist. It does not mean that we must constantly compare ourselves with others, each unit has its own reality and must act in accordance with it, but due to the lack of homogeneity in the way data is collected and reported, it gives a greater margin for greenwashing situations. . However, these certifications do not have to be rigorous. Currently we are witnessing the constant creation of new awards, certifications, etc., and many in reality do not have any value, and just show the financial capacity that many companies have to spend money on them.

A: Also from this ISO committee, which develops standards for sustainable tourism, is Alexandre Garrido, who says that hotel units that opt for the ISO 21401 standard will be able to offer better services and prove to their clients and to the entire market, which constitute a sustainable business , improving their relationships with suppliers, customers and the local community ("those that implement a sustainability management system based on ISO 21401 will be able to attest to their guests and to the whole market that they are sustainable businesses. ISO 21401 will benefit accommodation facilities by strengthening their management and improving their reputation, while providing better-quality services to clients and improving relationships with suppliers, employees and the local community.") Can you please comment on these statements?

R: The ISO standards are known by their rigor and therefore are very valid to attest to what they represent or consumer. Percebo or what Alexandre Garrido wants to say, obviously due to transparency issues facing the many lies that we are selling, such certifications have meaning and increase value. No entanto não acho que sejam fundamentais. In the case of Six Senses, up to now, we never had a concern with certifications and we always managed to establish an optimal relationship with our suppliers, customers and with the local community. Never in the absence of certification was an entry to any of the initiatives or measures that we wanted to take.

A: According to a study carried out by Booking.com in 2019, the percentage of travelers seeking sustainable accommodations is growing consistently, reaching almost 75% of the

total number in 2019 (“Consistent with overall intentions to make more sustainable travel choices, sustainable stays are growing in popularity, with almost three quarters (73%) of global travelers intending to stay at least once in an eco-friendly or green accommodation when looking at the year ahead. .com research has seen this figure trend up, from 62% in 2016 to 65% in 2017, and 68% in 2018.** Additionally, 70% of global travelers say they would be more likely to book an accommodation knowing it was eco -friendly, whether they were looking for a sustainable stay or not.”). Were you aware of these values? Do you have a significant part of clients that go to your establishment due to the Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices (ESPP) that have been implemented? And also to your perception that this number is going to increase?

R: Yes, we are aware of this study and these values. The study is interesting but in reality it hardly reports an intention and not a fair escolha. In most of the studies of this genre regarding the adoption of more sustainable measures or the acquisition of environmentally benign products, we inquired that they would be available for the alterations, but in practice we know that it is different, either now or the paradigm is going to change. Six Senses is known for having sustainability as one of its two basic pillars from the foundation of the brand, therefore many clients seek us for the same reason. It is notorious that more and more people are against the measures we adopt, that they want to participate in the educational activities that we have and that they also visit us precisely for this reason. But there are also many clients who are totally unaware, partly because, as stated above, we did not make an exhaustive disclosure of these measures.

A: This Booking study also says that 70% of these travelers are unaware of the existence of green brands for hotels and that 40% consider that the existence of international standards that help identify this type of establishment would be extremely useful and more than 60% affirms that they would feel better if they were staying in a establishment that soubessem would have a green mark (“However, when it comes to recognizing a sustainable place to stay, almost three quarters (72%) of global travelers say that they are not aware of the existence of eco-labels for vacation accommodations, while well over a third (37%) of affirming that an international standard for identifying eco-friendly accommodation would help encourage them to travel more sustainably, and 62% would feel better about staying in an accommodation if they knew it had an eco-label.”) He thinks that these data can influence hotel managers to definitely adopt ESPP in accordance with standards and seek certification. cações and green labels? Or how important are the international standards and green labels in relation to the implementation of ESPP?

R: Although we do not constantly think about the matter day by day, when confronted directly we all want our existence to have or less possible impact on the planet. There are many hotel chains that have adopted environmental measures, wanting to preserve resources, wanting to reduce the waste produced. Some are already more advanced in the measures that we adopt and also support projects for the regeneration and conservation of the ecosystem. The fact that consumers will be more interested in companies that adopt measures to reduce the impact of their activities will, happily, inevitably make it inevitable that most companies will continue to act without considering these fundamental aspects. The norms and certifications are interesting to act as guides and to give some guarantee to the consumers, but I do not do anything that is fundamental. See for us an example: we have internal guidelines that cross all departments, we incorporate sustainability into our operations, we have a social action component through our sustainability fund, but we do not have any type of certification and this has never limited us in the adoption of standards practices.

A: Several studies on Green Marketing in hotels during the last 5/6 years, will show that partnership with green brands (specifically that they have a brand image aligned with which hotel they intend to reach) was the predominant factor in the perception of two consumers over The environmentally sustainable initiatives implemented in a certain hotel. I am aware that this partnership in turn increases the credibility of the ESPP of the two hotels and in

turn arouses the interest of guests who can no longer be concerned with this issue, raising greater collective awareness of the issue and greater credibility in the certified ESPP, and successively assim. In this sense, could you give me practical examples of your hotel, of the type of measures implemented in which you would partner with green brands that would help you execute or promote? (for example, inclusion of the hotel in an online reservation platform dedicated to green-conscious guests or reference to the menu of the restaurant from the provenance of two products that seem crazy, etc.).

R: In the Six Senses Douro Valley we do not do this type of promotion with brands. A promotion of our measures is based on interaction with the client, through the explanations we give, two products that we transform and produce here. A visit to the Earth Lab is one of the things to highlight, since we can find the sustainability team that shares as hosts the measures we take and the projects we support. We are about to begin to explore these platforms more focused on sustainable tourism, but still a theme in development.

A: There have also been several academic papers, referring to the term Green Washing, which means that a hotel barely advertises that it implements ESPP and that as a company it cares about the environment, even if it has had changes in production processes to justify it; so as to achieve an easy but misleading separation from the competitors through. Could you give examples of barriers that you have had in the communication of Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices implemented in your hotel? Have you ever received that this, which is a current social trend, creates distrust and suspicion in some customer segments about your de facto or green-conscious hotel?

R: Yes, there is this concern. Unfortunately, there are always more examples that in a certain way contribute to leaving the consumer distrustful. No case, we do not use too much information related to these topics, we do not use our website or social networks. Instead, we prefer to do this approach personally as a client, especially not in our Earth Lab, or space where we do or showcase our two projects and initiatives. During the stay it is perceptible for our guests that what we do is real, therefore I am not directly concerned about this issue of green washing. As a matter of fact, this approach from the beginning also guarantees security to the client, and this is really important.

A: In your opinion, what are the Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices (ESPP) that a hotel unit must implement to obtain “sustainable” certification?

R: There are some areas of action that are fundamental:

- i) Waste: it is impossible for any large hotel unit to avoid producing waste, therefore it is essential that these are minimized as much as possible and the rest are properly routed to the treatment centers
- ii) Conservation of energy and water: adoption of measures that reduce the consumption of energy and also of water
- iii) Cooking: selection of seasonal products and or more local possibilities, which have a minor impact on the environment. It is always easy because the clients are demanding, but re-educating two clients and raising awareness is also part of our commitment to sustainability
- iv) Training of the staff: it is essential that the staff has training for these issues. It's one of the best ways to do practical work and find new ideas and solutions.

A: What is your perception about the current level of knowledge in the Portuguese hotel market about specific sustainable standards and labels for hotel tourism? Do you know in Portugal many hotel units that have ISO certifications and green label certifications?

R: Honestly, I don't know anything about ISO certifications, more certainty exists. There are several green certifications, or Green Key is an example of certification/award that many units have. But there are others, I know there are some with Bcorp certification as well.

A: What is your perception of the degree of awareness that exists in the Portuguese hotel market for the importance of defining a sustainability policy, and the impact that it can have on attracting customers?

R: The Tourism of Portugal office has taken some actions and adopted strategies to promote sustainability in hotels and restaurants, which I think will be an excellent help for those who are about to start implementing measures. To the perception that I currently have and that there are many units interested in trading, some have already been on their way. Now that it is consensual that the adoption of sustainable measures is fundamental, because there is more and more awareness and effort on the part of the consumer. That we cannot adopt a near future, run or risk going backwards and do not have the capacity to accompany.

A: In your opinion, how far is the implementation of ESPP in the hotel market in Portugal advanced? How or compares with the situation worldwide? (For example, UK, Italy, France, Spain, Nordic countries, Brazil or USA)

R: I don't have enough knowledge to give you a concrete answer. More than old, now that we are more or less all of us, not the same patamar. Some countries are more advanced than others in some areas (the Nordic countries, for example, are much more advanced than we are on energy and waste issues). We all have opportunities for improvement, then it will always be the same given that many things are changing as technology advances, therefore this issue will never stagnate.

A: In the cases of hotels in which environmental sustainability measures have not been adopted, he thinks that this is due to the fact of existing due to the perception that the cost-benefit ratio is very unfavorable, and the lack of knowledge of the measures to be adopted, including international standards and tools available?

R: I agree that lack of information is the main factor. There are changes that are very simple and do not require additional costs that are not implemented, I think, due to lack of knowledge of the real impact that we do not have (for example, to separate two recyclable waste). There is a lack of knowledge about environmental issues in management positions and this, inevitably, will reflect on the decisions made. However, there is also that perception of unfavorable cost-benefit that you mention. This idea was created that adopting less environmentally impactful measures always has a costly increase, but it is not always true. Furthermore, there are measures that can be more expensive in an initial phase rather than in a short-medium term, representing enormous populations.

A: Do you know of any case of success related to environmental sustainability measures in the Portuguese hotel market that you can share? Do you have any measure that has been a relevant event in your establishment or hotel chain?

R: In all the Six Senses water is bottled in-house, which allows us to greatly reduce the waste generated and the impact associated with its transportation. The fact that we never used shampoo and shower gel in mini doses is another measure of success. The containers that we always use can be refilled so here we also reduce waste immensely. The organic vegetable waste is fully treated in-house and transformed into compost, which we use in our gardens (which all Six Senses have too). Of course, our goal of being Plastic Free by 2022 is also a measure with a high impact, which has led us to constantly seek more interesting alternatives from an environmental point of view.

A: In relation to the major challenges you have encountered in the implementation of ESPP, do you have difficulties in establishing alternative means of production and environmentally sustainable products that have the same cost of purchase as your traditional ones? Did you feel that you needed more investment in infrastructure and technology in order to implement these environmentally sustainable alternatives?

R: The greatest challenge is to find alternatives, especially for plastic, we are not focusing so much on it. But simply, many two products are more expensive and it is not always easy to start these products produced in Portugal. Another challenge that many times these changes traced to a change of behavior. Some alternatives, to be alive, require changes in the operation and, as we know, changing habits is not always easy.

A: What emphasis gives the communication of your services to the fact of being environmentally sustainable and green-conscious or eco-friendly? Do you believe that it would be beneficial to be part of an online reservation platform that is specifically dedicated to eco-friendly hotel units (which have implemented ESPP measures certified in accordance with ISO14001 and ISO21401 standards)?

R: We do not give this focus. This perception is to enter the property and see how we do things. Once we are already well positioned in this area, for now there is nothing that would make a lot of difference. The market is not going to change, because there are going to be more and more big chains to adopt sustainable measures and we have to be prepared to continue to improve. The implementation of certified measures may be considered.

A: Do you see the implementation of ESPP as a marketing strategy? In your opinion, is it worth investing in marketing campaigns based on environmental sustainability measures?

R: It is a marketing strategy with which I do not fully agree, but I do not see any inconvenience in using these measures for such, in case we report them honestly. Using concepts such as “carbon neutrality” in such a way as to mislead consumers, for me it is totally wrong and this type of approach should be regulated. To have large oil companies, as is the case with BP, to say that using fuel has a neutral punch, and that it is better to supply BP than to ride a bicycle is completely absurd. I am not in favor of using these topics as a marketing strategy, but barnacle that is made use of them in that sense. We liked that we were more concerned with doing than with appearing, and in this respect, Six Senses had an optimal approach.

Transcript of the Interview with Manager 6 – General Manager - Monchique Resort & Spa

[A: António; S: Manager 6]

A: A little introduction to the goals of the work I am conducting. It is about environmental sustainability in hotels, and the structure of the interview that I gave you was planned as to understand what are the international standards that can help govern hotels in the implementation of measures, the role of hotel managers, among other things ...

S: Hum.

A: ...what measures do hotels practice and what is the current state of implementation of the measures and then what could be a communication plan to improve them or to, or to include new measures. And here, the purpose of doing the interview is beyond the survey, it is to have more open answers in which the personal vision of each manager is more understood.

S: Hum, hum.

A: I took three aspects that I saw in your questionnaire, you said you had an employee responsible for sustainability.

S: Yes, yes.

A: Is it someone specific highlighted in the hotel or is it someone that's related to DHM? I know that DHM has someone in charge.

S: Yes, we do, we have someone who does our internal audit processes, apart from all department heads, all stakeholders, all stakeholders having the proper training so that there is no cross contamination, so that there is, hum, garbage out of the right place, so we can boost recycling. Then we still have an internal employee who once a month, or every 15 days, depending on availability, goes around all the operational areas and will check if things are really being implemented and respected and for that the internal audit process is very important. So, we can't just depend on external audits and then I think the key is also choosing a person who really believes in what he's doing, right? If we put someone in front of this who has a plastic consumer habit and who has no awareness of environmental protection, it's no use, it's no use. Because not teaching everything, it must be something, it has to be someone who really believes in the things they are doing and the impact that person's actions have on the environment and in turn on the resort.

A: Yes, there are always two sides, isn't there? That we have to... these measures are implemented so that the hotel can provide this to the guests, but then we also have the internal struggle of putting the whole team to fight for it.

S: Yes, and you know, this also has to be transversal to the organization, it has to come from the general director himself, hum, do the recycling, ensure that people do the recycling and believe me, I'm just giving you the recycling as one of the examples is not? And in the very, in the very choice of materials to acquire, for example, now everything that was single-use plastics were banned, hum, and aluminums and all that, choosing the best alternative, if it can't be something that is reusable, because honestly in my personal opinion it is not plastic that is criminal, what is criminal is people's attitude towards plastic. Plastic is a great solution as long as you don't use it just once, right? Because plastic is considered extremely polluting and all that. It is considered extremely polluting because it's cheap, honestly if plastic was expensive, hum, people also had another attitude towards plastic, because plastic is not criminal, what is criminal is people's attitudes. And plastic is great to be reused more than once. I'll give you an example here, I have this bottle that is from Monchique, made of plastic, cheap plastic and I must have had it for 8 months. And these bottles cost me, the hotel, 0.60 cents.

A: No doubt.

S: There you have it, then having the hotel and staff areas, for example, having stations for people to fill their own bottles, it's as simple as that. But I escaped here, I escaped here a little bit from the topic, go ahead (laughs).

A: No, no. This is so, this is also supposed to be a conversation.

S: Yes.

A: That's also it, in all the measures that the hotel can implement to facilitate more responsible uses, it's not the material itself that's wrong, is it? It's the human being.

S: Yes, it's the attitude. And we DHM who preach for attitude and for having a disruptive attitude and all this, hmm, is a matter of "put your money when your mouth is", do you understand? Put the money where what you say, hum, and people have to understand. And on our part as managers and as a company it is very important to ensure that people have the right tools, hum, to perform what we ask them to do and that it is something, that is not a sacrifice, I don't want people to walk putting the garbage in bags and then moving it into containers, no, we will have containers scattered throughout the hotel so that the employees themselves already know that this is much easier to... that is, it doesn't have to be painful,

we own... the problem, the problem is never, never, and often it's not the employees themselves, it's the process, isn't it? If an employee fails, it is because the process or procedure itself was also not complete or was not easy to read or easy to understand, right? We have to create processes and procedures to facilitate the operation, don't we? I mean, I can't ask an employee to do 250 meters and recycle the paper, can I? Do I have to have stations or sub-stations before the final garbage station, hum, to facilitate the work of the employee and that he does not have the tendency to facilitate "shovel look today I'm going to mix the cardboard with the plastic", no. It won't make sense because at that station I'll have all the containers, usually it's not the employees' fault, it's the procedure.

A: Yeah. And in that sense, did you have any difficulty in implementing it, so at the structural level of the hotel in creating measures, practices above all, that kind of stations, sub-stations or... for example, is there a recycling division in the rooms too?

S: Yes, yes, inside the rooms, underneath, we have a little piece of furniture where we keep the garbage and we always have the, the three colors, the glass, the plastic and the paper, in all the rooms, in all the rooms, already with its own color, just arrive, the employees take it out, put it in their own containers that walk with them, or that are on the floor. Here in Monchique it was...it's quite easy, because in Portugal we have everything that is a well-identified recycling zone and the only thing we have to do is invest, sometimes residual, in creating substations, that is, when the garbage goes from the room, it doesn't go directly to the garbage outside, we created two sub-stations. We have the sub-station which is the one for the office on the floor, don't we? Then we have the sub-station that is in the garbage area of the housekeeping part, this for the housekeeping part, for example, which is the one that pollutes the most, despite thinking that it is the restaurants, the truth is that the rooms always have a lot of more garbage because it is garbage referring to 250 people, 300, or in our case up to 500 people. So we created these sub-stations so that it would be easier at the end of the day to take the garbage out of the sub-stations and they can now take the garbage to the recycling center and so it is much easier. In other experiences I've had and that was probably the ultimate challenge in everything that is to minimize our environmental impact as much as possible, because having no impact is a utopia for now, isn't it? I had the opportunity to work for 4 years on the island of Príncipe and the Island of Príncipe is a biosphere reserve and the hotel where I was the general manager for 4 years was certified by the responsible Tourism Institute.

A: Well, in the survey I saw that it was the first resort to implement measures...

S: In Africa, yes.

A: Very well, I was going to ask you...

S: Then, there was a lot of work, because what for us is already a given, such as the gas stations having a containment basin with sand and all that, there was none of that. We created internal audits, sorted the garbage, we sorted the garbage at the hotel, I have a lot of information there, we sorted the garbage at the hotel, but then the truth is that when the garbage was collected, the garbage was all mixed up in the same.

A: Well..

S: We even exported garbage, then we managed to get a deposit area in the city of Sto. António, when I say me I mean the HBD group, we managed to get a plastic deposit on the island, after that it was sent from the island of Príncipe to S. Tomé, after S. Tomé it was exported to I don't know where (laughs). Now imagine the costs involved in such an operation. And then the truth is that we in Portugal or Europe, we are not going to talk, we are not going to generalize, we are not going to generalize Portugal or Africa, the truth is that we in Portugal have access to immense information, to the television channels themselves, we have the radio, the media, everywhere there is talk of recycling and the

separation of garbage. In African countries where I've been, that's not how it works, is it? In other words, people know that recycling is important and that they should do it, but there is not exactly an awareness of public or private organizations among the populations in general.

A: Yeah.

S: We see our big campaign here, we still remember it today, António I don't know if you remember, António is probably a little younger than me, when Ecoporto came out, when they started with the stories about the ecoporto in Portugal were children. I don't know if António has ever seen that ad.

A: Maybe.

S: Okay, there were children explaining how to separate garbage. I still remember that today and I'm not really a fan (laughs) of everything recycling, I practice, of course, but I'm not really a fan. There are awareness raising actions for the populations. In Africa, it was up to us private organizations to sensitize people, including the HBD group, we offered an aluminum water bottle, just like this one but aluminum to each person who brought us 50 plastic bottles. Well, the island had around 6,000 people and I can say that we filled more than 100 square meters of plastic bottles in each of the sessions.

A: It's a consumption...

S: Plastic bottles are found in the middle of the bush, then plastic is difficult to decompose, isn't it? It's difficult. And that's how we managed to clean up that island a lot and not have as much plastic as we see in many African countries. From there I went to Mozambique, from Príncipe I went to Mozambique, I passed through Angola, South Africa, but when I arrived in Mozambique I noticed an abysmal difference, because Príncipe really was an island, go ahead, despite being tiny, 6,000 people, very clean, and in Mozambique it was already more difficult to find these areas, wasn't it?

A: Even harder with (incomprehensible) ambient.

S: Yes, yes. Very, very difficult, although I insisted and the company I worked for in Mozambique insisted, we did recycling. And we paid more to have our garbage transported to specialized centers in northern Mozambique. I was in the Pemba area, in Cabo Delgado, which nowadays is talked about for the worst reasons and for the terrorist attacks, and we already paid more to transport the garbage there because I think it is, it has to come from us, give back is not? Giving back is important, not only for the community but for the environment itself and as much as possible, we try our best to minimize our footprint.

A: And above all, in these countries, in these organizations, in countries such as Mozambique and on the island of Príncipe, you saw this economic effort that collected with more costs, certainly...

S: No, no...

A: Dwarf? I ask this because I also interviewed the GM of Azor Hotel, Vítor...

S: Yes, yes.

A: And Vítor was also in Cape Verde and he told me that the experience of Africa is that there was a very large governmental barrier because of the mass importation of products that were difficult to compose and that all the mechanisms that they wanted to implement had this barrier very large, it would have many more costs because the product was scarcer,

the process was more difficult to implement, so for an organization, I don't know, it must be difficult...

S: We didn't see, hum, financial returns but the customers themselves would like us to have that concern. First, because the hotel where I was staying, which was in the Pemba area, was called Mecufi, there was nothing around it, there was a small village, probably 150 people lived there, maybe 200 people, and then until I got to Pemba, it was the main city it was 30 or 40 kilometers, hum, on sandy roads and all that. I didn't see a financial return, but I saw that customers liked that part and respected it. I rarely found rubbish on the customer side mixed in, it was very rare, it was very rare. But we can't do these things only and for the sake of a financial return or what is expected, I'm not waiting for the customer to thank me for doing this, for having that attitude. I believe it's important to have, period. As a company, companies have to take a position in relation to environmental impact, as we at DHM have DHM green, right? In the case of HBD where I was, I mean we had that certification and we had annual audits. And in the case of Planhotel, Diamonds Mequfi where I was, we also had our own internal policy to minimize the environmental impact. We can't do everything for money because it's important that we have our own sense of responsibility and nowadays there are more and more, I mean, one of the most polluting companies in the world, which is BP for example (this little people talk about it and I happened to have the opportunity to get to know BP's projects because they were entering into a partnership with the company where I was on the island of Príncipe). BP invests, I consider this an investment and not an expense, it invests millions of euros in environmental conservation and the protection of marine life and all that. Of course, they are often also the ones who pollute the most and all that, but they try their best to reduce this impact. They sponsor with millions of euros training, scholarships, creation of schools... and the truth is that, as the oil companies are so badly seen in the market, this doesn't even pass abroad. But they invest a lot, invest a lot in this area.

A: Yeah, by the way it's interesting, I had no idea what a brand isn't. How could BP be so involved...

S: Yes, but look, look because you'll find cool things about the support that BP gives to the community especially in Africa, by the way let me if I find it here, hum...I'll try to find it later and then if I find it I'll tell you.

A: And what about for the hotel industry? That's why I also took the rules here, it was to serve a little bit of motivation, to have a well-designed and easy-to-understand guideline so that when they had it in hand, it would be easy to implement.

S: Right.

A: Do you believe that one of the questions I have here is this: do you believe that standards bring this benefit of being, of clarifying something that can be a bit confusing, which is environmental sustainability guidelines? The standards I use are the ISO standards which are the international standards for anything and everything and they have specific standards for environmental management systems and sustainable tourism.

S: Which ISO are you talking about, 14,000 or 22,000?

A: It's 14,000 and 21, both.

S: From 21, ok.

A: 21 is tourism...

S: Did you have the opportunity to analyze the ISO well or not?

A: Yes, yes.

S: What did you think?

A: Honestly I found it a little vague, I thought it's more the message than actions to take, things to implement. On top of that they have one, they allow it to be implemented without being certified, to use them as a base, basically.

S: Yes, yes. The ISO's, the ISO's are worth what they're worth and I sincerely consider that they are important to exist. But they also depart a lot from people's good faith there, don't they? If you look at an ISO, for example, 9001, it's the most complete ISO there is, but a company, an SME that wants to apply an ISO 9001, then has a tremendous investment. First, because you'll need it, if you're in the food industry, you'll need a food engineer to do all the records to have files for everything, and the ISO 9001 case even, it's super detailed and in my opinion, pay attention that this it's just my opinion, hum, it's a deterrent, no, not doing the ISO, not having it, not having it, ISO 9001, because it's super complicated to do and all that. The 14000 and 21000 that I was confusing with the 22000. They are, at the same time, generic, because deep down they have to apply to various types of business, to various types of areas of action, not It is? Then there are those 14000/I don't know how much that is intended for one type of business, then for another type of business. And when we get into a detailed 14000, that is, bar four, I have no idea, 14000/4 which is intended for hotel companies, and it's again a matter of bureaucracy and a lot of information to fill in, which companies no longer do, if not more than half of the companies were certified with some type of ISO. Because ISO's exist, there are many certified companies, but in the hotel business you don't see so many ISO certified, because that is to say we already have so many areas of action within the hotel, we have the kitchen part, the restaurant part, the SPA, the housekeeping part, the maintenance part, the purchase part, the financial part, which makes it almost impossible in hotels like us and I consider myself a small hotel, despite having 180 apartments, to be able to implement an ISO of these, because they are too bureaucratic, they are too bureaucratic and in my opinion what you should do is sincerely to raise awareness, is to have support from the municipal councils saying "hey, look, we really want to promote recycling, maybe here in Monchique or and Portimão recycling levels are not at the same level as I Vilamoura or Loulé, what do you need?" "Maybe we'll need to create more garbage sub-stations, maybe I'll need to have more containers..." "Then come on, we'll sponsor half". And that's where I think we should integrate, it shouldn't be something that is forced or bureaucratic, otherwise we know what people are going to do, we live in Portugal, we live in the country where more bureaucracy is bypassed, I mean we see we see it in politics, we see it (laughs) in finance, we see it in banks, we see it in all these scandals that the news gives us, and that's exactly it, bureaucracy is bypassed and then people end up not doing things as they should them. Recycling, in this case, I'm here putting my foot in the recycling area because I think it's honestly the first case for us to achieve more. I say recycling, I mean other things, in the purchase and choice of materials to use and all that. Um, it has to be part of our daily life, as it is part of our daily life to take out the garbage every day, the organic stuff, it has to start being part of our daily life, in our homes and in our companies, to have one more space to to have the plastic next to it, to have the card next to it. It's not always easy for people to have small houses and all that, but it should start there, I think it's the first step, the first step of a manager or a responsible company and with minimal environmental concern is to start with then, it is to ensure that you make the right choices, that you buy the right material, that this material is produced under the right conditions and then when it ends, when the life cycle of this product ends, that it is recycled in the best possible way, not It is? It's important to make choices, when I'm going to buy paper, reams and reams of paper, I'm always concerned to see if the paper is recycled or if it's recyclable. It's important, it's important to start there. Then from there everything else...

A: And do you feel that there is a lack of governmental support, support or perhaps, as I said, motivations to sponsor some action or to give preference to some tax exemption for...For example, I also interviewed Duarte Gonçalves da Cunha, from Douro 41.

S: Hmm, I know it too.

A: He told me that when he was in Mochique that he was about to make the hotel sustainable and that he would also talk about the reuse of resources and sustainable choices, he talks about processes and infrastructural things, isn't it? For example to take advantage of rainwater, or to water gardens, or close to the river, for example Douro 41 wants to make one, use the power of the river to generate electricity...

S: Mini hydro, mini hydro.

Ah yes. Is there government support or tax exemptions for hotel companies that want to implement this type...?

S: There isn't, but there should be. Then, going into the politics part, and my area of training is international relations, so (laughs) the political part, I feel, I'm comfortable talking. Hmm, we have a big problem, which is structural in our society, and I'll give you the example of roundabouts. In the past, it was mandatory to enter the roundabout in the right lane, go around the entire roundabout in the right lane, basically eliminating the left lane. However, and we were taught that way in driving schools, to always make the roundabout in the right lane. However, there is a government awareness that if we are entering a roundabout and if we are going to the first exit, we should take the rightmost lane, if we are not going to the first exit, we must take the leftmost lane. And then what do we do with it? We do a month-long sensitization on television, on the radio, we talk about it on the news, on Público they do some funny cartoons, on Expresso they do a report, that's it, that's it. Then the fines begin, that is, in the structure itself, I know that the structure is the most ridiculous thing in the world but it is something that has bothered me from the beginning and that is once again the symbol of our ineffectiveness as a society. There was not a single marking on a roundabout or a change in road signage telling people how to enter a roundabout. Do you know where it exists? In mega-roundabouts like the Marquês roundabout, and all the other two-lane roundabouts that exist in the country? (laughs) Do you understand? So it starts right there: we gave up halfway through, we went from raising awareness to fines, right? And that is what is wrong in this country and now applied there, there it is. We do it, they say: "You have to do this, you have to share, you have to do I don't know what", then they go from audits, audits, fines, period. It doesn't come, there isn't, for example, the card compactor, let's imagine: why do I have to pay for a card compactor, two thousand, it's three thousand euros a month, it's three thousand euros a year, sorry, for a card compactor, when I am not responsible for collecting the garbage and that is why we pay taxes. Why isn't it the municipality itself, and I'm not just saying mine, throughout the Algarve, throughout the Algarve, most hotels have to sponsor their card compactors, which doesn't make sense. Epa, if the structure, if the infrastructure that is public doesn't work, it's not adequate to the size of the property, in this case Monchique, I think that the municipalities should intervene, yes. They must intervene, arrive, and "look, Monchique, what do you need?" "Look, maybe we needed to have another island and maybe we needed to have a compactor and a few more containers". And that's where it starts. Sometimes there is a disconnect between the public and the private. And it's only through the associations that we get anything, after a bureaucratic process that takes two or three months. It doesn't make sense for us, resorts, we hotel units to be far from everything that is public bodies. They have to count on us, we have to count on them. And it has to be a long-term thing, we can't start from raising awareness of the fine, there has to be constant follow-up.

A: Of course.

S: As we privately do, isn't it? If we implement a new product in a hotel, we will want to know how that product is performing, right? If I implement a new treatment at the SPA, for example, I will want to know how many treatments have already been sold, why am I not selling more, I give you this in terms of business as it can be applied in the government for

the same thing. “we need to improve a little bit here, what are your main difficulties in garbage collection?” “Look, this has been the case, the days they do the garbage collection are not enough, I needed them to come more often, I needed a compactor”. I think that's how things are, I'm not saying that they give us support or tax exemption, because taxes are important for the country, but contribute other things, buy containers because that way instead of buying just 6 containers for Monchique maybe they'll have to buy 60 for every hotel or organization, and they get cheaper prices and that's how you get it.

A: Give motivation in a practical sense, don't you? Give the tools to...

S: Exactly, help, help, because we know what to do with the tools but we can't always invest in all the tools we need, right? We couldn't, we just couldn't.

A: And in relation to the Portuguese paradigm, whenever most hotels, even taking into account all the difficulties or added costs and perhaps lack of support, there is a widespread adoption of environmentally sustainable measures or do you think it is more related to newer hotels or to large chains that have, perhaps, peer pressure? What is your perception of the current state of Portuguese hospitality at a national level?

S: Yes, the state of the nation (laughs). When they created all those rules and obligations to recycle, I believe that even established chains were forced to do and take these attitudes, so I think they really do. Maybe they don't give it the same importance that newly created chains, chains or newly created companies give this, that part, maybe not. Maybe they don't. But those who do, do. Maybe they don't do it as effectively, now they're not as efficient either. Now, it's also true, in the old days, when we opened a hotel 30 or 40 years ago, we didn't need to have the refrigerated room for the garbage dump, for example, it wasn't mandatory. It became, I don't know, I'm sending it to the air António, 20 years ago. And, in the meantime, the hotels themselves, especially the units that open, already include infrastructure even for that, don't you? I'm still focused here on the garbage and recycling part because in my opinion it's what causes the most, the most impact, apart from all attitudes. And then yes, there are many chains, many new hotels, even independent, independent units that, even when choosing furniture, for example, already choose materials that come from sustainable production, that is, they already choose to have more wood, more natural materials and it is not only and exclusively building a hotel and at the cheapest cost. It's: “let's see what we can put here that is reusable, that is more energy efficient, and all that”. I think so, there are more and more. The government, in my opinion, has not failed, it has given, it has given support, that is to say, even we, as individuals, had support, we had no, we have support from 20 to 30%, 40%, to replace the windows of our home, I mean, this is very important. Hmm, then there is this set of rules that all hoteliers, established or not in the market, have to comply with and have been complying with. But maybe with less concern and maybe look “if it passes, it passes, if it passes, it passes”, while we don't, we might force a little bit so that the thing goes well and for the teams to have the proper training to ensure that things are put in the right place.

A: Another facility also for newly created hotels and, for example, I interviewed Filipa, from Évora Farm.

S: Yes.

A: They also had the facility because of the geographical context of the hotel, but also because of the motivation for the hotel itself, they have a whole structure to reuse rainwater.

S: Yeah, great.

A: For irrigation, yes, which is one thing, infrastructurally it brings a huge benefit, water consumption also in hotels is also an exaggeration.

S: That we do too, yes.

A: I was also going to ask you, what are the measurements, in addition to all the things you have to recycle, what are the essential measurements that you have in your hotel? So infrastructural, for example that of the adoption of systems...

S: Look at energy production, it's point number 1. We have solar panels, at the moment just to heat water, but we want in the next few years, um, this we've probably talked about for 10 years. We would like 10 years to stay in an energy-friendly hotel, that is, at least during the day, not depending on any energy from the electricity grid. That's the main point we want to make it. Implemented already, we already have water heating through solar panels, we have an area with 300 square meters with electricity production. Then we have the use of rainwater and in the future we would like to deal with a composting station for later use, especially here to support forestry projects, we have a few more lands and we would like to plant a few trees here in these, in some of these land, for now that's what we have. Then all the frames that we are altering and that we are altering, because we are talking about 600 or so windows with more than 2 meters by 3 meters, we are also altering and all the new glass that we are putting in our frame is already glass with a very different energy class from those who are here, because those who are here have also been here for 10 years, right? And now we are replacing each time, this year for example we replaced 30, we are replacing it little by little so that the building is thermally much more pleasant and sustainable.

A: And... There was, just a second. Did you have great difficulties, in monetary terms, implementing these alternatives? Are they financially sustainable alternatives? Do you have a long-term payoff? For example, this implementing solar panels.

S: Yes, yes, yes.

A: It's not just (incomprehensible)

S: Yes. The question is: given the size I have, while maybe any other hotel with 300 meters of solar panels can already have hot water for almost all the rooms, I with 300 square meters have 12%? 14%? Well maybe 20%, because they are facing south, although they are already somewhat old. Then everything else, given the size of the property, 185 apartments, logically I have some difficulty, I, and the company, in taking and investing 200 thousand euros in energy efficiency, despite the payback being only 3 years. We want to, we have this in our sights, it's a long-term goal that we have, now are not good years to invest, are they? 2020 and 2021, um, we are all afraid of the state of our treasury, um, so, yes, we want to do it, we have the study done, prepared by consultants to invest in the coming years around 200 to 250 thousand euros that we have already calculated the payback, with payback at 2/3 years. In other words, it's worth it, it's definitely worth it.

A: Short timeline for the hospitality industry.

S: Yes, yes.

A: Regarding the communication they have with the guests, they put great emphasis on communication, for example, at Booking, etc. and then also within the hotel, they put great emphasis on the guests also having... a more sustainable attitude?

S: We sensitize without pressure. I mean when the customer opens a door in the room where we have the garbage bins kept for each accommodation unit, when the customer opens the door and sees the 4 garbage containers, waste, right? The customer automatically knows that we have a concern. When the customer sees that our straw is not made of plastic, it is of course made of paper that the customer sees. We have to assume that, we don't really have "in your face", but the small attitudes already notice this, I mean, we the envelopes, because of the COVID where we put the cutlery are made of recycled paper, our napkin is made of

recycled paper. recycled and recyclable paper. I think we shouldn't force this, but in small actions and attitudes we have to be aware, and the customer himself when he starts... that is, now he goes to McDonald's and even the straw is already on paper at McDonald's, probably when he gets to the supermarket, well I think that supermarkets no longer sell, um, you're going to opt for a paper straw. I don't think it should be "in your face", but it should be constantly present. I don't have plastic or paper cups there to offer at my water station to customers, what I have are bottles like these. As much as they take, a souvenir, and they realize that they are not going to make more garbage than what they really need to do. It doesn't have to be "in your face", António, in my opinion it doesn't have to be "in your face". Yes, we have to keep this in mind, but it should never be forced, it has to be part of our daily lives and our day to day.

A: Maybe just to finish, do you feel that it would be relevant or, yes, that it would be relevant to have an online platform, exclusively dedicated to green conscious and eco-friendly hotels? Or that it should, since there is not one specifically dedicated to this, feels that it could be a factor to attract more customers, who have a more sustainable posture if there were more platforms to...

S: I was trying to remember, because there are already some like that.

A: There are, I have a Booking study here that showed that in 2019, 75% of the total demand for accommodation was for sustainable accommodation, which I found to be a very high number, for example TripAdvisor also has Green Leaders in which they show in a section of the os website, for customers who are interested in looking for hotels that are green.

S: Look at that Booking study let me just tell you one thing, it was by chance, that 75% is by chance, believe me. Because probably that 75% also belong to large hotel reservations or belonging to chains...that was worldwide, wasn't it?

A: Yes, yes.

S: Ready. because I don't see Booking having much impact or even giving importance to whether or not these hotels are certified or not. That's the first point. Then there are already several associations or several sites, I was just remembering the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World, which is right around the corner, there are also others that are the Greener Act, which happens to even belong to an acquaintance of mine who is to develop this application. Um where people during their vacation can themselves reduce their impact and their footprint, um, through small actions they can take. It is very important to have it, but the truth is that it already exists but nothing has been consolidated. I mean there is no green booking, if there was a green booking, maybe it makes sense. And then yes, but then the hotels themselves had to, it couldn't be a written commitment letter, it had to be an audit, where this platform would go to the hotel and verify if we really are green booking. I'm here to give you an example of a name, right? I don't know if it exists, if it doesn't, but it can't be, if the idea was to create such a platform, there had to be a certification process, it can't be just because I'm DHM Green or because I'm I don't know how many Greens, there are that there is a certification for the thing to be taken seriously. But yes it makes perfect sense and especially it would make even more sense to consolidate all those platforms that exist today with this concern.

A: Ah yes.

S: So there's a lot here, António (laughs).

A: Yes, it's great, by the way, I created a survey and then I wanted to implement it with the interviews, for this, so we don't just have a quick answer and we're here in conversation.

S: Yes, yes.

A: And I always have different answers and different points of view that managers bring a lot to their personal experience, which is the valuable and even valuable on a personal note, isn't it?

S: Of course, of course.

A: My background is also hospitality, I graduated in hotel management in Vila do Conde, it was called ESEIG at the time, now it's called ESHT.

S: Yes.

A: Then I had to work at a hotel that opened here in Porto, which is Vila Foz, a new hotel that opened on Avenida Brasil in front of the sea.

S: Yes, yes.

A: And I felt like I needed something else and now I'm doing this Masters in Marketing. I do not know, let's see.

S: Good, good. Look, I'm going to share it with you, I think that, can you activate screen sharing for me or not?

A: Well, can you do it?

S: Let me see, now. Can you see this?

A: Ah yes.

S: Okay this is the Greener Act. It allows organizations and travelers to take the right actions to minimize environmental impacts, let me show you here. If you while, as I think only through the app. This is a very recent thing, and I think it was even an acquaintance of mine who is developing this application, check it out, read this because it has interesting things and the principle of this is very interesting, traveling and acting in a more sustainable way, this is able to fit like a glove on your thesis.

A: Yeah, I can see that.

S: You see, the long run, this has some really cool stuff here. And then that's what I was telling you, just here on this site, which is a minimal site, here you have again, 3 different associations, 2 of which I've never heard of, that should start consolidated to have more weight.

A: Exactly. Do you feel like it's a bit diffused too? The information...

S: Yes, the information is there, it's all online and it exists, but it's important that someone consolidates all these things, doing this green booking, something like that.

A: And wouldn't it be easy for you to give me the contact of this person, talk about a possible interview with me?

S: Good idea, I'll talk to him.

A: It would be interesting here for my thesis, if it weren't for a nuisance.

S: You will love him, he was the tourism director of the company HBD, he is French, he was my director, I was the general director of two units and he was the director of the tourism

part. You'll love talking to him because he really believes in this. He's really an activist in this, we cleaned the beaches and he was the first to be there and you'll enjoy talking to him, I'll see if he's available to talk to you and if I still have his contact because I haven't worked with him for 3 years. But I'll tell you something and I'll also share the contacts, okay?

A: Yes sir, thank you very much.

S: António everything is going well, I hope it goes well for you, and if you need anything else, beep.

A: Yes sir thank you very much.

S: A hug, thank you.

Transcript of interview with Manager 9 – General Manager - Azor Hotel

[A: António ; V: Manager 9]

A: Hello V, welcome and let me start by thanking you your availability. It is very much appreciated. Tell me a little bit about your path.

V: Hi Antonio, you're welcome! I have a degree in hospitality from the Estoril School. Then I invested a little bit in a more international path because I thought that even Estoril is very outdated, very much. Hm... If I can recommend DHP to you, the Lisbon course is top. The price they charge, I don't even know who the professors are who teach now, but I did it, it's been six months, it's the old Professional, that is, the legislation has changed...

A: Yeah.

V: You no longer need a professional certification to be a hotel director, but I still wanted to get it, the old-fashioned way.

A: Yes yes.

V: That is equivalent to a graduate degree and a professional certification, there are some countries that still require you know, so that is a professional certification to be able to act as hotel manager. It was only 6 or 7 years ago that a government's measure came out eliminating the need for such certification, before, you needed a professional certification to be a hotel director. But the fact is that getting the professional certification still helps, and it's very good, very good. The networking is incredible. In fact, it was from there that I basically, look, went to the Pestana group, then in the Pestana group I ended up meeting almost everyone.

A: Yeah.

V: And that's it. So come on Anthony!

A: Come on then. I don't know if you had the opportunity to complete the survey, I haven't seen it yet.

V: Not yet, not yet. Is this conversation dependent on the survey?

A: It could be easier if I already had...

V: Let me see here in my mailbox: University work, I have one from ... let me see another one. This email had already been answered... Yeah, it's here in my urgent flags to respond. But is it sine qua non that without that questionnaire we cannot do the interview?

A: Hm, I could give you more background on what I would ask you now, but...

V: Feel free. I'm so involved in the topic, that is, if it's about hospitality because...

A: Very well.

V: Even, as they say in Freestyle, I think I can help you.

A: Yes sir. Maybe I'll share, I'll see if I can share the questions, because that way it's easier to follow.

V: Ok, I already have your open questionnaire here to answer.

A: Yes sir, thank you. Okay, however, I have to record this interview here and then transcribe it, doesn't it is okay for you?

V: No, no problem.

A: I will try to share the questions document here. Just a second.

V: So, have you managed to talk to other professionals? have you done more questionnaires?

A: Yes, hm, as I have some background in the hotel business, some well-known people who also work in the hotel business...

V: DHM too?

A: Hmm.. No. DHM have already been a few yes. I interviewed XX, and YY from the Évora hotel.

V: Hm, yes yes, I know them, good!

A: Who were very nice. Now, I can and I'm also trying with ZZ from Monchique. Exactly. I'm very sorry but since I wasn't the one who created this meeting, the system is not letting me share or record. Don't you mind if I hang up?

V: Do you want to create a Teams link and save it?

A: Don't you mind? I'll call you back. Thank you very much.

V: Okay.

A: Excuse me.

A: I will share the document here, which is easier to follow. Can you see the document?

V: Hm hm yes yes.

A: The idea of the work is, therefore, about environmentally sustainable policies and practices in the hotel industry and in the global image I made of the work, I wanted to understand what were the international standards that rule and can help hotel establishments to implement sustainable measures. What is actually in practice and what

marketing communication measures can come into play here to enhance or improve, sustainability in hotels. And here, about the international standards, two that I found that I thought were pertinent for this work. It was these two. It was the ISO that makes the international standards for everything and anything. It has this name ISO 14001 and ISO 21401.

V: We happen to be doing an ISO audit now, therefore, for July. We are preparing this audit.

A: And it would be with a view to evaluating, for example, one of these two parameters.

V: Exactly, let's, let's evaluate. We will also assess the sustainability parameters.

A: Very well.

V: We have one, we have a person in charge of this... We have elected the Green ambassadors and they have been taking care of this area from the garbage separation, etc. It's a small task that increasingly needs a position and such.

A: Is there someone responsible within the matter?

V: I'll explain it to you. I like to involve the teams, I think that sometimes, and on this topic, which has a very strong preponderance, an example, I'll give you an example, the kitchen has the part of the butlers that there is an element that takes care of the whole garbage separation and therefore I don't have one, I have a team. In other words, everyone is responsible for this, for this policy. If it's not a struggle in vain, which ends up being almost a lifestyle and that has to be changed, it has to be, it has to be, from the purchases, from the products we buy. This I would say that the General Manager is the one to have to set the example and the main one to have to define, to make known the policies for all areas.

A: A top-down approach that...

V: Yes yes yes...

A: that all collaborators feel that this is what it is, more than a duty and an option.

V: Yes yes yes....

A: Here, the first question relates with standards and it starts by asking about a statement from the from the person who created it and who is at the head of this ISO technical committee, in which he says that (highlighted in yellow) "these standards bring clear clarity to a confusing market that can be applied to all types of accommodation and help to encourage more sustainability in tourism in general". Do you agree that if there are ISO standards that serve as an international recommendation, they can help implementation and provide guidelines, making it easier to understand and adopt ESPP?

V: We know well oh António, you know that I worked in some regions that I will give an example. When I was in Cape Verde, it was the first one, if you search Google Plastic Cape Verde, there are countless news items with my name and the hotel that was the first in 2016 to go for this plastic change, etc. But sometimes it is very difficult and I understand that there are these ISO guidelines and so on. But then, there are a number of governmental factors that make the entry of plastic massively. OK? Interests interests at the level of customs, the example of customs. If you let it in at the outset, the product is the cheapest product, which is plastic, for example. Another example of plastic, that is, this is a relationship, this is a love-hate relationship, because when the consumer product arrives, it comes at prices, I would say 200% cheaper plastic for consumption. So what happens? As much as there is and let's be frank, as much as there is the issue of standards, since its production policy is a vicious cycle that plastic has in the manufacturing sector. Therefore,

producing in a massive way and as long as regulations and governments do not imply the elimination of plastic from their production, this will always end up being recommended measures, I would say. This is not an imposition, because if it is an imposition, it has to be done from its production to the final consumer, you know? So this is a very complicated relationship between pricing and sustainability, because sustainability is expensive, ok, and the customer has to pay for it. And what I felt is, the customer pays as long as we manage to make this communication. In other words, the hotel has to wear a sustainability profile as a whole. I've seen and seen a lot of hotels, I think. I started in 2016 with this one, so only a Millennial GM was the first to be shocked by the amount of plastic. In 2016 it was already a reality that was already talked about a lot. But ten years ago this theme already existed. Only ten years ago it wasn't urgent. And now we, our generation, are talking about urgency and these ISOs came out of a sense of urgency. Like this is no longer an alert. It is urgent to change now. ISO, ISO is almost like a warrior of the environment who is here pulling the guerrillas for, for an industry that is powerful, which often has financial implications of changing assembly lines. For example, you to change the content of an assembly line of an aminitie or of or of or of a water factory you have to change an entire production assembly line, ok, and we are talking a lot of times powerful industries do not is, and they put the raw material on the market and that's it, and many times they are not able to make these changes. I think there must be an investment from the continents in the non-repayable financing of these factories, ok, from the beginning and in a way create a fund here to support the change of assembly lines, you know, because the final product when it reaches the markets is a cycle vicious and it is too difficult to go for bamboo bets, rice transformation bets, etc. Do you understand? Because price is the raw material. It's surreal, you know? So, there are brands that manage to communicate their sustainability profile, ok, but there are other companies that don't have such a strong marketing capacity, and then the other side of the coin is that they have the most sustainable products, they charge more for it. , but then the client doesn't recognize it because it's getting pissed, you know. Especially the older generations are more concerned with the topic. For us, it's urgent for Millennials, it's urgent and we are the most critical voice that we point to the political leader you understand, and that we irritate and that we want to move. So that's a bit of it. Therefore, ISO serves, in my view, almost not to legislate, because behind ISO still comes a number of problems and governmental, taxes, production of industries that are very powerful to bring to the final consumer products that no matter how much you say you reject it is and is one and one is a business love affair. I don't know if it makes sense.

A: It makes a lot of sense. And I think that even with this answer, we raised three very important topics here, which other managers have also agreed with this view, that there is a great difficulty. Even inside the hotel. This top-down approach should still exist at the national level, therefore, at the government level, and then the establishments as far away as possible...

S: Yes yes yes yes...

A: In addition to the difficulty of the entire system, it is becoming difficult to change the production processes and, for example, as happened in Cape Verde that there was, it was in Cape Verde that they said no, that there was a rule in the plastic field that , even which one wanted to change, would always be in circulation and therefore, it is difficult to change these ways.

V: It's a bit of a challenge, then I can send the link to the report it's super interesting at the time, there are, there are several, there are several topics that were talked about. Notice that there are hotels with 4000 beds and I, with a property of 93 rooms, was the first in Cape Verde to promote the elimination of plastic from straws. And how high can you imagine the inclusives of Ilha do Sal or Boa Vista? It was, consumption, isn't it? So what was done? At the time, a formal government protocol of commitment was signed, ok, and there has to be a commitment from the companies, ok? A commitment from the company that my counterpart who replaced me, the company commits itself, at the governmental level, to

continue with sustainable policies. At the time, we had 40% of solar energy and signaling for the water, and you see, here's a more critical voice, I'll give you an example. We produce enough potable water for agricultural distribution. In other words, if I wanted to make a sale to a chain of imagine an agricultural tractor at a price for agricultural production and to help sustainable agriculture, because I gave another example in Cape Verde where water is extremely scarce and then agricultural production is affected by the price of water. Therefore, they produce what is possible with the amount of water, which is mango, which is little more. The raw material is all imported and therefore, when I thought of proposing such a strategy, the surplus water that I can produce will be donated or sold at a low price or to an agrarian partner for the production of an organic farm. But the problem is that you enter here in a competition called water production and for that there are national waters that you enter in competition and I basically give you another example, we had a flagship that represented 60% cheaper than water from the Web. OK? In other words, this is business ok, and it is governmental business in which there is in it, here in Portugal we talk about SMAS. I don't know, I don't know, but in that case we were talking about that, despite having a sustainable approach as a young person, as a Millennial or as disruptive ideas for a motivation other than business, it's called sustainability, and that sustainability is often sometimes it means not giving money, it's donating and helping to help the distribution chain. Development is often barred with economic interest policies, processes. This is one of the examples and I think an interesting work that you can involve in this master's theme is, for example, in the case of, analyze a little bit what it is like someone at home who wants to install a solar panel? What are the conditions, what are the conditions of competition with electricity? Is it fair and sustainable or do the fees you pay end up not being worth the investment? You see, many times this sustainability ends up having governmental and legal blocks that are hard for our generation. It is hard. The economic interests that are outlining this environmental impact.

A: And besides that, it also makes it equally difficult for hotels to implement, for example in the case of Azor, it was, it was difficult... I don't know how long you have been in Azor, but.

V: So for a year and two months, ok, we don't have any kind of electrical energy, solar panel I mean, but we have, for example, in water heating, using a compound that is pellets, it's a compound . So we don't even use gas there. It is a more ecological compound for heating water and only in terms of gas, etc., there is a substantial reduction and it is a different source of combustion, isn't it?

A: What else, shall we say, sustainable alternatives, how was it implemented in Azor? Replacement of...

V: Well we. We here even won, there is already a sector that is DHM Green and luckily, luckily, the sensors had already been implemented. I am already happy that it is a company that is oriented towards these policies. The separation of garbage, etc. It already works. OK? And the Azores turns out to be a challenge. If on the mainland you already feel that it works, here the region is still a little behind on this topic. Despite being green, despite being, you can't find the garbage cans on the street? Not. It's still late on the topic.

A: But also having fewer people, smaller economy and more difficult to access these resources and implement quickly and effectively.

V: António, here and I here, I'm going to be frank here. I'm a millennial guy, I've been in the industry for many years. Our motivations are completely different from our generations ahead. We have a totally different approach that is concerned with the environment. I think the next step is in politics, that is, we have an old school policy in Portugal. We have a policy like few young people, with those who are carefree about the environment. OK. Let's be honest, you don't listen to anyone talking about the environment, whether it's PS, PSD, everything, everything imaginable. They are concerned with issues of racism, xenophobia, European funds, whatever. And what about the environment? This represents the lack of a

millennial mindset even in politics, you know, and here at the local level it really represents, so we have political leaders who are not interested in the environment. OK? old school mindset. It's not urgent for them, it's urgent for our generation. It will still be urgent for people, I don't know, I didn't ask you how old Antonio is, but?

A: I'm 25.

V: 25 years, it is already urgent for you. And I'm also 37, more than ten years old. I don't want to imagine the urgency of your generation. OK? And this has to start to change. Do you understand the mindset, and I mean, I'm going to give you an example, do you have clothing brands right now? Who pays €60 for a t-shirt told you but why do I have to pay €60 for a T-shirt? It's fair Production. Like, it's paid fairly. It's not an Indian kid who produced the T-shirt, he's paid a fair wage and a regular t-shirt with recycling compounds or wherever. And so this is often more expensive, but it also gives some branding value and is important. I think I think not just talking about the environment, but talking about how young people can be involved in politics. And it's a little bit more step forward. Like I'm interested in meddling isn't it. It cannot be just one Leonardo dedicating himself to talking about the environment. But it has to be, it has to be young people and sometimes we, we, us millennials, we young people, are a little bit lazy and we don't want to. I don't really like politics. I like to travel and blog. You understand.

A: Well, yes, it has to be. It has to be an active generation.

V: It's an active generation. And you know that you know that you know that when talking about sustainable policies, it's not just sustainable policies on the topic, it's just plastic. There is talk of social inclusion and hiring policies. How do I have a Down syndrome percentage? Why not refugees? Why don't I have refugees working with me with opportunities? This is part of branding and process sustainability. That's a little bit.

A: That also led me here to other questions that I already had, that I had already planned. And maybe, for example, in relation to the national hospitality prism, in this theme, we are talking about generational, of your knowledge of the people, of hotel managers you know, do you think there are difficulties in adapting or concerns with sustainability? Between an old hotel, with a manager with many years of experience in the house, than with a hotel that is opening now, for example, as was the case of XX, in Évora, which even rainwater will use to the irrigation system, given that there is a difficulty in adapting here in terms of infrastructure, but also in terms of mentality on the part of the manager?

V: Me, me, Antonio is notorious. What we are talking about is not, everything changes, there isn't, all generations change, there are those who adapt. I know managers who adapt to others, who are, are more focused on the financial part, the cost, what kind of equipment and who puts in and what is the cost per room, is delivered turnkey. But, but it is known that nowadays the way we build can be used as branding. In other words, if you ask me if I, I prefer them to have, to have their own branding and to communicate a sustainable hotel that possibly brings some, some, some affection. I think customers also get a different affection when hotels have these sustainable policies, and are brand ambassadors. Do you understand? I'll give you an example. Coca-Cola, in recent years, had brutal sales drops because they accused of being inactive in this topic. And if you notice, little or nothing is said about glue in terms of the environment, it's not one of the.. You start to hear about Adidas very strongly since the plastic sneakers, you start hearing about Patagonia, you start hearing number of brands. And it is in this industry that it is strong, this is too difficult, right? I would say yes, that there is a big gap here, between New GM's, Old GM's. And it's like everything, isn't it, us to whom it adapts, to whom it transforms. I know GMs with highly disruptive career years. It all depends on our mindset, right? But, but definitely that is, in any professional area, we have changes here and oh Antonio, we have to recognize that in the last 20 years, we started to have, not two generations, our parents and the young people used to be our parents and the youth. This digital revolution has brought almost five

generations. Gen X, Baby Boomers that are our parents, however, still created in baby boomers a baby boomers adventures, that is, the newly retired super adventurers who do stand-up padels. Therefore, every moment can have five or six generations that have nicknamed it and that each one has a different mindset, many times. When in the old days, I mean, we got to know our parents' toys, we played with the same things. Nowadays, from the age of 37 to your age, there are a number of different things. We are and there are ten years of difference and this happens in leadership, in tourism they happen in everything, that is, each generation has its own approach. But I think, I think that we are common, from my age to yours, ten years apart, this environmental engagement, without a doubt. Ours, our elders, so to speak, of course, have had their generational struggles. Liberdade and 75 and and there are other types of wars and other types of fights. And that's it, that's a bit.

A: These are the differences that technological advancement and social struggles bring from generation to generation.

V: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

A: And as I was saying, it applies to almost any professional area. Also sometimes, the hotel itself, for example, I interviewed the manager of Dom Henrique, in downtown Porto,

V: I know I know

A: Luís Perez, director, has been the manager for many years, saying that he had difficulty making major changes. For example, "one of the most innovative things I have here are the elevators I put in 20 years ago". So, they were state-of-the-art elevators that consumed less energy, but it's been 20 years that you can't compare, for example, the Farm Hotel da Filipa because it's opening now that you can use the rains to water and everything without plastic etc.

V: But you have several. For example, you know that I spent almost 11 years outside Portugal. I have now returned to the Azores, so I will give an example in Rio de Janeiro we had, we had the reuse of some type of water from the rooms. Therefore, we used this reuse for sanitary water, for example. And we had this reuse of a percentage of the washbasin and barnacles with water that was certainly treated and then reused, because for the toilets it was and was almost half of the water bill.

A: I saw that in Brazil they are at the forefront of sustainability. In fact, one of these ISO standards, one of them, which is about sustainable tourism, was based on a guideline created by a Brazilian.

V: That's how Brazil is very big and I know that I lived there and in Rio de Janeiro they have these sustainable policies, they communicate, but then, at the same time, you turn to plastic, which is crazy. You see, this love-affair with plastic is very difficult, I mean these are on the beach, plastic caipirinha and plastic everywhere we buy, that is, it's not rooted yet. But there is a much more heated war in the community. And today, in Portugal, there is still a lot, a lot of this war, a little bit, how can I say? It's Lassy, ahaha.

A: It's also one of the questions I was going to ask next, how does the hotel industry in Portugal see how it compares at a global level, with Brazil, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Italy?

Speaker 200:27:43

V: Yes, but in these policies?

A: In the implementation of environmental sustainability, do you feel that Portugal in general is well positioned? You're late?

V: Yes, I believe so. Look at the hotel level, very late, but I think we are very late, far behind, mainly, for those who have built, repaired, built new hotels in recent years, do a round of interviews and try to understand what kind of equipment these hotels have you see, and there are a number of new hotels and they continue to do the format they did, maybe five or ten years ago. Not adapted to take advantage of solar and wind energy. I know that there was another government communication, they almost used the Alentejo to say that they are an example, this is a lie, it is completely a lie that it is like a show off showcase. Do you understand? And then and then at the root of at the root of hotels I don't think it's an example. I will give an example. I worked very closely with a country that is Namibia. I had projects in Namibia, I had, I had, I went ten or 15 times to Namibia for work, etc. And until today it was, without a doubt, the country that most impressed me from an environmental point of view. We are talking about a country in Africa, which is the first in Africa to be cleaner, and the fifth in the world. And you, you ask, but how? Whoever has to do with a widely governmental communication, in which they define that the whole country is in green protection. And this represents what? It represents, which is their strategic tourist strategy, which is a lawless country. You go without seeing garbage, kilometers and kilometers kilometers. It has a sustainability policy with animal life and everything that is nature is what it is. In other words, they depend on tourism, which is the main factor in maintaining environmental policies. That is part of the DNA of the country and tourism. Do you understand? Do we have this ingrained, you know? Said, for example, here in the Azores there is no serious communication about hotels and the environment.

A: But if the case of Namibia does not have the infrastructural and economic access that Portugal has to be in the European area, even the geographical position, it can, implemented that..

V: I challenge you to explore the themes of Namibia a little bit. And look, you will be surprised. It has a very strong German influence. It didn't have that apartheid theme and it has a very strong South African and Dutch influence. Therefore, the country has a very strong presence of these three countries, historical roots. So, at the time, Hitler decided that Namibia was a strategically interesting country for him, the diamond issue. It's almost like a rich supply silo. It doesn't come in books, it doesn't come in stories. It's only when you're visiting the country that, hence, the German influence in that country. Then they developed a whole policy there that has a lot of tourism, based on safaris, beaches, it has a little bit of everything and it's impressive. Policies in hotels are actually audited for this topic you are studying.

A: Because it is there because they also have this government imposition, because it makes it easier, but sustainable alternatives, because the government has already encouraged that these products do not enter the country, such as plastic, for example.

V: Exactly. Exactly. The government itself has already encouraged and has already banned it. Note if, at all, the use of paper, and then created extremely strong, extremely strong rates for plastic, almost making it impossible for the product to even enter the country. And South Africa is also the same.

A: You also feel that sustainable development that starts with the government.

V: In another country that I have visited and felt this example, it is Costa Rica.

A: Look I was there too and felt it.

V: Yeah, we're talking about a country that basically has almost not even in the construction of roads, it's cautious that it prefers dirt to put tar, even in this form, almost radical. But it is also a tourist strategy for people.

A: Because they attract exactly there it is, this branding is typical of the country. They attract tourists who go there with this behavior.

V: And this also brings a little bit. And sometimes I say here, for example, I think, I think the Azores is one of the most incredible destinations within Europe, I would call Hawaii, and that doesn't communicate, doesn't communicate well, you know, outside, right? There is talk of trekking, there is talk of whales, there is talk of a lot. But has it not been possible to make a capsule with a name for this yet? There are nine islands, ok, but you, Costa Rica can say in a word or a sentence that everything that represents Costa Rica's policies is "pura vida", you know. And only in this sentence is pure life. Full stop.

A: Well, it really had everything or we have an image, there is an image associated with the Azores but it's not really tangible.

V: That's what I'm telling you this. This goes for a strategy, a strategy of promoting the destination. Is this a long term vision? We have to define the long term. So when Costa Rica defined this, this was a 100-year vision. "Pura vida" and they have a whole strategy behind them. I don't know if you remember paying the tourist tax when leaving the airport and we have an advertising board saying what is being done with the tourist tax. I don't know if you remember paying a fee.

A: As I went there and I took the bus, I traveled to Panama and then I took the bus.

V: Okay, but look, I'll give you an example at the airport in Costa Rica. When you are going out, you are obliged to pay the tourist tax, and there is a separate counter where you have some televisions and that says the amount collected from the tourist tax, on the right side, it looks like the total and the photos and the names of the projects appear that are being built, always on an ecological basis, with tourist fees from visitors to the country. Do you understand, that is, you as a paid tourist and are you contributing to the tourism sustainability of that country? We will often give an example, one more criticism, if the tourist tax for the city of Lisbon was invented and no one knows where that goes.

A: Well, here in Porto we also have them. For example, I have a house in local accommodation that I am also obliged to charge to clients. And indeed, it could be without a doubt, to show

V: I ask a question, can you have access to what you pay for and that you have the right to know what it is made of?

A: I don't know, I don't know where the money goes.

V: But that's exactly what I'm saying. This is a tourist strategy. For example, Costa Rica shares and is a good example, isn't it? Share what they are, but use that strategy as advertising. The tourist tax is very expensive, €50 is very expensive. Maybe it's more expensive here, because they charge for each accommodation and after seven days you can even leave the..

A: But there is no doubt that it is also a growing concern in our generation, in my generation, which is knowing the causes of everything they are paying for, everything they are going to buy. Perhaps the older generations don't have that tact.

V: Hmm.... Come on, let's be frank. We, our generations, I speak for myself. We are not Money-driven. We are careless of money. Like, if you have to have a small house and one is a 1965 car it's even prettier and I don't know what. That minimalism is what marks the millennial generation. Careless about money type. And much more interested in these policies of economic sustainability. We are not selfish, completely blind, de. I speak for myself. This is my view and the view of many friends. And look, I have friends in politics, secretaries of State, several in several CPLP countries, I know them. And they have a very

strong focus on making an impact in what they do, whether it's their work, and it's fun isn't it? It's not just about the money. And you know that, the fact that our generation is not money-driven, brings us here to be concerned about something that has a lifestyle impact on our lives, right? And if Portugal doesn't do strategy for a generation that is often minimalist and I don't know what.. I'll give you an example that I don't like and I don't like the prison environment, but at the same time, it's funny that I said with COO this week. Selina's new one. Okay, it's a chain that was very smart in communicating to the public. Know who your target audience is. Then you have some doubts when you arrive from inside any of Selina's hotels, what is that? That's a melting pot of a mess of back speakers with people who have a double room and there's a mess that seems to be in a hippie style and at the same time, in a millennial that a little more money. There is a mix there. I did this criticism and he was, but that's our battle. This is our battle. We don't want to be hippie hotels, but rather for a millennial audience that has some money. Hence resorting to these services and what makes an embrace of our hotels not?

A: Undoubtedly, I was here at Selina do Porto, I think there are two but there was one that in a friend of mine had an exhibition of paintings there and you could see it completely. The central building had those Packers, because it had bunkers around it, completely different cabins. And then we are there in the courtyard, doing an exhibition of four. It was totally that melting pot you were talking about.

V: Can you understand? You know that when I go to a chain, I can quickly analyze whether the branding strategy is working or not.

A: Face-to-face with the grimace, if what they say...

V: Yeah, I love their communication. Okay. But then they end up being there, but I'm here in a Boom Festival hotel ahah, do you understand? And then he's the guy who drinks a Mojito that stays for 6 hours to make the atmosphere, but then goes to the supermarket to buy it, buy vodka to make before going out. Do you understand?

V: Okay. Sorry if I'm not here to disperse but our conversation interesting.

A: No no, before everyone spoke like that, because work gets rich is when I can have completely open and deep visions.

V: You know, you know that this theme is generational? This is much more comprehensive than direct answers. Do you understand? And I'm talking about that possibly, I must be one of the most GM's that did the most work. And look, I leave you the invitation that in September I'm going to do a big event here in the Azores. I'm going to put together several, several, several themes, it's just going to be an event linked to the environment. I did this in Cape Verde, I brought three days of events and speakers and I called it a PLASTx Talks, instead of TEDx you are watching, and at the time I brought South Africans, I did an event that was with Chico Gaiivota I don't know if you've heard speak. A guy who took it, makes works of art with plastic. Look for Chico Gaiivota. Look, I shared the link here and I will share it here. Plastic. It explains a little bit about the type of events I did. It was here a few years ago and it was from RTP too.

A: Very well.

V: Basically, what is that? What is it that I invited? I invited the schools, the kids to attend those lectures, one if a South African was brought to Spiker too, who is Armadillo. Tatu made a backpack with the solar panel, which however is paid for by Bill Gates. So I'm going to replicate here in the Azores the list of events that... I'll send you this link, it's also interesting for your work. If you want to talk to her, I share it too and she talks about helping you with your master's degree. She, however, became so well known that Red Bull, in addition to sportsmen, wanted entrepreneurs and sponsored by Red Bull and travels the

world doing and making speakers. And what do I have in mind, September, doing three, four days in the Azores just connected to the environment, people from all over the world and coming to talk, having a list of speakers, livestream, art gallery exhibition with these guys who builds works of art with plastic.

A: Is Xico the seagull?

V: Yeah, and it's another one that if you want, I'll share the contact. I think he would be happy to talk to you and contribute to your work. Chico, when I met him, he wasn't very well known. He didn't promote himself, he didn't promote himself much, he didn't promote himself. And I found the type for the cause, that is, he lived it a lot. I used to tell him that, but oh Ricardo, his name is Ricardo. They call him Xico, Seagull, catch seagull is like seagulls pick up all the garbage. And it is, so he will talk in the link that I sent later. And basically I was very focused on the environment, it was a very personal thing but you have to start communicating and investing in Instagram. However, when I took him to Cape Verde, he had 16 days to build five pieces of art. He had schools, orphanages that he took with him to collect. And then I put a kind of video with him and said No, you're going to produce that, this is cool if we also advertise ourselves if we share. And that's it, it was fun. From there Jerónimo Martins started, all these companies hiring him as an ambassador. But he's extremely discerning and he's a person that maybe you talk to, he'll impress you more. That is, he knows governments, EDP from the inside. All. Because then companies go to him and what he says, they don't imagine that his focus is the cause and not the business. So, many times imagine that we have Jerónimo Martins or another company, I was asked to do events for the team that made coffee breaks with plastic cups in the middle of the coffee break with plastic material. But are you kidding me? You invite me to this, but we are, I'm giving you a speech about the environment and you arrive at the coffee break and there's plastic material, this...

A: It's just pats on the back anyway. There were no criteria.

V: You know, I didn't come here for the 1000 or 2000 € they pay me to come here to give a speaker. I come for the cause and you don't enter... It really rejects events and everything if the theme is that, you understand. Look, for example, if he was talking to you, immediately criticize your background, which is those caps over there.

A: Yesahaha,

V: You know why he collects most of the pieces he collects are the visors of the bones, he picks them up on the beach and builds works of art with the visors. And she is highly critical of Havaianas and Palas. But you take it with him right away, in everything you're talking about, you know?

A: Funny.

V: OK. More questions?

A: Just to end here two more questions. But just one more aside, in this regard. What we talk about the Azores, I think it's a super interesting initiative and I think what we talk about image, are these types of events that are associated with the Azores. It's a lever to create here...

V: I basically what do I want to do? I want to do three days. I want to bring, for example, surfing guys, which is also a topic that they end up touching, isn't it? And then, like the crowd of these works, O Xico Gaivota, etc. The idea is to create three days of debates and also involve politics. In other words, none of this can be done without the main driver, which is politics. Our generation has to stick, as they say, the finger in the nose to those who play the decisive role. I'm going to do it with, I'm very, very... I had 11 years abroad and I

was very connected to CPLP countries. Therefore, I will try to make it, to be a very Portuguese-speaking event between Brazil and Cape Verde. Come Secretary of State. Come come. I always do events with this dimension of politics, people. And I even point the finger at meetings, where the politician also leaves there almost compromised.

A: Exactly. It's not just a political appearance, it's really about creating change. But I think so

V: Look, I'll give you an example. Here the hotel, we have implemented an app that you can look for is now starting, an app that we promote people to visit Ponta Delgada and the first hotel... It's one of the measures you can point out about my first year of management and policy environment, we have an e-bike app and we really encourage it, because we have e-bikes, we have 25.

A: If you have an app to communicate; I had a question like that in the survey, if there was an app to communicate...

V: Yeah yeah, I have, have, I was here to answer your inquiry. I already got here to a part that asks me. But that's it and basically, we have 25 e-bikes. The suites include a bicycle for free. We're going to pay for like five days on a bike, etc. Basically to promote, no, don't rent the car. No, no, you don't need the car on your visit to the city. It's easier, because you don't need to park, and that's it, to start promoting this lifestyle. I live 500 meters, one kilometer from the hotel and I always try to come by bike when it's sunny. Then I created a special price monthly fee for employees, which is 12 € per month, they can have their bikes around town and come to work by bike, so you have these two client and employee.

A: Because to implement in hotels we always have that side, right? That is, making employees believe in what we are doing and then having the commitment...

V: You know this wasn't just that. It also has to do with something that has to do with our Portuguese way of seeing things. Ah the GM in a suit and tie riding a bike. This looks bad, my God! Do you understand and many times part of us that we have to be the first, No, this makes sense, because it does this 25 kilometers per hour on the bike that gives..

A: Of course, to deproblematize, not to have prejudices. Modify mindsets to be at the forefront of the initiative.

V: Yes yes.

A: Look, I'm back staying at Azor, I'm going with my girlfriend.

Go and? When?

A: From 22nd to 24th or 25th of August.

V: Oh good good good.

A: We'll be there. Then we rented an AirBnb in the center of the island to walk around. I would be delighted to get to know all of these.

V: But are you going to stay here on the Azor? Good good this is great.

A: If you will be there, I would be happy to meet you personally.

V: Of course I do and I am a welcome ambassador to all guests. In fact, I should have seen the arrival lists today.

A: But I won't take it from you any longer either. I just had one more question, which was about partnerships with green brands and green labels. If they are a hotel, there is a lot of emphasis on that. If they are looking for green partners, for example, how to buy local food, green brands that do a treatment...

V: This one, this one is almost from the DNA of DHM. I think talking to the other directors is almost one of the things I like that made me come to DHM. This is DNA. And I'm like, we buy organic vegetables are more expensive, we charge more and our branding is what it is, what it is. Many times people, Ah but wanted a menu with x price. Sorry, this is our pricing, we didn't get it. It is part of our branding to explain the qualitative part, the sustainable part. We have something here in the Azores that is also fantastic. It's one of the things that well, this is a reflection of a regionalism. It is not environmental that it is, they have something called that they explore what is interesting for their theme, the so-called Azores brand and the brand is the Azores brand. What is purchased locally, from certified companies in the region, such as products from the region, and they finance a 30% discount on the customer's raw material, that is, to become competitive. So, I even share some invoices with you, see if you can see here on the right hand side saying Azores brand. This is a fish. And when you have this brand, we receive a 30% fund equivalent to the purchase. Did you understand?

A: Yes yes yes.

V: So it's one of the things you can add to a government strategy. I don't see how the environmental strategy is a sustainability strategy, but also some regionalism in the mix, ok.

A: Of course, it's not environmental, but it promotes. It ends here, then we cut out a lot of negative factors, the transport of goods at a global level.

V: The boats and all that. But it is also one of the measures that I remembered here. It might be interesting for your project, which is Mainland Portugal and the regions here...

A: And Regarding guests. Also, to finish the questions, he feels that he is able to communicate easily and that the guests agree not to use towels if it is not necessary, to understand this type of paying more for ingredients but if they know that they are of biological and local origin, there is an ease liaison, the liaison, a communication link with guests, is it easy? In terms of Ok, we do that is, are they on Azor, are the guests Azor and do they understand all the measures implemented and do they comply? Is it easy to communicate between what they implement and what the attitude of the guests is?

V: It's very difficult and very difficult for António, but both of us, let's be honest. We are talking about five stars, five stars, we are talking about a range of customers with some purchasing power, older ones, our segment is 40 and above. We are not a millennial segment ok, it is very difficult. This one is very difficult. This notion is not noticeable. Do you understand if maybe in some international audience, but we, in general, Portugal is not yet.. Is the Portuguese public still not sustainable? No, no. Our generation is already an extremely traveled generation, he would say. With more world, with more world. And I will lead by example. When I started traveling to Indonesia, I was shocked by the plastic, I was shocked. Like being on some beaches and taking a dip and coming with plastic on your head. Couldn't understand. And asked the question. But why is this? It was the Indonesian explanation, we are talking about ten, ten, 11 years ago. They did not and did not have the invasion of Western products. And from the moment Indonesia started importing and allowing products to enter, they came in a plastic form. And what happened to the country? The country was not prepared for this waste treatment. I couldn't do this garbage treatment, I couldn't. So it was a very serious problem that people throw them into the sea, they throw them into the vegetation. It is not treated.

A: Well no. That's what matters en masse. And then there is no minimum infrastructure for treatment.

V: And that's what it's like to have the government like we have these products are cheap, because in the meantime come the lobby with some distributor or some trading company and nothing is prepared and then when you realize it after five years we have an environmental problem .. You can see some things from Indonesia. It was a very strong problem. If you write Indonesia Plastic you can see this problem everywhere, especially in these countries. Indonesia has, has, say, 1000 islands, doesn't it?

A: Yes and it is one of the most populous countries in the world.

V: Yes one of the not the most, but one of the biggest. But but do a Google search here and you can see. OK. Look, Antonio, I don't know if there are any more questions.

A: On my part. Thank you very much.

V: Look and when you come here we'll talk a little bit, we'll develop the theme here. If we need any more help there on the subject and at least some, a kick, that can help work.

A: If you could pass a contact, or talk to colleagues, there is a kid here who is doing a master's degree on this, even hoteliers, if there are contacts that you think are interested in filling out the survey and talking to me would be very good.

V: If you want, are you just doing national hospitality?

A: I've already tried outside. I tried a contact at Tivoli in Brazil, in Praia do Forte, and was lucky that they filled in the survey. But I didn't get the interview. But, for example, Brazil would also be interesting to include in the study.

V: Ah, I can get you contacts and, if you want, Namibia and Angola.

A: The more the better.

V: I'll see what I can do.

A: Thank you so much and also for your precious time and fantastic conversation.

V: You're welcome. Good luck!

Transcript of the Interview with Manager 10 – General Manager – Évora Farm Hotel

[A: António ; F: Manager 10]

A: I don't know if you've had the opportunity to see the survey I sent by email.

F: Oh Antonio, sorry, I didn't have...

A: No problem. We created the survey in order to ask questions, a more initial approach and then with the interviews to explore a little more, almost like a... a pilot study this survey is, but there is no problem.

F: I know it's based on sustainability...

A: Exactly, yes.

F: I noticed, in questions related to environmental impact. So I'll be happy to help you the best I can. Just to fit you exactly into my, my role and the project in which I'm in. So, I'm the general manager of a unit that hasn't opened yet, the Évora Farm Hotel, that will open on June 1st, hmm, so the answers I'm going to give you will be based on what we foresee and plan for Évora, ok?

A: Very well. So here the purpose of the work, which focuses on environmentally sustainable measures and practices, is to make an analysis of, of, of the knowledge of the norms that exist about this, international norms and what are the strategies that are in practice and what is, what is the impact resulting from these strategies. Maybe I will start with the longest questions, hum, even if later I have any, any difficulties, maybe I can share the screen.

F: Of course.

A: And then maybe some easier questions. If it takes too long, I also...

F: António, if you can, of course, share the screen right away so that I can follow what you are reading.

A: Absolutely. Let me see if it opens well. Okay, can you see?

F: Perfect, perfect.

A: Okay, here is one of the factors that I found essential about the implementation of these environmental sustainability measures...

F: Hmm.

A: It understand who created, what international standards are and therefore what norms can be followed to create, in an effective way, implement these measures. And I saw that ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, has all kinds of standards for all kinds of industries, they have some specific to sustainable tourism.

F: Hmm.

A: And here the chair of this committee, Manuel Otero, says that there are several measures available...

F: Yes.

A: About policies and practices, but none of them integrate social, economic dimensions or are of interest, better, exempt from commercial interests. This statement raises some, some opinion like that...

F: I have great difficulty in answering this, António, I will be very honest with you, because, because I am not, hum, I am not particularly familiar with it and I would be lying to you if I said that I am aware of what are the international standards of the organization for a standardization of sustainability, etc., within tourism. I can tell you, hum, within what our project will be, what could be some examples of the initiatives that we will have, um, I don't know if it fits this question better, if you have any...

A: Yes, yes. It does. I also wanted to mention that there will certainly be questions here that will lead us to the answers of others, right? Therefore...

F: Right. Okay, we, I think more than ever, and I genuinely hope not because of international trends because this is a little bit like humanity is going a little bit in the way of, of following

what are the trends of, of, of the moment. I don't think we've ever heard so much about sustainability and environmental causes as today. And if we do and if we listen, it's because there really is a reason for great concern that goes far beyond what agriculture, um, or mass meat production is, isn't it? There is a lot of talk about meat production and I think it goes far beyond that. In our hotel in particular, in Évora, we are one, a project that has a high sensitivity from the start, with the environmental issue, with the issue of sustainability. I give you a very, very valid example. The unit is a unit that does not have water, mains water, so we are going to be, we are going to be dependent on three holes that we have and one of the things we were careful to create that had a high financial investment, was an entire treatment system of water and the WWTP where all the river water will be channeled through this WWTP, they will undergo a very, very specific treatment that allows them to be reused and not, um, directly thrown into a sewer for the irrigation of the unit, so there will be all the return to the water table that sustains us and that allows us to operationalize the vast majority of that water through after irrigation for our organic farming, for our orchard and for our olive grove. So I think this is one of the excellent, excellent examples that we are going to have of environmental and sustainable initiatives. Hmm, another one that we're going to have, we're going to have a combustion point so we're going to do it, we're going to combust it as much as possible, because we also have a resident agronomist on the team...

A: Very well...

F: That also more than anyone understands immensely how it is possible to do organic farming, combustion and, and regeneration and regenerative agriculture which is nothing more nor less than a continuous enrichment of what the lands are, therefore, the soil, the Soil fertility is something that has to be fed, nurtured and worked on. And combustion is one of the best ways to do that, so we're recycling, combusting isn't just about... I'll give you a very, very simple example, like, like, grass clippings from the garden or, it's nothing like that, combustion goes through the paper too, it goes through organic residues, hum, which are then, super enriching organic matter of the soils. In this sense, we will have this, we will be careful, hum, we will have the hotel with a very aggressive plan also for electric lighting, therefore, energy autonomy... as much balanced as possible. All service areas, let's consider motion sensors as much as possible, so we don't neglect to leave unnecessary lights on continuously, hum, and then obviously we're going to try to eliminate the plastic from the unit as much as possible, starting with the amenities all that are available in the guest rooms, by the accessories used in our restaurant, therefore, everything that is single-use that are recycled, recycled materials and not plastic. Hum and then we will have, we will have within what are the experiences, the activities for our guests, hum, and for our younger ones we will also have small activities, recycling centers, workshops, how to use simple things in everyday life day that we have in our homes, from the paper egg carton to everything, everything that can be the milk pack, whatever, things that can be reused and that can even become quite fun for our customers, hum, as an activity and family and for the youngest.

A: Well, very well, in the meantime we dropped several questions here that one was...

F: Well, António, I suffer from this, I start talking and I don't shut up.

A: Exactly, it's ideal (laughs). Hmm, one of the questions was, was that precisely, this suspicion or distrust for this being a current fashion, isn't it? I mean, everyone wants to be environmentally sustainable, very much this, the term that is the green washing of hotels, companies trying to easily demarcate themselves from the competition for a false...

F: António, not only for that, sorry to interrupt you...

A: Go ahead.

F: Not only because of that, but because, um, abroad I realized, from the years I spent abroad, that there are cultures other than the Portuguese, in particular, but there is, there is

genuinely a concern for tourists to look for, it can be a decision point, for the tourist to book a hotel that is sensitive or ecological or with a greater concern in terms of sustainability, of one that is not, so it's so much a fad, I think we're adapting here as a matter of fashion but I think that out there are many, there are many countries where people actually are absolutely aware of this. Then I also think that here there are other management policies of, of the society that encourages us to have motivations to be more and more careful, by the simple act of recycling, for example. I lived in cultures where recycling is a source of income for families, that is, it contributes to a better world, but the family also has the financial recognition of this effort that makes division, return and I think that was interesting, I think we are maybe light years away from being able to do that in Portugal but abroad I think there are very different realities from where we are.

A: So I would clearly say that, comparing at least with the Portuguese market or with Portuguese culture that we are perhaps a little behind what would be the perception of the valuable that it is and the, the potential it has...

F: António, yes, but I think it is also... yes, I would say yes, but also in the examples where I was also... I had it in Canada...

A: Yeah.

F: The Canadian, I think... (laughs)

A: A little bit more....(laugh)

F: It's more comparative with Switzerland. That's why I think the countries where I went are not an example in this sense either, because they are extremes of, of a very great social and cultural responsibility, hmm, they take topics like these very, very seriously, hm, but, but that's it, the truth is that I observed, lived, understand perfectly, hum, and I can understand the lightness with which we still approach the subject in Portugal, without a doubt.

A: Very well, this also leads me to another question, which is the fact, you mentioned the agronomist, if I'm not mistaken, so there is someone, is there someone already specific, specialized in a little of, of, what could be environmental sustainability, isn't it? So there's an employee...

F: We do.

A: Responsible...

F: With academic training.

A: With academic training.

F: Agronomist, who is responsible for all the maintenance of the hotel, for all the agricultural component, hum, and outdoor spaces, therefore, with knowledge of the facts, with the ability to be able, he himself also develops other sustainability measures, um, a greater comfort for us, to guarantee that the soil doesn't remain, um, without the regeneration that is due and the respect for what they are, it's a very simple thing like the agricultural schedule, a person doing an agricultural production outside of what is the normal production schedule, it can be quite exhausting for the terrain and soil and I don't think we're going to take this risk, I think we're in great hands.

A: Very well, yes, it seems to me at least, from the analysis I did, websites and the people I intend to interview, it seems to me that Évora Farm Hotel, considering the location, geographically, is better positioned for this type of actions and to implement these, these measures. Let me just move forward here, see if we can take a few more question threads.

So, maybe in relation to these questions about the rules, um, maybe it wouldn't have much relevance, since maybe you won't be aware...

F: No, I'm not.

A: You are not aware of what they mean, or what their benefits could be, but maybe in relation...

F: The benefits, the benefits, isn't it more about self-awareness? And a sense of accountability, almost an ethical and moral measure as a human being in this world, I think... for sure that the measures, even though I'm not fully familiar with what they are, have an impact at a behavioral level that will educate people and that will, I believe, even help with motivation within the hotel industry, right? And tourism. It turns out to be an engagement level and above average motivation for the teams themselves, doesn't it? When we feel that we are part of a unit or a company that has the detail, sensitivity and discipline to look at what the world is like for my children, for yours, for the next generations, I think it gives us a motivation additional, isn't it?

A: Of course.

F: When we see and are inserted in an organization where carelessness and disbelief about, about the environmental impact that certain behaviors have is non-existent, I think it is, I don't know if this serves as an answer, but for me just the fact..

A: Yes, it's great.

F: ...I think, I think it's a motivation for everyone to want to learn a little more and actually want to adapt some habits, hum, I don't believe, at all, that all people turn vegetarian because someone says that agriculture will annihilate with the degrees of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, I don't believe it will go that way, but I believe that maybe starting little by little, something as simple as separating plastic from paper and the glass at home, hum, I think it would already be, or maybe buy a bottle of water that is now sold in cardboard instead of being plastic...

A: Yeah.

F: ...maybe if everyone, if 10% of the population did that, maybe the difference would already be seen.

A: Without a doubt. And yet, in a more general way, do you believe that if the hotel community here in Portugal had more knowledge of what these standards can bring and even that there are these standards to implement, that there is a standard for the implementation of sustainable measures, do you believe, here in Portugal, that could it be a decisive factor to have more implementation? This knowledge of the rules or do you think maybe it's an issue...

F: António, I think that, not wanting to get into discussions that I don't even have the capacity to have, but I think that, if I started from above, and when I speak from above I speak of our rulers, I think that from the moment the example does not come from above, hum, there is no incentive, no incentive, there is also a lack of knowledge of what it is, what would genuinely be the impact on the impact about the impact of tourism in Portugal, if we started to be known for a more sustainable and more, hum, ecological tourism. Hmm, I'll give you a very simple example, I don't know if you have ever been in Fernando de Noronha in Brazil. There, there, the degree of, of, of ecological quality and sustainability, etc., of the island is something out of the ordinary and it has always been a luxury destination with always maximum occupancy, with a very high average nightly rate, because people appreciate the nature and appreciate the sensitivity that exists at the

environmental level, etc. of the destination. Portugal could undoubtedly position itself strongly in this sense, but I think that for tourism to respond to what this need would be, it would have to come from social and official entities higher than the hotel per se, you know what I mean?

A: Well, absolutely. But I'm glad you spoke in Brazil because this, this standard for sustainable tourism created by ISO came from a measure of environmental sustainability that was created in Brazil, precisely.

F: Ah, so, you see, I didn't know (laughs).

A: Then, he worked with ISO in this technical committee of sustainable tourism afterwards together with other people...

F: See? Funny I had no idea, interesting.

A: Unintentionally, we always know a little more, don't we?

F: Exactly.

A: Very well. Hmm, here there was a Booking study from 2019 that shows that there has been a demand for sustainable accommodation that reached almost, within the platform, which reached almost 75% of the total number in 2019. Did you have any idea of these values?

F: No, I had no idea, not that big. I had the idea that there is a very specific market niche in that sense. As I said, I have already lived and had this international exposure that gave me this knowledge from my own experience, hmmm, I think it helps a lot that we also, I happen to not have said this, but I think it's also something else. I think it helps a lot to have, and I'm glad we do, characters from the world of general, global knowledge, for example Cristiano Ronaldo, it's a pity that he still hasn't had a say on this topic but I think the day he starts to have, which I think he will have, surely, surely already in his personal practice of private life, he must have some measures but when he starts to be the face, as is Leonardo DiCaprio, as are other public figures, hum, I think Portuguese culture will become even more mentalized because we are followers of people who represent us so well abroad and whom we look up to with all respect and affection. I think that with more and more impactful people in our generation, in our society today, hum, being ambassadors of these measures, we can more easily see the "Bookings of life" and these search and demand analyzes also take over. And then the conversion rate ratio, because I think it's one thing for us to understand what the percentage of those who searched and then look at the ratio of what the percentage of those who made it. I think it would be interesting to understand, from the 70%, what happened and then make a comparison with two or three other public figures who are, who are bearers of this message, to understand a little more the sequence of the increase, which will surely be.

A: Of course. And also from this perspective of knowledge or awareness, do you believe that if hotel managers here in Portugal were in possession of these or were more aware of these numbers, these trends, even if there was not, as we were saying before, perhaps a governmental approach, top-down, about implementing these measures, do you believe that if hotel managers had...okay admitting that maybe they don't know the rules and admitting that there is no governmental and legal incentive, do you think that seeing, for example, these booking numbers or programs from TripAdvisor, such as Green Leaders, which promote...

F: I think so. I think it would definitely have a positive impact. But, António, it was as I was saying to you, before you saw these values, which would be impactful in themselves, of course, I think it would be essential to be educated about what Green Tourism is and what

these measures are, isn't it? What and how can we make this difference and that I think it would be, in order not to build the house on the roof, I think you have to deal with the foundations and foundations first. And these bases I think are generally unknown, that is, I do not say that there will obviously not be as we already have, we have some, some specific hotel units in Portugal where awareness is there of sustainability and the environment. But I don't believe it is part of the DNA of what is a future tourism, because it will be a future tourism without a doubt.

A: In that sense, Évora Farm Hotel was motivated or had a great preponderance in this part yet, ready as the hotel has not yet opened, as I said at the beginning, what you are telling me will be for the hotel what is planned, but was it an initial motivation or did you have this initial awareness "ok maybe in all parts of the hotel structure where we can introduce sustainable alternatives to what would be traditional methods, isn't it?". For example, the treatment of river water or hiring someone with specialized training to manage this entire part of the hotel. Was there a great preponderance in this initial phase in sustainability? In the case of Évora...

F: There was, there was, from the beginning, without a doubt, António, we had, we had... I'm seeing if I can find you here, I'm sorry, just give me a second. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, hum, now explaining a little bit here at the beginning, the Évora Farm Hotel project was always a project, once again, and inviting almost naturally due to the location it is, from, from the place where it is implemented, in the way we have always thought, the operationalization of the same due to limitations that we also have, such as accessibility to mains water, therefore, in terms of environmental impact, we are going to make a point too and I think this is important, it already is part of the DNA of the day-to-day operation of the hotel. We want to explain to our guests what I just explained to you, so the entire water cycle that is used in the hotel hum where the waste water, both from the kitchens and from the toilets, will be treated in our biological ETAR, one more thing in particular because now there is a more technical component here that I can explain to you, this biological treatment, which is also such a funny word that today we find in anything biological, but we will actually have one, a treatment system by the action of oxygen from decanting the residual sludge, so the whole mixture will be completely divided by means of an oxygen action where this post-treatment water itself will be for exclusive use in the irrigation of the entire plant product as I told you. It will not be for personal consumption or for bathing, but it will be for the vegetable gardens, orchards, gardens, in the animals, we will have a nucleus of animals and, in this way, we can guarantee the reuse of these waters that in normal operations we see in so many other sites are rejected, is not it? We are going to use them for the maintenance and conservation of the soil, and, and always reinforcing, that is, there will not be an industrial exploitation of what are the natural resources, which are the water tables that we have in the hotel in question. I think that since day 1 the unit has been designed in this sense because we can't think that three holes are eternal or that we have the right to wear down the water table in this way, right? Hmm, after what I told you, composting was also easy through our agricultural engineer, or agronomist, sorry, we immediately assume that we will effectively have the recycling of all plant material that comes from, I don't know, from kitchens, from gardens, the grass cutting that I mentioned earlier, for the regeneration of the soil that will be reintroduced in the orchard, in the vegetable garden, so we have a supply of natural nutrients, don't we? Continuous on the ground, hum, we obviously run away from chemical resources, there is no need, there is no need for that, because also, an important thing, António, we are not going to be supported by our vegetable garden, therefore, our garden is a didactic vegetable garden, there will be a component of explanation, guest interaction with the garden, so the idea is not for the boss to have the farm to table from there in our garden, we will have a farm to table, we will have a farm to table, through effectively the union and connection to local producers, also another form of sustainability, not at the level of the planet but at the level of sustainability and respect for the local market and the local economy and that's it, Évora was always like that from the beginning, so António, I can not say much more.

A: No, it's great and we were also talking here about the different measures that have been implemented in the hotel and I was also going to ask you this, if having gardens and having animals in the hotel would be to self-sustain the hotel's raw material or if it was to educate consumers.

F: Yes, that's exactly it, because we will always respect the seasonal production, the plantations, the sowing, so everything will always be a little more reduced dynamics and a dynamic of familiarization and from there we say that we are a didactic farm, we are not a pedagogical farm, a pedagogical farm, any QR Code can explain there, we have a didactic farm where customers will interact in loco with the agronomist, with the animals, with a personal explanation and a very direct follow-up.

A: Very well. Hum, now a little bit about partnerships, I realized that they are going to opt for local products, right? As far as...

F: Yes, local producers, exactly.

A: ...raw material for the restaurant... Will they have any other partnerships with green brands or with any certified green conscious company that have, I don't know, different treatment from laundry or...

F: António, I can give you an example, no, not in that sense, but I also have a very cool example, the staff uniforms, are made, or are going to be made and are being produced by a Portuguese brand, 100% Portuguese, that creates uniforms based on fabric leftovers, fabric scraps, in factories, which are then recreated and reused in the production of parts, whether in a shirt or... thus avoiding the waste of material, of material of mass production of uniforms, ready, ready. So it's also a story of recycling and reuse.

A: Of course, yes, more than valid as an answer, it was really this type of actions that we wanted to understand here with these questions. Moving forward now, going back a little bit to the promotion part and this being a current trend, of course the hotel is not yet in operation but do you experience difficulties or some barriers in promoting your hotel as an environmentally sustainable hotel?

F: That, that answer is that I don't have it yet to give you, it's very difficult, to be answering you, I prefer not to answer.

A: Of course, of course.

F: Hum, I think it will be positively impactful when we start to actively promote based on what sustainability measures are, I think it will be even more so when the customer feels it and lives it, understands it in loco, but I can't give him an answer yet, quickly.

A: Absolutely. And maybe I was still asking if finding alternatives, or thinking about environmentally sustainable alternatives, was it easy to find producers and develop means of production that were high cost-benefit, greater than traditional measures? Have environmentally sustainable measures become cheaper?

F: No, no.

A: Is it an added cost that will...?

F: Everything that is, I'm telling you about the local producers of organic farming, everything that is, everything that is, hum, as traditional as possible, as pure and as natural as possible is obviously a little more expensive than the industrialized one, isn't it? Because the degree of strictness of the norms of the limitations that they themselves have, means that the production is not massive, it means that they are, with a much higher raw material cost,

therefore obviously it is more expensive, but... we have other ways of compensate for that cost so there is not, I don't think it is, that it will be, in the future, one of the barriers why tourism in Portugal should not be more, more sustainable in that sense, because locally we can't make partnerships, hum, because in fact the quality is there, look, I'm talking to you, for example, of meat producers in our region and of more organic meat, more outdoors, less aggressive in their production, it's obviously a little more expensive but also the quality is there, it also allows us to have a higher sales ratio margin, so I don't think so.

A: This question was also relevant because of the way your answer has to do with, the mass production of agriculture already has many norms and many standards to comply with, it becomes easier and more advantageous in economic terms to buy even from those suppliers, isn't it?

F: Exactly.

A: We have that guarantee. And this could be how it worked in the hotel industry, that if there was a mass understanding and compliance with orders, maybe it would normalize a little bit, it would stop being a trend and become the mainstream and it could be that it would accentuate the adoption on the part of consumers.

F: But I think so, António, I think that little by little, we, we now have the decree-law that came out and that is approved and that will be implemented very quickly, which is ending with single-use plastic items, so the hotels will have to respect that too. I think, I think that little by little we are guaranteed to get there, get there, *pasito a pasito*, we've reached a good start, but I think it's, it's, it's all one, it's a whole change of habits, mindsets and motivations, I think that little by little the more educated people are, the more motivated they will feel too, and tourism is no exception.

A: Very well, I think that we have been answering almost all the questions here, little by little, we talked a little bit about the knowledge of the norms, about the type of measures, about the training of workers, about the demand, about what is that the client, about the client's awareness, I don't know if in relation to this topic there is something else, something in mind that I might not, I didn't say, that he wants to talk about.

F: No, no, António I think a hotel is a world of opportunities for sustainability and for us to make our planet a better place to be, hum, once again too, we have the possibility in the future, in Évora, of a photovoltaic energy, for example, hum, as in Évora, there are many hotel units in the country that have space, that have land and everything that is needed to be able to have photovoltaic panels, we have... I mean, the coffee beans ground daily at breakfast can be transformed into a welcome ritual in a spa treatment, with a foot exfoliation, I don't know...

A: It's an industry with immense...

F: There are so many cool ways of doing the things that a hotel produces and, which must be part of it, that I think just...hum, we just have to do one thing too, which is to sit down, as hoteliers, to sit down with our teams, once a month, and we discuss, Green thoughts, I don't know something like that. Okay, and we have some ideas, suddenly our colleague who is in the pantry who sees a lot of things going to the trash daily, says "look at these things no one ever thought of, but this can be done for this..." hum, our housekeeping colleague does something else, so I think it has a lot to do with communication, communication, the possibility of involving people, creativity, look... and that's it, and we think that little by little, we have to change our way of being, okay?

A: That's right, I was going to say that even in the survey there was a question about that, about whether they would hold a staff meeting to discuss this type, this green conscious, right? To get the idea, "maybe I remember this in relation to this..."

F: I personally, I personally will surely. For now, at an early stage, what I'm going to focus on is the operationalization of the hotel, right? Because opening a hotel is a tremendous hustle and bustle, so this is it right now and, later on, still in the opening year, I will certainly have one, one, a schedule for a green, a green moment, because I think it's fundamental, there it is, and I think the teams are still motivated for that too.

A: Yes ma'am, very well, I don't want to take more time, I wanted to thank you.

F: António, I hope it helped or contributed something to your, to your thesis and it was a pleasure to meet you.

A: Of course I do! It was a pleasure to meet you too and one day when I am walking around the Alentejo I will be delighted to visit the hotel.

F: Come, come visit us in Évora, ok?

A: I'm also a hotelier from scratch, I studied hotel management and I've been working in some hotels and now I'm doing this master's in marketing at Católica University but one day I hope to return to the hotel business.

F: Very well. In which hotels did you work?

A: I did an internship at the Four Seasons, in Florence, Italy, then here in Portugal I was at the opening...

F: What year was it? What year were you in Florence?

A: In 2016.

F: In 2016. Do you know that I was 20 years in Four Seasons? I'm a Four Seasons woman!

A: That for me was a good school.

F: I worked for the Ritz for 10 years, I went to Whistler, in Canada for 5 years, I went to Geneva for 5 years and then I went with José Silva, with our esteemed mentor of my whole life, to the Jumeirah in Dubai. But I've been to Firenze, a great hotel, I really like it.

A: The hotel is a spectacle.

F: All right, very good, look, António, I really enjoyed meeting you! A great day for you.

A: Thank you, also.

F: Thank you, all the best, all going well. Excuse me, thank you.

A: Excuse me.

Transcript of the Interview with Owner 1 –Partner/Owner - JASE Hotels & Resorts

[A: António ; J: Owner 1]

A: The ISO, International Organization for Standardisation, has a technical committee responsible for standards in the field of tourism: ISO/TC 228 Tourism and related services.

Within this committee there are several working groups, one of which is exclusively dedicated to standards for sustainable tourism. Some of the standards developed by this committee and working group are the ISO14000 and ISO21401 standards (Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements); the ones I named as relevant to my project. According to the chair of this technical committee, Manuel Otero, “there are many initiatives available that can help the hotel industry to improve its Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices, but none that integrate the social and economic dimensions or that are exempt from commercial interests”. **Do you agree with this statement? Can you give me examples of existing initiatives?**

J: I agree with the statement, in fact, isolated programs are proliferating, both in the environmental and social spheres, but often disconnected and poorly articulated. It is also true that all the programs that I know of are somehow linked to commercial interests, however I do not see this as an inconvenience, quite the contrary, because in my opinion, if there were no programs from organizations that promoted these concerns, it would be very difficult to have programs monitored and sponsored by state institutions. Despite these economic interests, the programs have allowed for a greater dissemination of good practices, which in itself is positive.

A: Also according to this specialist, the situation of directives, aids, schemes on this topic of sustainability in hotels is very fragmented at an international level, which makes it difficult for hotel managers to know which are the best and most useful options to take. And that the existence of international standards provides an answer to this difficulty (“This internationally agreed standard provides clarity in a confusing market, applies to all types of accommodation and can serve as a tool to improve sustainable management. It will also help to stimulate the market for more sustainability in both the accommodation sector and the tourism industry as a whole.”). **Do you agree with this view?**

J: Yes, the truth is that there is no compass that allows Hoteliers to choose and work with the best social and environmental implementation programs. We chose according to the companies that have the most reputation, since in addition to the genuine concerns of each one, we are very influenced in the choices by the companies that give us greater visibility for their certification, as is the case of Green Key. I believe that in addition to genuine intentions, the hotel industry uses programs with the aim of obtaining better visibility in sales in markets where this concern is decisive, such as the North European market.

A: Also from this ISO committee, who develops standards for sustainable tourism is Alexandre Garrido, who says that hotel units, by opting for the ISO 21401 standard, will be able to offer better services and prove to their customers and the entire market that they constitute a business sustainability, improving its relationships with suppliers, customers and the local community (“those that implement a sustainability management system based on ISO 21401 will be able to attest to their guests and to the whole market that they are sustainable businesses. ISO 21401 will benefit accommodation facilities by strengthening their management and improving their reputation, while providing better-quality services to clients and improving relationships with suppliers, employees and the local community.”) **Could you please comment on these statements?**

J: I don't know the norm in depth to be able to comment on it, however I believe that a norm that considers both environmental and social concerns is decisive for the future of companies. The concern and implementation of environmental policies, the concern to share and support populations with actions both of an environmental nature and of social support, namely with the use of perishable goods and the use of food waste, as well as the interaction of employees with programs of social scope, which allows for an integrated concern of society with the active participation of employees, with a clear advantage from the point of view of internal marketing, motivation and the feeling of belonging and contribution to the surrounding society.

A: According to a study carried out by Booking.com in 2019, the percentage of travelers looking for sustainable accommodation has been growing consistently, reaching almost 75% of the total number in 2019 (“Consistent with overall intentions to make more sustainable travel choices, sustainable stays are growing in popularity, with almost three quarters (73%) of global travelers intending to stay at least once in an eco-friendly or green accommodation when looking at the year ahead. .com research has seen this figure trend up, from 62% in 2016 to 65% in 2017, and 68% in 2018.** Additionally, 70% of global travelers say they would be more likely to book an accommodation knowing it was eco-friendly, whether they were looking for a sustainable stay or not.”). **Were you aware of these values? Do you have a significant part of customers who go to your establishment due to the ESPP you have implemented? Is it also your perception that this number has been increasing?**

J: Yes, it has been increasing and even motivates the repositioning of one of the hotel units that target this type of consumer. As mentioned above, these concerns are echoed in the search for and choice of hotels by a large part of tourists, especially from the northern European and Asian market, and are by themselves, a competitive advantage both in exploration and as a selling point.

A: This study by Booking also says that 70% of its travelers are unaware of the existence of green brands for the hotel industry and almost 40% believe that the existence of international standards that help to identify this type of establishments would be extremely useful and more than 60% says that they would feel better staying at an establishment they knew had a green mark (“However, when it comes to recognizing a sustainable place to stay, almost three quarters (72%) of global travelers say that they are not aware of the existence of eco-labels for vacation accommodations, while well over a third (37%) of affirm that an international standard for identifying eco-friendly accommodation would help encourage them to travel more sustainably, and 62% would feel better about staying in an accommodation if they knew it had an eco-label.”) **Do you think that this data can influence hotel managers to definitively adopt ESPP according to standards and seek certifications and green labels? How important are international standards and green labels to you in relation to the implementation of ESPP?**

J: I think this has happened, especially in the last decade. It is not just a concern that we have to have with the environment, and we all know today that this type of certification is essential and today the number of hotel units that are concerned about having a certification of this type is increasing. We're still far from ideal but we're clearly better off compared to Hotels that had environmental or social certifications in the past decade.

A: Several studies on Green Marketing in hotels during the last 5/6 years, showed that the partnership with green brands (specifically that have a brand image aligned with what the hotel intends to achieve) was the predominant factor in consumers' perception of the environmentally sustainable initiatives implemented in a particular hotel. And until this partnership, in turn, increases the credibility of the hotels' ESPP and, in turn, arouses the interest of guests who otherwise might not be concerned with this topic, leading to a greater collective awareness on the topic and greater credibility in the certified ESPP, and so on. **In that sense, could you give me practical examples of your hotel, of the type of measures implemented in which you have a partnership with green brands that help them to implement or promote? (for example, inclusion of the hotel in an online booking platform dedicated to green-conscious guests or reference in the restaurant menu of the origin of local products, etc).**

J: Yes, we practice in all the hotels of the group. Still far from what we would like to do, but still, with very interesting programs that involve management and all employees. Jase Group Hotels have clear policies for environmental protection and sustainability. As an example, in addition to all the concerns with waste separation and reduction of water consumption and use of water for irrigation, among others, the Hotels are all certified by Green Key and produce around 40% of the energy consumed. At the same time, we created

the "Coração Jase", which is managed exclusively by the group's employees and is dedicated to collecting goods and values to support the surrounding society, in particular the people most in need in the areas where the Hotels are located. This structure has already supported more than 150 families throughout its 10 years of existence. By way of information, one of the Hotels of the Group Douro Palace Hotel Resort & Spa won the Oscar of the Travel Awards for the category of best green Hotel in Portugal and is a candidate and finalist in the same category but for Europe in 2021.

A: There is also in several academic papers, the reference to the term Green Washing, which means that a hotel only advertises that it implements ESPP and that as a company it is concerned with the environment, without any changes in the production processes to justify it; in order to achieve an easy but misleading separation from the competition through. **Could you give examples of barriers you have had in communicating the Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices implemented in your hotel? Do you have any fears that this, which is a current social trend, will create distrust and suspicion in some customer segments as to whether the hotel is in fact green-conscious?**

J: I don't subscribe. Today customers are mostly sensitive and, as such, I don't think it's a problem today. With the dissemination of information and criticism online, the market quickly filters itself. If we deceive the public, it will certainly be for a short time because the market is self-regulating and we end up paying dearly for the lack of publicity of concerns that we do not have. I believe in the market that regulates itself through the concern with the image and with the very results of the companies if they do not deliver what they advertise.

A: In your opinion, what are the essential Environmentally Sustainable Policies and Practices (ESPP) that a hotel must implement to obtain "sustainable" certification?

J: There will certainly be many others, but I would venture to say that the production of energy with photovoltaics and the production of heating with photovoltaic panels, the reduction of water consumption with the introduction of meters and reducers, reuse of rainwater for sanitary water, garbage separation, use of led or low consumption light bulbs and the non-use of plastics in packaging, among many other possibilities such as organic production when hotels have the concept of farm to table

A: What is your perception of the current level of knowledge in the Portuguese hotel market about specific sustainable standards and labels for hotel tourism? Do you know many hotels in Portugal that have ISO certifications and green label certifications?

J: I know a lot of hotels with certifications, especially the green Key, but I believe that a significant part of the industry is not aware of these certifications and the ones that are known are the ones disseminated by these better-known organizations.

A: What is your perception of the level of awareness that exists in the Portuguese hotel market for the importance of defining a sustainability policy, and the impact this can have on attracting customers?

J: Sensitivity is increasing, if only because of the competitive advantage that can be obtained in sales and marketing and in the savings that can also be generated with these practices, but I dared to take the risk that the vast majority still do not have this type of concern and only introduce it when it is an imposition of those who finance investments, as is the case of community programs managed by Turismo de Portugal.

A: In your opinion, is the degree of implementation of ESPP in the hotel market in Portugal advanced? How does it compare with the situation worldwide? (For example UK, Italy, France, Spain, Nordic countries, Brazil or USA).

J: We are behind the Nordic countries but I think we will be in the European average. This is not a portuguese problem but a problem for the industry. In my opinion, we are far from

being in a comfortable position, but even so, I think that we are one of the countries that have evolved the most in this area.

A: In the case of hotels where environmental sustainability measures are not adopted, do you think that this is due to the fact that there is a perception that the cost-benefit ratio is very unfavorable, and the lack of knowledge of the measures to be adopted, including international standards and tools available?

J: Yes, in most cases the perception is that the implementation has costs that only pay off in the long term. In reality, systems such as photovoltaics are practically impossible to monetize due to the initial investment costs. I believe that most do not do it for the cost it entails, unless they use community programs that support this investment.

A: Do you remember any success stories related to environmental sustainability measures in the Portuguese hotel market that you can share? Do you have any measure that has been relevantly successful in your establishment or hotel chain?

J: I have already answered this question in some way in the previous questions. Many hotels are now a reference because of these concerns. As an example, I mention the Douro Palace Hotel Resort & Spa in our chain, which we have just repositioned as a result of the investments we have made in the area of sustainability and the farm-to-table positioning with the elimination of all pesticides from the farm where the Hotel is located and which has to be the heart of this hotel's offer.

A: Regarding the biggest challenges you have encountered in implementing ESPP, did you have difficulty finding alternatives for environmentally sustainable means of production and products that have the same purchase cost as traditional ones? Did you feel that you needed greater infrastructural and technological investment in order to implement these environmentally sustainable alternatives?

J: Yes, as mentioned before, the transformation costs are enormous and the investment in specific equipment and programs is very high and I have no doubt that it would be very difficult without programs to support this transformation.

A: What emphasis do you give in the communication of your services to the fact that they are environmentally sustainable and green-conscious or eco-friendly? Do you intend to use it as a major advertising tool?

J: Concern for the environment and society not only brings cost reduction in some cases, such as the case of own energy production, but also from a commercial point of view this is one of the strongest arguments for sale of our accommodation, particularly in Northern European markets. The awards and distinctions obtained are fundamental instruments of our promotion and we massively publicize all certifications as well as internal programs regarding environmental and social sustainability.

A: Do you see the implementation of ESPP as a marketing strategy? In your opinion, is it worth investing in marketing campaigns based on environmental sustainability measures?

J: It's worth it both in relational marketing and in internal marketing and obviously in the company's management philosophy that all of it focuses on Marketing and on the legitimate expectations of our internal and external public, so for us Marketing is the Engine and the our fuel is the good practices that we have been able to implement.