

# ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LUXURY HOTEL

Case: Grand Palace Hotel Riga, Latvia

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Ieva Losane

Lahti University of Applied Sciences  
Degree programme in Tourism and Hospitality

LOSANE, IEVA:

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## ABSTRACT

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Chemical pollution, loss of biodiversity, ecological and other to environmental issues addressing words are often heard in today's society. Sustainability and especially its environmental aspect are growing trends. Environmental sustainability is a considerable issue as well in the tourism industry. Hotels can decrease their negative impact on the environment by following and implementing environmentally sustainable practices at their business. Any step towards sustainability benefits both the environment and a company.

This research deals with environmental friendliness from the perspective of a luxury hotel and possibilities to find suggestions and practical solutions to improve environmentally friendly practices at the hotel. For the basis of this study is taken the five-star Grand Palace Hotel Riga, Latvia. The hotel is a member of the luxury The Leading Hotels of the World club. The current situation on environmental issues at Grand Palace Hotel Riga is analyzed by interviewing and observing.

The priority of this work is to gather information about sustainability, environmental practices and its implementation in daily routine at the hotel. The theoretical part of the thesis provides information on the conception of sustainability, environmental sustainability in tourism, eco-labeling, a short touch on hotel grading in Europe and The Leading Hotels of the World club. There is collected information on waste management, water and energy, lighting and re-cycling.

Being a luxury hotel brings a need to follow high standard service, which does not always meet the understanding of environmentally friendly practices. The thesis and the guidebook purpose is to gather information and data on environmental sustainability for the needs of a luxury hotel: to give a short information on sustainability and its aspects and provide some suggestions on environmentally friendly practices for the hotel.

Keywords: sustainability, environmentally friendly, hotel

Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu  
Matkailun ala

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Kemiallinen saastuminen, biologisen monimuotoisuuden väheneminen, ekologiset ja muut ympäristöasioihin liittyvät sanat ovat usein kuultuja nykypäivän yhteiskunnassa. Kestävä kehitys ja erityisesti sen ympäristönäkökulma on kasvava trendi. Ympäristön kestävyys ja vakaus on huomattavan tärkeä kysymys myös matkailualalla. Hotellit voivat vähentää kielteisiä vaikutuksia ympäristöön seuraamalla ja toteuttamalla ympäristön kestävää käyttöä omassa liiketoiminnassaan. Mikä tahansa askel kohti kestävästä kehitystä hyödyttää sekä ympäristöä että yritystä.

Tämä tutkimus käsittelee ympäristöystävällisyys näkökulmasta luksushotellia ja mahdollisuuksia löytää ehdotuksia ja käytännön ratkaisut, joilla parannetaan ympäristöystävällisiä käytäntöjä hotellissa. Perustana tähän tutkimukseen on otettu viiden tähden Grand Palace Hotel Riga Latviassa, joka on Luxury The Leading Hotels of The World Club jäsen. Nykyinen tilanne ympäristökysymyksistä Grand Palace Hotel Rigassa analysoidaan haastattelemalla ja havainnoimalla.

Pääpaino on kerätä tietoa kestävydestä, ympäristökäytännöistä ja niiden täytäntöönpanosta päivittäisissä rutiineissa hotellissa. Teoreettinen osa työstä tarjoaa mielikuva tietoa kestävydestä, ympäristönsuojelun kestävästä matkailusta, ympäristömerkinnät, lyhyt kosketus hotellien luokitukseen Euroopassa ja Leading Hotels of World Clubissa. On kerätty tiedot jätehuollosta, vedestä, energiasta, valaistuksesta ja kierrätyksestä.

Olemalla luksushotelli tuo tarvetta seurata korkeatasoista palvelua, joka ei aina täytä ymmärrystä ympäristöystävällisistä käytännöistä. Opinnäytetyön ja ympäristöoppaan tarkoituksena oli kerätä tietoa ympäristön kestävyys tarpeista luksushotellissa: antaa lyhyesti tietoa kestävästä kehityksestä ja sen näkökohtiin ja hankkia ehdotuksia ympäristöystävälliseen käytäntöön hotellissa.

Avainsanat: kestävyys, ympäristöystävällinen hotelli

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

...”just my changing to a green lifestyle won’t change the whole picture, and I will certainly get cancer anyway” (Boström & Klintman 2008, 1).

In today’s society, would it be possible to find a single adult person who would not react to such words as ecological, environmentally friendly, environmentalism, climate change, chemical pollution, loss of biodiversity, sustainability, etc? Their reaction might be different – from skeptical, even denying and passivity to ‘let’s do something’ and active practices. Reasons for skepticism and passivity in perspective of environmental friendliness might come from information, which is overwhelming us. There are, almost in every newspaper and TV news, warnings of humanity’s negative footprints on the environment. People get overwhelmed and feel small and helpless in front of this flow of negative information about environmental changes. In some cases, they react passively. The latest world economic crisis influenced people’s actions, too. In many cases, they just concentrate on keeping their business running and there is no power or willingness left to pay attention to ecological problems, as they seem to be very far from their respective small enterprise.

However, the concept of sustainability has received attention from countryside and cities, from academics, businesses of different areas, governments, churches and other organizations. There are people, consumers and business practitioners, who have understood that their role is not to be passive or indecisive and they are willing to make changes in their everyday action towards sustainability at their home and business.

Sustainability and environmental-friendliness are considerable issues as well in the tourism industry including the hotel business. Even though the impact of the tourism business on the environment is considered less harmful than industrial impact, it still does exist. The increasing environmental awareness has touched many policies makers, consumers, business keepers and others in the area of accommodation.

## 1.1 Starting points of the thesis

In these subchapters, the reader is introduced to the starting points of this thesis. The thesis research purpose, target and definition of the thesis and guidebook.

My personal interest in impacts of humanity on the environment and an interest in the hotel business led to the idea to write the thesis on the topic of a combination of these interests. Hence, to write about applying of sustainability and sustainable practices at a hotel. To realize the idea I contacted my last work place at Grand Palace Hotel in Riga, Latvia, where I was working as an accountant for several years. The hotel is a luxury five star hotel and it is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World. As the next action step, a proposal letter was sent to Grand Palace Hotel Riga, which was approved. The opportunity to go to Riga came two weeks later after Grand Palace Hotel agreed to be a commission organization. There was a shortage of time and I had to focus my attention on research methods theory – theme interview and observation, because these things were relatively new for me. Terms such as sustainable tourism, environmental-friendliness and eco-labels were already familiar to me.

Even though the concept of sustainability practices has reached the accommodation sector, there are still many discussions about practical implementation methods in the hotel business. Those discussions usually are general; they cover the whole accommodation sector, not the specific type of hotel or high-service hotel. Luxury hotels or hotels that practice a high-level service is barely mentioned in literature about sustainability.

Before interviews were done at Grand Palace Hotel, Riga, a basic idea of the thesis subject was Environmentally Friendly Hotel. During interviews by the interviewees, the importance for the hotel to be a member of The Leading Hotels of the World was brought up. By following there came up the contradictions between practicing luxuriating and environmental sustainability, which brought an interesting twist and new perspective to this work and of course to subject of it - Environmentally Friendly Luxury Hotel.

## 1.2 Purpose and objectives of thesis and guidebook

This thesis focuses on sustainability and environmental sustainable aspects at luxury hotel. Idea of this work is to get attention from small and/or specific type of hotels to pay attention to their every day's sustainable activities. Any step towards sustainability benefits both company and the environment.

Objective of this thesis is to study environmental-friendliness from the perspective of a luxury hotel and to find practical solutions, suggestions for sustainable improvements and good base to become environmentally friendly hotel. For base of this study is taken Hotel Grand Palace, Riga. There is analyzed data on present situation at the luxury hotel on point of view of environmental sustainability and its implementation in practice and gather data of possible practical and technical environmentally friendly steps in every day's routine. That would be presented at the guidebook.

The guidebook purpose is gather data on environmental sustainability for needs of luxury hotel; to provide the basic information on sustainability, environmental sustainability, its development and provide some suggestions on what could be done towards environmentally friendly practice. This guidebook is meant to be easy useable, informative, short and unobtrusive. Since this virtual guidebook applies knowledge created for Hotel Grand Palace, Riga, it is taken into account that daily schedule of hotel's employees is very busy and it is good to advise them briefly and succinctly.

There are discussions – does following environmentally friendly choices are always best solution for person and company and can we trust green-labels (Bosttröm & Klintman 2008, 1-32). As well, some of Grand Palace Hotel management personnel expressed wish to be introduced with positive and negative aspects of environmentally friendly development. However, this work idea occurred based on position of environmental friendliness necessity, consequently this thesis target is to encourage taking first steps towards sustainability and to lead into trust to eco-labeling.



### 1.3 Confining of Thesis and guidebook

The thesis and the guide book is confined is confined to hotel side of business only, excluding the kitchen and restaurant operations. However, it is not possible to separate this particular business ensemble into different independent pieces; as well, most ideas on environmental practices can also be applied to other facilities and departments of business, which require improving their environmental sustainability.

The research includes such areas as energy, waste management, re-cycling and water usage. The idea is to gather ideas of environmentally friendly practices that could be in the hotel. The idea of the guidebook is to give briefly ideas and to guide to environmentally friendly practices.

The thesis is meant to be an informative work. The responsible environmental practice business adoption requires a responsible attitude towards the environment and understanding the basis of the concept of sustainability and issues related to this topic. That requires providing theoretical knowledge on these subjects.

The theoretical part of the thesis deals with the concepts of sustainability, environmental sustainability in tourism, eco-labeling, touching briefly on hotel grading in Europe and basic information about The Leading Hotels of the World club. Terms such as sustainable tourism, environmentally friendly and/or eco-label are generally heard by everybody, but in most cases the deeper meaning and difference between these terms and/or definitions are undiscovered. It is an integral part for a company to understand definitions and concepts and know the key reasons and drivers of environmentally sustainable development, when it decides to implant that in their life.

As well, understandings about hotel grading are variable, caused by different reasons. Mostly hotel grading systems depend on country's internal interpretation; in each country it can be resolved differently. Five star hotel service level can be vastly different from country to country. Travelers in the same grade hotels might

have different experiences. Their vision of grading in practical implementation can depend on what countries they have visited.

In this thesis, both of terms are used – environmental sustainability and environmental friendliness, generally as equal. There is no official definition of environmental friendliness. The International Organization for Standardization has qualified this term 'environmental friendliness' as too broad meaning. However, it is common in practical use (for example, it is used by European Commission), with friendly sound and it is used for products or services to claim minimal or no harm to the environment. (Consumers Union of United States, 2012.) Conception of environmental sustainability and others topic- related definitions are discussed in chapter 2.

Suggestions for improvements are generally based on official policies of eco-labeling. Mostly the internet is used as an information source, as the newest information is updated fast on internet pages. However, written sources are used as information, as well.

## 2 SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURISM

It is important for a company to understand definitions and concepts and know the key reasons and drivers of environmental sustainable practices, when it decides to implant that in life. This chapter deals with conceptions of sustainability, environmental sustainability in tourism.

In the past several decades, global industrialization, urbanization in all countries and global wealth growth have caused different environmental problems to our planet (United Nations World Travel Organization 2011; Bushell 2001, 32; World Trade Organization 1998; Borg 1997). Tourism is rapidly becoming one of the most important sectors of economic growth in the world (United Nations Environment Programme 2012; Harms 2010, 111; Lansing & De Vries 2006). Tourism demand, both domestic and international, is directly related to income levels, and therefore has prospered as global wealth has increased (Bushell 2001, 32; World

Trade Organization 1998). The arrival of low-cost air travel has radically transformed tourism and increase the popularity of mass tourism (Bushell 2001, 32; World Trade Organization 1998). Even though, due to the global economic crisis, some areas during 2009 experienced slower growth, it is still expected that the number of tourists worldwide will grow every year over the next decade (Harms 2010, 111). UNWTO's Tourism 2020 Vision (2012a) and Tourism towards 2030 Global overview (2012b) predicts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. They are expecting that by 2020 the top three tourist receiving regions will be Europe (717 million tourists), East Asia and the Pacific (397 million) and the Americas (282 million), followed by Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2011.) Tourism, compared with other forms of economic activity, such as extractive industries, is considered to be relatively clean (Bushell 2001, 32; Parviainen 1997, 8) and it has a tendency to be seen as economic development and a benefit (Lansing & De Vries 2006; Bushell 2001, 32; France 1997, 8-9). Nevertheless, tourism is responsible (especially mass tourism) for a negative social, cultural and environmental impact, such as the destruction of ecological systems and loss of cultural heritage (Lansing & De Vries 2006; Bushell 2001, 32; Swarbrooke 2001, 4-9; Borg 1997, 36-37; Parviainen 1997, 8).

There is a great pressure on historical towns, particularly in Europe. The large number of tourists affects fragile built environment. There is a possibility, that a city loses its sense of identity and sense of history. At the same time, many tourists in historic towns are day-trippers and they are not leaving a lot of money in their visited town. (Swarbrooke, 2000, 172-173.)

The principles of sustainability were originally developed in response to those concerns about negative impacts on environment. The terms that have surfaced in recent years in tourism business are sustainable tourism, environmentally sustainable tourism, sustainable tourism development. (Lansing & De Vries, 2006; Borg 1997, 36.)

## 2.1 Concept of Sustainable Tourism and its development

Sustainability and sustainable development as terms are widely used and can be interpreted in many different ways (Harms 2010, 114; Lansing & De Vries 2006; McCool & Moisey 2001, 3; Swarbrooke 2000, 13; France 1997, 11-13). In Stockholm, 1972 in The United Nation Conference on Human Environment, the international community met to consider global environment and development needs, for the first time the concept of sustainable development got heard and attention (Table 1).

Table 1. Sustainable Development Timeline. Adapted from Earth Summit 2012.

1972	United Nations (UN) Conference on Human Environment
1983	UN General Assembly creates the UN Commission on Environment and Development otherwise known as the Brundtland Commission
1987	Brundtland Commission Report "Our Common Future"
1992	UN Conference on Environment and Earth Summit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Agenda 21 Blueprint for a sustainable planet</li> <li>✓ Creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development</li> </ul>
1993	Creation of European Commission Directorate-General (DG) Environment
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development
2012	UN Conference on Sustainable Development RIO +20

One of the most used and accepted key statements of sustainability is given by World Commission on Environment and Development's Report commonly called the Brundtland Report after its chairwoman, Our Common Future (WCED, 1987)

(Fletcher 2005, 260; Hunter 2002, 3; McCool & Moisey 2001, 1; Swarbrooke 2000, 13; France 1997, 12). They described sustainable tourism development as development that ‘meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs’ (Earth summit 2012, 2012; UNWTO, 2012). Generally it was based on the idea that there is no need to deny or go backward in economic growth, the other way round, that economical growth can find ways to be environmentally sustainable and socially equitable (Swarbrooke 2000, 5).

The UNWTO has conceptualized a sustainable tourism development (STD) definition. It says that sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles generally refer to a balanced mix of the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development (Figure 1) (United Nations WTO, 2012).

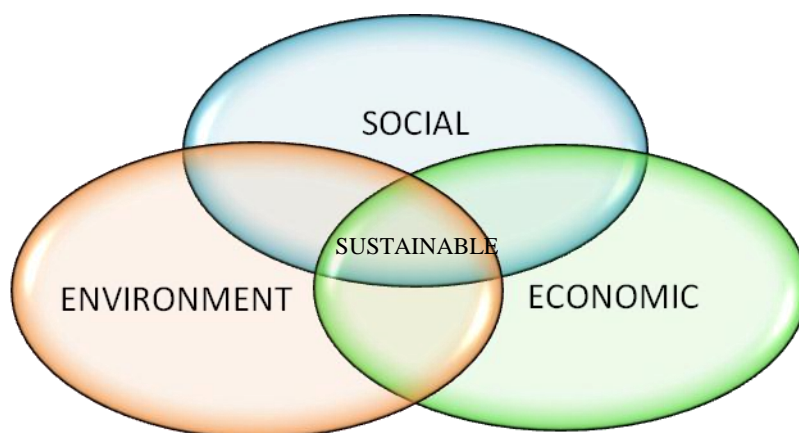


Figure 1. Relations between environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability (The World Conservation Union 2006)

Thus, sustainable tourism should meet a number of criteria:

- 1) In the area of environmental sustainability that means making optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development and by helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 2) In the area of social sustainability that would be expressed in way of respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of a visited place. That would be expressed by helping to conserve their built and living cultural heritage, traditional values, and by contributing to inter-cultural understanding.
- 3) In the area of economic sustainability should ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders. That should include such operations as stable employment and income-earning opportunities, social services to host communities. (United Nations WTO, 2012.)

To achieve and maintain sustainable tourism is a continuous process. The World's development is expanding and it is an ever changing process, which requires following its development and finding new ways to manage and/or correct those new impacts. (United Nations WTO, 2012.)

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and at the same time raise tourists' awareness about sustainable issues, explain, involve in process of sustaining and teach through examples (United Nations WTO, 2012).

## 2.2 Environmental sustainability

An "unsustainable situation" occurs when natural capital is used up faster than it can be replenished. The long-term result of environmental degradation is the inability to sustain human life. Such degradation could imply extinction for humanity. Environmental sustainability is the process of making sure current processes of interaction with the environment are pursued with the idea of keeping the environment as natural as possible. (Park 2006.)

That means that environmental sustainability can be defined as systemic conditions where human actions will not disturb planetary cycles more than planetary

resilience allows and at the same time do not impoverish the ecosystems and other environmental systems for the benefit of future generations. (Vezzoli & Manzini 2008, 6; Park 2006.)

This thesis focus is on the environmental sustainability and its aspects at a hotel. Social and economic aspects are also presented at some level, because those three aspects of sustainable tourism closely interact with each other.

### 2.3 Global Baseline Criteria for Sustainable Tourism - Sustainable Tourism Criteria Initiative

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world in order to minimize the negative impacts of tourism growth– and harness its power to help make positive change in the world. The GSTC is currently active in all United Nations WTO regions. The GSTC fosters sustainable tourism through the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles; compiling, adapting and creating the tools and training to engage in sustainable tourism practices. At the heart of this work are the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria requirements that any tourism business should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world’s natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation. (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2011.)

There are hundreds of certification systems and many practices that define sustainable tourism around the world. The Global Baseline Criteria for Sustainable Tourism beginning in 2007, a coalition of 27 organizations – the Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria – came together to develop the principal ideas and actions that have been expressed in many documents and standards around the world since the term “sustainable tourism” was introduced and to develop the criteria. (GSTC 2011; UNWTO 2012c.). Through this common understanding of what sustainable tourism really means, the travel industry, media, governments, and consumers will be better positioned to recognize and support sustainable tourism. The Criteria are oriented towards hotels and tour operators, and they should

be considered as a baseline that a tourism business should implement, or that a credible certification program should be based upon. (UNWTO 2012c.)

#### 2.4 Baselines for Sustainable Development in Europe Union

The European Commission (2012) has briefly defined sustainable development as development which stands for meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – in other words, a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.

According to the EU Commission (2012), sustainable development is not about policies only. Society must be involved in the process of sustainability. This requires profound changes in thinking, in economic and social structures and in consumption and production patterns.

European Commission has created an environmental system EMS, EMAS and certifiable standard ISO 14001:2004 that provides the requirements for an environmental management system.

Those standards described closer in chapter 4.

### 3 ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN HOTEL

#### 3.1 The need for environmentally sustainable practices

Enterprises play a decisive role in the greening of the economy, as they are able to improve the environmental impacts of their operations, to offer consumers and citizens products and services that help conserve the environment, and to create solutions for reducing the environmental impacts of other companies (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2010).

Two main considerations lead to the conclusion on the need to include the practice of environmental sustainability in tourism companies' operations. First, tourism



companies realize that for a healthy business, a healthy destination is vital. (Harms 2000, 112.) Second, the valuation of nature is growing. The management of environmental issues is an essential part of the activities in the hotel and other tourism industry areas. Customers are environmentally conscious and they require enterprises to consider their impacts on the environment. (Harms 2000, 112-113; Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority 2010; Rohweder 2004, 24.) They take care of their own footprints not only when they are at home, but they care about the effects that their travel have on the places they visit. (Harms 2000, 112-113; Rohweder 2004, 24.) Those service providers who are more conscious would react to consumer demand and by understanding the positive effects of sustainability on their business, they would stand in a better position than their competitors would (Harms 2000, 113).

When those travelers change their role and become employees, they like to welcome and realize at their work places environmentally friendly operations as well (Rohweder 2004, 24; Parviainen 1997, 18).

Many sustainable tourism leaders, who have involved into their daily operations the triple bottom line programs around energy consumption and water and waste management, have shown positive changes in both – negative environmental impact reduction and financial benefits for the business (Harms 2010, 112; Swarbrooke 2000, 301; Parviainen 1997, 9-10, 18; Linnanen, Markkanen & Ilmola 1997). Parviainen (1997) in his book *Tourism Companies Environmental Guidebook* (Matkailuyrityksen ympäristöopas) talks about results of The Finnish Tourist Board (FTB / MEK) implemented development projects for environment-friendly and sustainable tourism (YSMEK) in different tourism companies including hotels. He emphasizes that results of the projects showed that besides companies reducing their negative impact on environment and their own cost reducing, the image of companies have been improved as well (Parviainen 1997, 9, 15,18; Linnanen 1997). Parviainen (1997, 15) continues that these savings on water, electricity and heating reduce the pressure to increase prices, which would undermine the strength of competitiveness.

By purchasing products and services from local enterprises and suppliers, hotels are maximizing the economic benefits of tourism, for the local economy (Aula & Heinonen 2002, 138; Swarbrooke 2000, 302).

### 3.2 Environmental friendliness in hotel

Swarbrooke (2000, 299) in his book *Sustainable Tourism Management* highlights four areas where the hospitality sector and the concept of sustainable tourism interact: the location and design of new accommodation units, operational management practices in relation to the environment, human resources management practices, tourists and catering establishments.

The accommodation business has been a leading sector among others sectors of tourism in the development and practice of environmentally friendly operations. Many hotel operations have been carrying out environmental audits and environmentally friendly operations, such as:

- developing recycling systems for paper, bottles, organic waste and packaging materials
- using low energy light bulbs
- installing water-saving devices
- making full use of energy-conservation measures
- using unbleached and undyed fabrics
- developing solar-powered water heating systems. (Swarbrooke 2000, 301.)

Swarbrooke (2000, 301) notes, that almost all of the environmentally friendly actions mentioned above also bring cost reductions for the hotel. It could be one reason to undertake such action.

#### 3.2.1 Energy and water efficiency

Energy use is one of the most damaging activities on the planet. It affects air, water, human and ecological health. By using efficiency technology and eliminating

waste can effectively reduce negative impacts. (Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria 2009.)

Reducing energy use, whether for heating in a winter climate or air-conditioning in hot climates, has clear environmental as well financial savings to the business (Tourism Principles and Practices 2005, 408).

Tourists are high consumers of water. During visits, clients of the hotel use water for baths, showers, laundry, swimming pools. Hotels are maintaining gardens. The long-term impact of unregulated water use by tourists can be very significant. (Tourism Principles and Practices 2005, 408.)

### 3.2.2 The waste management in Latvia, Old Riga

Accommodation operations create large amounts of liquid and solid waste, which requires sensitive disposal (Tourism Principles and Practices 2005, 409).

A hotel guest generates about upwards of 1kg of waste per night, more than half of it in paper, plastic and cardboard. In addition to negative environmental impact, the cost of waste disposal becomes more expensive. (Green Hotelier 2010.)

The Latvian Republic law, Cabinet of Ministers Regulations and recommendations regulate the Waste management in Latvia. The local municipalities in their administrative territory are responsible for waste management under the LR legislation.

Latvian Law on Waste Management follows European Union regulations and recommendations on waste management. (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development 2012.)

In Latvia state is responsible for hazardous waste management organization and coordination. It is prohibited to mix different types of hazardous waste, as well as the mixing of hazardous waste with household waste or industrial waste. (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development 2012.)

According to the National Waste Management Plan and regional waste management plans and environmental protection, municipal waste managers in collaboration with local waste companies organize waste separate collection in local administrative areas, including paper, metal, plastic and glass, what is required by Cabinet of Ministers Regulations and terms. (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development 2011.)

The Old town of Riga is historical heritage and it is declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This status requires following to some exceptional city management rules. The Old Riga is not suitable for big-size vehicles and the containers should not disturb traffic and people.

There are used waste bags, what are put out on street at certain times and location, just before the waste collecting company arrives to collect them. Time and place is scheduled. Waste is collected once per day. (Šterna 2012, Lassila & Tikkanoja 2008.)

Finnish company Lassila & Tikanoja (L&T Ltd) is one of the biggest waste management operators in Latvia. It offers the private and corporate customers solid household waste collection and transportation services. (L&T 2008.)

## 4 ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS FOR THE HOTEL

### 4.1 The Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS)

The Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS) is created by Sustainable Travel International (STI). It is the world's only voluntary, global sustainable certification program that is specific to the luxury accommodation sector. LECS is a comprehensive standard that helps to protect the destinations and at the same time takes into consideration the specific needs and challenges of operating a new or existing luxury hotel and environmental and social issues. (Sustainable Travel International, 2009.)

The Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS) is one of the only programs created toward the luxury hotels that features the Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, Profit) which is required in order to adhere to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC). (The Leading Hotels of the World 2011/2012, 8.)

LECS is meant to be user-friendly, educational and a practical tool for management, while being applicable to tourism businesses of all sizes. (The Leading Hotels of the World 2011/2012, 8.)

The Leading Hotels of the World has found Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS) program created by Sustainable Travel International to be most efficient and appropriate for their member hotels (Figure 2). (The Leading Hotels of the World 2011/2012, 8.)



Figure 2. STI Eco-Certification Luxury Hotel  
(Leading Quality Assurance 2012).

#### 4.2 EU-Ecolabel

The European Community decided to develop a Europe-wide voluntary environmental scheme that consumers could trust and established The European Ecolabel in the year 1992. The European Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme, to encourage businesses to market products and services that are kinder to the environment. Products and services awarded the Ecolabel carry the flower logo. The EU Ecolabel covers a wide range of products and services, with further groups being con-

tinuously added. Product groups include cleaning products, appliances, paper products, etc., and services such as tourist accommodation. The EU Ecolabel is part of a broader action plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy adopted by the Commission on 16 July 2008 (Figure 3). (European Commission 2012.)



Figure 3. Europe Union Eco-Label  
(Europe Union. Environment. Eco-labels. 2012)

#### 4.3 EMS and EMAS

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a tool that helps a organization manage and improve the environmental aspects of their production processes. It helps organizations to achieve their environmental obligations and performance goals. (European Commission 2012.)

The European Commission created The Europeans Eco-management and Audit Scheme – EMAS as a voluntary environmental management system based on a harmonized scheme throughout the EU. It is available for any kind of organization. Their objective is to improve the environmental performance of organizations. To help companies to reduce their environmental impact and continuously improve their environmental performance.

#### 4.4 ISO 14001:2004

ISO 14001:2004 is a certifiable standard providing the requirements for an environmental management system. Like EMAS, it specifies the most important requirements to identify, control and monitor environmental aspects of organisations, as well as how to manage and improve environmental management systems. (European Union 2012.)

ISO 14001:2004 is applicable to any organization that wishes to establish, implement, maintain and improve an environmental management system

It is an international standard, which can be achieved by meeting certain criteria and by conducting an audit held by an external and accredited auditor.

ISO 14001:2004 specifies requirements for an environmental management system to enable an organization to develop and implement a policy and objectives that take into account legal requirements about environmental aspects. It applies to those environmental aspects that the organization identifies as those, which it can control, and those, which it can influence. It does not itself state specific environmental performance criteria. (International Organizations for Standardization 2012.)

#### 4.5 The Green Key

Green Key is a non-governmental, non-profit and independent certification program for environmentally friendly practice. It is supported by the World Tourism Organization and UNEP. Green Key is presently the largest global eco-label for accommodation and has a national administration centre in each participating country. (Green Key 2012.)



Figure 4. Green Key 2012.

## 5 INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMISSIONING ORGANIZATION

In this chapter, readers are introduced to the Hotel Grand Palace Riga, Latvia from different perspectives and points of view. The first introduction provides general information on the hotel's facilities, offered services and awards. As earlier mentioned, the Grand Palace Hotel is a five star hotel and it is a member of The Leading Hotels of The World. This fact has brought a new perspective to this research work – a contradiction between rules for being an environmentally friendly hotel and being a luxury hotel. For that, there are briefly discussed grading systems in the European Union area and in Latvia; and introduced main essence of The Leading Hotels of the World.

The next subchapter contains general information about the personnel of the hotel. The management of the hotel played an important role in this research work.

### 5.1 Grand Palace Hotel Riga, Latvia

Commissioning organization of this thesis is the five star Grand Palace Hotel Riga, Latvia. The hotel is one of three luxury Schössle Hotel group hotels. The oth-



er two hotels, Shlössle Hotel and Hotel St. Peterbourg, are located in Tallinn, Estonia. The owner of this Schlössle Hotel group is Marbella Club Hotel group in Spain (Pakalniete, Šterna 2011). Grand Palace Hotel is located in the centre of the historical Old Town of Riga. The Old Town of Riga has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Hotel is surrounded by prestigious and major tourism objects. The Grand Palace Hotel building was originally built as a central bank in Latvia in 1877. (Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012; Hotel.com 2012; Booking.com 2012.) In the year 2000 it opened its door as a hotel.

The hotel has 56 designer rooms. There are allergy-free rooms, smoking and non-smoking rooms. All rooms are equipped with air-conditioning, computers, laptop compatible safes and LCD televisions. All accommodations provide desks, safes, mini bars and direct-dial phones. Guests are provided complimentary with bottled water. All bathrooms have a shower – bath combination, scales, bathrobes and hair dryers and complimentary slippers. In addition, hypo-allergenic bedding and towels are available on request. (Booking.com 2012; Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012; Hotel.com 2012.)

The Grand Palace Hotel is equipped with facilities for disabled guests. The hotel offers such services as housekeeping daily, laundry, dry cleaning, ironing service and other services. (Booking.com 2012; Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012; Hotel.com 2012.)

The Grand Palace hotel has Suite restaurant, Suite lounge and Suite VIP room and Pils Bar. In the hotel's bar it is allowed to smoke. The hotel has, as well, a business center, a fitness center, steam room, sauna and gym. The hotel is pet friendly. (Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012.)

The Grand Palace Hotel is the only The Leading Hotels of the World (Figure 3) and Virtuoso (Figure 4) member in Latvia. It has been voted as Latvia's Leading hotel for 8 years by the body of World Travel Awards (Figure 5) (Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012.)



Figure 5. Logo of The Leading Hotels of the World  
(The Leading Hotels of the World 2012).



Figure 6. Logo of Virtuoso  
(Facebook: Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012).



Figure 7. Logo of World Travel Awards  
(Grand Palace Hotel Riga 2012).

## 5.2 Concepts of five star hotels in European Union and in Latvia

There is no global standard for the use of term 'hotel'. This term can include small family-owned operation so called bed and breakfast in Europe and megaresorts in the Caribbean. (Pearson Education 2005, 387-388.)

Quality comparisons are attempted through various accommodation grading and classification schemes (Dallen J. Timothy, Victor B. Teye 2009, 135). Generally, the star rating is system for grading of hotels and usually more stars mean quality that is more luxurious.

Classification systems exist at national and regional level in most European Union Member States. HOTREC, which is the umbrella association of national trade associations representing the hotels, restaurants, cafés and similar establishments in Europe, have contributed to the development of such systems, either on their own initiative or in collaboration with public authorities. (Hotrec 2011.)

Since 2004, HOTREC and its associations have been working on bringing the hotel classification systems in the various European countries closer to one another. Hotelstar Union, which consists of 11 countries and is under the patronage of HOTREC, committed to apply almost identical criteria for their hotel classification. Latvia is a member of Hotelstar Union. (Hotrec 2011.)

The Hotel and Restaurant Centre (HRC) of Latvia carries out the implementation of State Standards in the field of accommodation and awards certificates to hotels, including motels, guesthouses, campsites and youth hostels.

The Hotel and Restaurant Centre is competent to carry out certification in accordance with the requirements of the European standard LVS EN 45011 "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems", adopted by Latvia.

Here are listed some of basic requirements of five star hotel standard by HRC (2011) and Hotelstars (2011):

- high quality exclusive furniture and equipment in common style;
- all floors shall be accessible by lift from the same floor as reception desk;
- air conditioning in all rooms;
- bed linen changed daily;
- bathrobe per guest;
- personalized greeting for each guest with fresh flowers or a present in the room;
- at least 5 toiletries with the exception of soap and shampoo for each guest;
- personal care products in flacons;

- indoor swimming pool and / or fitness or health centre as well as changing rooms and shower facilities and / or sauna and relaxation area.

### 5.3 The Leading Hotels of The World

The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. is the largest luxury hospitality organization in the world, representing over 430 of the finest hotels, resorts and spas in over 80 countries. Its mission is to curate and champion an exclusive collection of independent properties. Established in 1928 by several European hoteliers, it started with 38 initial members. Its loyal customers demand levels of quality they have come to expect of the brand, while seeking enriching travel experiences. Leading Hotel members are utterly unique and independent. (The Leading Hotels of the World, 2011.)

The Leading Hotels of the World has created their own grading system, by which they are evaluating hotels. In that moment, when a hotel decides to become member of The Leading Hotel, it must meet many strict criteria. This group has created their own concept of the manner and prescribed level of presentation of their product that must be met by the hotel. The member of this group has to keep and update their service level on an everyday basis. A controller from The Leading Hotel of the World is sent every half year. The hotel has to meet 81% of criteria made by this group in each department overall, then it can continue to be a member. In case, when the hotel does not collect needed points, the controller is sent one more time. If it fails again, the hotel lost the membership of this luxury group. The hotel has to pay a membership fee. The Leading Hotels of the World has its own reservation chain. (Pakalniete, 2011.)

The Leading Hotels' reservation system brings to Grand Palace Hotel on average 50% of reservations (Pakalniete, 2011; Šterna, 2012). This is an important fact, which shows the importance for the hotel to be a member of The Leading Hotel of the World club.

#### 5.4 The management personnel of the hotel

There are 70 workers at the Grand Palace Hotel, Riga. Ten employees have been working for the hotel since the hotel's opening day, therefore, already 11 years. The manager of hotel, Bernard Loew, chief accountant Svetlana Šterna and executive housekeeper Ruta Pakalniete are among those ten. Generally the rest of management such as front office manager Gita Liliensšteina, reservation and room revenue manager Didzis Grāvītis, marketing and sales manager Raivis Ņikitins, food and beverages manager Mairita Jansone, chief chef assistant Inga Skopāne have not changed for last three- four years. This situation according to general manager Bernhard Loew's words (2011) has brought a positivity and stability in the hotel management daily routine.

Bernard Loew and Svetlana Šterna perform their duties and responsibilities at the hotel Shlössle Tallinn in Estonia, too.

## 6 RESEARCH METHODS

The starting point for analysis would be an attitude and stand point of personnel to sustainability, environmental sustainability and its environmental practices at hotels.

The intention of this work was to collect information on the present situation at Grand Palace Hotel from point of view of environmental issues. In case if personnel would be willing to develop environmental friendliness in their daily operations, offer ideas and/ or add new functions in their daily practice.

To change the company's way of acting and to develop some parts of their work methods, first we must clarify this company's current state. That means collecting information on the present situation about personnel's point of view and knowledge on this particular subject, and collecting data about already existing every day practices and operations at company. When the situation has been analyzed, then options and /or ideas can be offered. In this particular thesis case, it

would be collecting data and information about current situation on environmental sustainability/friendliness at Grand Palace Hotel Riga.

The most common material and data collection methods are observation, interview, questionnaire and information collecting based on variety of documents (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 71).

The theme interview (Appendix 1) and observation has been chosen as data collection methods for this research work. Interviews were carried out at the beginning of March 2011 at Grand Palace Hotel Riga, Latvia. During two days nine persons were interviewed from Grand Palace Hotel management personnel - the manager of hotel Bernard Loew , chief accountant Svetlana Šterna, executive housekeeper Ruta Pakalniete , front office manager Gita Lilienšteina, reservation and room revenue manager Didzis Grāvītis, marketing and sales manager Raivis Ņikitins, food and beverages manager Mairita Jansone, chef Stanislavs Karasins and chief assistant Inga Skopāne.

Eight interviews were in Latvian language, one in English with General Manager Bernard Loew.

## 6.1 Interviews

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 36), notes that the interview can be used for analyzing, in that way it is possible to collect information and get new hypotheses. That can show also links between different events.

Choosing an interview as a method of data collection was based on both: on individual opinion that personal contact, interaction between people face-to-face is valuable for research work; and that the interview has many positive aspects. As Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 35) mention, that person has a creative and active role and can bring out his opinion as freely as possible during an interview. Other positive aspects would be flexibility (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 204; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73; Järvenpää & Kosonen 2003, 24; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 34).

According to writers on the research methodology, the interview's flexibility is an advantage to the interviewer. The interviewer has a possibility to repeat a question, if needed to correct misunderstandings, to clarify wordings and to engage the interviewee in conversation. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 205; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 36, 48.) The writer of this thesis finds it an advantage that there is a possibility for all participants in an interview to discuss a topic, to deepen questions and turn the conversation in the needed direction, which would not be so easy or even could not be fulfilled in the case of electronically sent ready-made questionnaire. An interview's positive aspect is the possibility to engage in conversation persons who are not so open and/or talkative; as well, conversation makes an interview less formal.

Even though, this research work's main theme of the interview was about environmental friendliness, one of the ideas was to get information and point of view from the perspective of each department and/or work area. This flexibility that an interview as a research method can offer on the order and form of questions that can be presented depending on the researcher's viewpoint and on the direction, what the interview has taken (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 205; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 36, 48.) was an important point.

There are different types of interviews, for example, structured interview a.k.a. form interview, theme interview and open type interview /debate. (Järvenpää & Kosonen 2003, 24; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 43.)

The theme interview's discussed topics should be decided in advance. This type of interview gives the interviewer a free hand to change freely the form and order of questions during the interview. ( Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 75; Järvenpää & Kosonen 2003, 24; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000,43.) As earlier above is mentioned, this research work's main theme of interview was about environmental sustainability/friendliness aspects at the hotel from the perspective of personnel. However, it was suspected that the interviewee's own work specifics and his or her professional vision of the hotel's work could influence the course and sequence of questions. The interview had to be flexible and easily adaptive. Questions had to be

presented depending on the interviewee's work characteristic, position at the hotel and his openness to the interview. The theme interview covers above-mentioned reasons and fits this research work.

However, one of the themes, subject matter and/or aspect has to be the same for all of interviewees. (Eskola & Vastamäki 2010, 28; Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 208; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 75; Hirsjärvi, Järvenpää & Kosonen 2003, 24; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 43, 48). This is the reason why the theme interview is also called also a semi-structured method (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 48; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 208; Eskola & Vastamäki 2010, 28).

## 6.2 Observation

Scientific observation varies from very informal to, for example, an interview in connection with monitoring in a fully systematic observation.

The interview accompanied by observation enriches the research work. During the interview, the interviewer can observe the interviewee, his reaction to the questions and surroundings, at the same time. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73; Järvenpää & Kosonen, 2003, 24.) In this case, by interviewing has been collected data about factors influencing the daily operations at company from environmentally friendly action viewpoint has been collected by interviews. It was important to get information not only about staff attitude, opinion and beliefs, but also collect data about daily practices and what those practices are influencing.

Combining observation and interview and/or other data collection methods is often very productive (Aarnos 2001; Grönfors 2001) (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 81). It can bring out a broader perspective and increase reliability of the study by the expanding use of collection methods (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 38). Observations can diversify the study's desirable information (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 81).



### 6.3 Methods in action

The observation and interviews took place on March 3-4, 2011 at the Grand Palace Hotel Riga, Latvia. The interviews were organized by chief accountant Svetlana Šterna.

Since this thesis writer had been working at the Grand Palace Hotel as accountant, the hotel facilities, basis for work methods and approach are known. This knowledge is used as a base of observing and complemented during visiting and interviewing at the hotel.

The meeting with the executive housekeeper of the hotel, Ruta Pakalniete, started as an interview and latter was accompanied by observation of hotel facilities. For that, the observer participated in the daily routine of the hotels executive housekeeper at the hotel. During that time Ruta Pakalniete introduced and explained the main directions of hotel housekeeping and maintenance.

The interviews were recorded. Recorded interviews were transcribed.

## 7 HOTEL PERSONNEL AND SUSTAINABILITY

### 7.1 Hotel personnel general position on environmental sustainability

All of interviewees were definitely positive on idea about need of sustainable practices and its implementation in their personal life and business.

Most of them mentioned following the healthy and 'green' life style, such as, choosing local food products, saving energy and water, waste separation.

Six of interviewers believed that environmental practices will be the part of the hotel business in future. However, they expressed concerns about the hotel readiness to implement environmentally friendly practices right now.

Personnel of Grand Palace Hotel management expressed general society's understanding of sustainability and general understanding of those terms. For example, that environmental sustainable practice is possible out of urban territory. This rea-

son brought to idea to include in theoretical part of this thesis (see chapter 2) and as well in the guidebook general information about Sustainable tourism.

### 7.2 Hotel personnel position on eco-labeling and certification

Generally, the hotel personnel did not know by names eco-labels and environmentally sustainable certificates their offered practices. More than half of them mentioned in Latvia created Green Spoons-label, which has been created for food products. European level labels were not mentioned. Two of interviewees expressed a skeptical attitude on eco-labels and/or environmentally friendly certification. Other interviewees expressed attitude on idea of eco-labeling were positive. Almost all of them mentioned that they do not pay attention to whether a product is labeled or not. At the same time, most of them admitted that they prefer to buy for personal use local food products rather than those that are brought from other European countries.

The received result about prompted the decision to include some general information on certification systems and eco-labels in the thesis and the guidebook.

### 7.3 Hotel management on environmentally friendly hotel image

Seven of the hotel management reacted positively on environmentally friendly hotel image. They also think that clients' reaction would be positive if the hotel would become environmentally friendly. One of interviewees did not have an opinion. Other one expressed opinion that some clients would be even annoyed. However, the same time some clients would ready to pay for hotel that practices environmental sustainability, because they come to this hotel for service, money is not an issue.

(Grāvītis, D; Jansone, M; Kirjenko, T; Liliensšteina, G; Loew, B; Ņikitins, R; Pakalniete, R; Skopāne, I; Šterna, S.)

## 8 HOTEL - ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND LUXURY

### 8.1 Contradictories between luxury and environmental friendliness

Hotel – environmentally friendly and luxury? Some people might not imagine those two things ‘working’ together. This is a question we ask ourselves: is it really so, when five star luxury hotel decides to become environmentally friendly, it is not quite possible? On the other hand, maybe it is just in peoples’ minds that luxury and environmental friendliness are not possible together.

Having a five star grade and being a member of the luxurious hotels group brings the need for high-level service, which does not always meet the understanding of being environmentally friendly. For example, in guest room toilets, there can be maximum 50% - 60% of toilet paper roll used and then it must be taken away. (Pakalniete 2011, Šterna 2012.)

According to the Grand Palace Hotel General Manager (2011) a note in the guests shower-room about towel re-use opportunity, when guest are asked to decide which of their towels require laundry and which can be re-used, is not allowed by The Leading Hotels of The World.

### 8.2 Waste management in the hotel - contradictions

During the interviews contradiction between sustainable waste management and Old Riga being as World Heritage Site was brought up. (See chapters’ 3 under chapter 3.2.5. about waste management)

Since the Old town of Riga is declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and its status requires following to some exceptional city management rules. The Old Riga is not suitable for big-size vehicles and the waste containers should not disturb traffic and people. Waste is collected once per day.

Since there is no possibility to keep waste outside of building in Old Riga, at Grand Palace Hotel waste from all departments are collected at basement level near of entrance into hotel for employees, what is located at the opposite side of

building. There has been planned and created space for that. Since beginning of year 2012 waste company L&T collects waste only once per day, before it has been twice per day. This created a challenge situation for Hotel Grand Palace, because of waste from kitchen. The kitchen created waste generally comes from food, which logically tend to perishable and distinguish odors. That kind of situation is not acceptable not by hygienic, ethical, esthetical reasons and not by European Commission guidelines and the Latvia's Food Hygiene Regulation. For that, Hotel Grand Palace has created a cold space/room for food waste, which is located at the same basement level. (Pakalniete 2011; Šterna 2011.)

## 9 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the work was to gather data about possible environmentally friendly operations in hotel, especially in luxury hotel. There are coming more and more sustainable certification programs formed for hospitality business. However, sustainable practices mostly associated with countryside lodgings. There is consideration that the hotels located in urban area are not, and even cannot be, as environmentally friendly as the hotels located in countryside. That it would be easier to launch environmentally friendly practices nearby nature and implementation of sustainable operations in the hotel that is located in urban area is more complicated. Nevertheless, sustainable practices are needed as much in countryside hotels as in urban area located hotels.

Certain environmentally friendly goals can be set regardless of location and type of hotel.

It has been seen that environmentally friendly operations, even those with no big investments, can bring economical benefit to hotel. So, in that case both the hotel and the environment are the winners.

The thesis and the guidebook presents possible environmentally friendly certifications for luxury hotel. There are many different environmental standards dedicated to sustainable operations, still not yet many choices that could be used for luxury hotels specifically. Specifically, for the Hotel Grand Palace could be applied The

Leading Hotels of the World created environmental certificate LECS. However, the hotel management is not yet ready for big changes neither economically nor morally. At the same time, they are willing to make environmentally changes in everyday operations.

The purpose of the guidebook is to serve the hotel management and other employees. Even though, the hotel practices include many environmentally friendly operations in day-to-day life already now, the guidebook helps understand what could be done towards sustainable environment further. The guide gives practical environmentally friendly advices and tips.

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## BROCHURES

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### I Personal attitude

1. What kind of image/conception arises to you in relation to environmental friendly, eco-label, green hotel, eco-product, environmentally sustainable product?
  - ✓ Could you describe your point of view and/or your reaction and /or understanding of environmental issues?
2. Do you practice environmental friendly life style in your private life?
3. What can you say about eco-labels, environmental friendly label and/or certificate?
  - ✓ What kind of them is known/familiar to you?
  - ✓ How do you feel about them?
4. Have you visited any “green” hotel/eco-certificated hotel?
  - ✓ If “yes”, what kind of impression did you get?

### II Present situation at the hotel

1. What does your department does related to environmental practices on daily routine basis?
  - ✓ Do you and your co-workers follow such things as light saving, paper saving, etc.?
2. What do other departments do related to environmental practices on daily basis?

- ✓ What is your opinion on present situation of environmentally friendly practices at the hotel?

3. Would you be ready to make some changes at the hotel towards more environmental friendliness?

- ✓ Would you be ready to go for environmental certification?

4. What do you think – would the hotel (hotel management, hotel owners) be ready to invest some money and time to become more environmentally friendly or even to get some official environmental certificate/label?

### III Customers and environmentally friendly hotel

1. Do you think are luxury and environmental friendliness possible combine/integrate?

2. (Do you think) would customers attitude change if hotel would become an environmentally friendly hotel?

- ✓ What would be their attitude?

3. Would clients be ready to pay more (because of the hotel environmental sustainable practices)?

4. Do you think would it be possible to enchain a new type of clients?

5. Would being certificated environmentally friendly hotel (eco-labeled) make a change on your hotel image?

## Appendix 2

**We do not  
inherit the earth  
from our  
ancestors,  
we  
borrow  
it from  
our children.**



- Native American Proverb

The  
Common  
Good

*Environmentally*

*Friendly Hotel*

*Guidebook*





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## **Basic of basics**

### **SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLINESS**

#### **Sustainable tourism**

attempts to make a low impact on the environment and local culture. At the same time helping to generate future employment for local people. The aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development brings a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and the tourists themselves, over a long term period.

#### **Sustainable tourism development**

Earth Summit 2012 and United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) described sustainable tourism development as development that 'meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs'.

Generally, it was based on the idea that there is no need to deny or go backward in economic growth, the other way round, that economical growth can find ways to be environmentally sustainable and socially equitable.

#### **The aims of sustainable tourism**

- ✓ is to make optimal use of environmental resources
- ✓ respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities
- ✓ Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities and contributing to poverty alleviation.

#### **Environmental sustainability/friendliness**

Environmental sustainability/friendliness is the process of making sure current processes of interaction with the environment are pursued with the idea of keeping the environment as natural as possible. That means that environmental sustainability/friendliness can be defined as systemic conditions where human actions will not disturb planetary cycles more than planetary resilience allows and at the same time do not impoverish the ecosystems and other environmental systems for the benefit of future generations.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPERATIONS (NO INVESTMENT REQUIRED OR SMALL INVESTMENT NEEDED)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Environmentally friendly tips</i>
<i>Energy</i>	
<i>Lighting</i>	<p>When leaving a room always turn off all lights or when they are not needed</p> <p>Turn off electrical equipment when they are not in use (computers)</p> <p>When workday is over unplug electrical devices when they are not in use (cell phone chargers, photocopiers, projectors, amplifiers, coffee pots)</p> <p>When workday is over insure windows are tightly closed,</p> <p>When walking through the hotel amenities, notice electronic devices/equipments and lights on without use,turn/ switch them off</p> <p>Energy-saving lamps consume less than half the energy compared to a standard lamp.</p> <p>It is good if at least 50% of the light bulbs are energy efficient</p>
<i>Laundry</i>	<p>Co-operating with the guests in order to reduce the amount of laundry. Invite them to reuse their towels and linens – not to have them changed every day</p> <p>Wash small quantities in a 5kg machine and always ensure machines are fully loaded</p> <p>Minimize the rinse cycle as much as possible without reducing quality</p>
<i>Heating</i>	<p>Keeping room temperature at sensible level. Not heating unoccupied rooms</p>
<i>Air conditioning</i>	<p>Regularly clean the surfaces of the heating / cooling exchanger of the ventilation</p>

	The ventilation system must be controlled at least once a year and repaired if necessary in order to be energy efficient
<i>Recycling</i>	
	Recycle batteries, electronics - cell phones, computers, televisions, DVDs and radios
	Recycle ink and toner cartridges
	If possible, return the glass bottles to company who sold the product
<i>Water</i>	
	The staff and cleaning personnel must regularly check for dripping taps and leaky toilets
	Each bathroom must have an appropriate waste bin
	Water flow from at least 50% of the showers must not exceed 9 litres per minute
	Water flow from at least 50% of the taps must not exceed 8 liters per minute
<i>Washing and cleaning</i>	
	Fibre cloth is used for cleaning to save water and chemicals
	Newly purchased chemical cleaning products and products for washing have a national or internationally recognized eco
	Guest room soaps, shampoos, conditioners use natural ingredients and come from environmentally responsible companies
	Rain water is collected and used for watering flowers
	Water plants and garden after sunset or before high sun
<i>Waste management</i>	
	The establishment must separate waste into the categories that can be handled separately by the local or national waste management facilities

Instructions on how to separate and handle waste must be easily available to the staff and *guests in an understandable and simple format*

Hazardous waste (such as batteries, bulbs, paint, chemicals) should be secured in separate containers. Then brought to an approved reception facility

Toiletries such as shampoo, soap, shower caps, etc. in rooms should not be packaged in single dose containers. If they are single packed, then they has to be packaged in material that can be recycled

No use of disposable products (soap, shampoo, shower caps, etc)

### *Paper*

As possible, e-mail documents and print different report only by request

All centralized printers set to double-sided default printing, where duplex printing is available

Public restrooms offer washable/reusable hand towels, not paper

Buy environmentally friendly paper (copier, toilet paper, etc.)

Minimize paper advertising – store catalogs online, send by e-mail newsletters, brochures

Add a message to the bottom of all emails asking people to only print if necessary

Set up one or more printers and/or print trays with once-used paper and create a box for people to drop off safely reusable documents for printing drafts on the blank side

### *Other activities*

<i>Donating</i>	<p>Easy available to the guests information about nearby parks, landscape and nature conservation areas</p> <p>Donating partially-used shampoos and conditioners to local charities</p> <p>Donating used linens and towels to local charities and/or businesses</p>
<i>Indoor environment</i>	<p>The majority of the rooms must be non-smoking</p>
	<p>The establishment has a personnel policy concerning smoking during working hours</p>

## ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPERATIONS (Investments needed)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Environmentally friendly operations</i>
<i>Energy</i>	
<i>Lighting</i>	<p>The establishment is 90% equipped with energy efficient light bulbs</p> <p>Automatic systems that turn the lights off when guests leave their room are installed</p> <p>Temperature adjustments when guest is out of guest room Guest sensors for in/out of room</p> <p>Unnecessary outside lights have an automatic turn off sensor installed</p> <p>Separate electricity meters are installed at strategically important places for energy monitoring</p> <p>The accommodation has a key card system to ensure that electrical appliances are switched off in rented rooms when the occupants are out</p> <p>Implementation of motion sensors in low occupancy storage areas</p>
<i>Laundry</i>	<p>When buying washing machines, look out for a good water consumption rating</p>
<i>Heating</i>	<p>All windows have an appropriately high degree of thermal insulation</p> <p>Switch off heating when windows are open</p>
<i>Air conditioning</i>	<p>Air-conditioning automatically switches off when windows are open</p>
<i>Other</i>	<p>Purchasing energy efficient electronic devices (for example, energy efficient fitness equipment, mini- bars that do not have an energy consumption of more than 1 kWh/day)</p>
<i>Water</i>	
	<p>Purchased toilets are dual flush type 3/6 litres or they are not flushing more than 6 liters per flush</p>

## ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS FOR THE HOTEL



The Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS) is one of the only programs created toward the luxury hotels. LECS is meant to be user-friendly, educational and a practical tool for management, while being applicable to tourism businesses of all sizes. The Leading Hotels of the World has found Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS) program created by Sustainable Travel International to be most efficient and appropriate for their member hotels. (The Leading Hotels of the World 2011/2012.)

(<http://www.lhw.com>)



The European Community decided to develop a Europe-wide voluntary environmental scheme that consumers could trust. The European Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme, to encourage businesses to market products and services that are kinder to the environment. (European Commission 2012.)

(<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel>)



Green Key is a non-governmental, non-profit and independent certification program for environmentally friendly practice. It is supported by the World Tourism Organization and UNEP. Green Key is presently the largest global eco-label for accommodation and has a national administration centre in each participating country. (Green Key 2012.)

(<http://www.green-key.org>)



## USEFUL LINKS

- ✓ European Commission -Ecolabels  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/hotels.pdf>
  
- ✓ Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria – Sustainable tourism  
<http://www.gstcouncil.org/uploads/GSTC%20v1%20Criteria%20Indicators%20.pdf>
  
- ✓ Green Key - Ecolabel  
[www.green-key.org](http://www.green-key.org)
  
- ✓ The Leading Hotels of the World  
<http://www.lhw.com/luxury>
  
- ✓ United Nations Environment Programme  
<http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/sustain/>
  
- ✓ Sustainable Travel International. Luxury eco certification for Hoteliers.  
[http://sustainabletravelinternational.org/documents/sustainabletourismcertification\\_luxuryhotelstandard.html](http://sustainabletravelinternational.org/documents/sustainabletourismcertification_luxuryhotelstandard.html)
  
- ✓ United Nations World Tourism Organization  
<http://sdt.unwto.org>

## **SOURCES:**

European Commission

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/hotels.pdf>

Green Hotelier

<http://www.greenhotelier.org>

Global Stewards.

<http://www.globalstewards.org/hotel.htm>

Green Key

<http://www.green-key.org>

Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants

<http://www.kimptonhotels.com/kimpton-cares/earthcare-business.aspx>

The Leading Hotels of the World

<http://www.lhw.com/luxury/>

Sustainable Travel International. Luxury eco certification for Hoteliers.

[http://sustainabletravelinternational.org/documents/sustainabletourismcertification\\_luxuryhotelstandard.html](http://sustainabletravelinternational.org/documents/sustainabletourismcertification_luxuryhotelstandard.html)

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