

*Defining and assessing environmentally friendly
hotel concepts and their effects on destinations*

Master Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the Degree

Master of Science

in International Tourism Management

Submitted to Dr. Sabine Sedlacek

Apostolos Tsiantis

1713006

Vienna, June 2019

AFFIDAVIT

I hereby affirm that this Master's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

Date

Signature

Abstract

Tourism is known as one of the fastest growing industries worldwide with a major impact on destinations' economic growth as well as environmental degradation. In the past few decades, awareness has risen amid consumers regarding the need of implementing greener practices in the touristic sector and more intensely in the hotel industry. The emergence of a new niche of guests, the eco-conscious ones, has led many hotels devise greener strategies that are more appealing and communicable to their customers and implement them in multiple levels of their operations. However, apart from the attraction of new customers and a consequent increase of revenue, the implementation of eco-friendly concepts in the hotel industry entails numerous benefits.

The present research aims to concentrate and assess the efficacy of current green business strategies integrated in the daily modus operandi of hotels while the governing research question is how are such eco-friendly strategies implemented by hotel lodgings in Vienna affect their environmental performance. For the consolidation of the required information, general managers of the hotels under examination are interviewed by the author. The hotels chosen are situated in the city of Vienna, Austria, and belong to different tiers and styles of hotels (chain, family-ran, luxury, traditional, modern). Following the accumulation of implemented green practices, an evaluation will follow in accordance to the most important EMAS guidelines and making use of the traffic light assessment tool. Finally, the effects of these practices are demonstrated in an effort to detect any sort of impact the hotels' strategies might have on the destination and its stakeholders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity and thank all the people who have supported me in my academic career and my life thus far.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Sabine Sedlacek, for her support and understanding throughout this journey.

A big thank you is not enough to express my gratitude to my family for always being there and supporting every single choice I ever made.

I am forever grateful to Christina Strauss for her continuous support, her love and her encouragement to go on even when I thought I couldn't.

Lastly, I feel blessed to have met so many great and unique people during my time at Modul University whom I am honored to call friends.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	III
Acknowledgements.....	V
List of tables.....	X
List of Figures.....	XI
List of Abbreviations	XII
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature review.....	4
2.1 Historical overview of hotel sustainability and key concepts.....	5
2.1.1 Tourism: definition and its effects on the environment.....	7
2.1.2 Importance of green business practices in hotels.....	8
2.1.3 Environmentally friendly accommodations – definition and examples	10
2.1.4 Green business strategy and environmental performance	10
2.1.5 Environmental Management System	11
2.2 Criteria for assessment – EMAS versus ISO 14001	12
2.2.1 EMAS	13
2.2.2 ISO 14001	17
2.2.3 Comparison.....	21
2.2.4 Criteria assessment and tool selection	23
3. Methodology.....	24
3.1 Qualitative approach and the research components.....	26
3.1.1 Justification of the approach and method chosen	27
3.1.2 The selection of hotels and study site	30
3.1.3 The governing guidelines to the interview	31
3.1.4 Limitations and validity threats	32
3.2 Research question and supporting questions	33
4. Case studies.....	34
4.1 Boutiquehotel Stadthalle.....	34

4.1.1 Informational note	35
4.1.2 Green business practices	35
4.1.3 Assessment	38
4.1.4 The effects	43
4.2 Der Wilhelmshof	45
4.2.1 Informational note	46
4.2.2 Green business practices	46
4.2.3 Assessment	48
4.2.4 The effects	53
4.3 The InterContinental	54
4.3.1 Informational note	54
4.3.2 Green business practices	55
4.3.3 Assessment	56
4.3.4 The effects	59
5. The view of the Austrian Hotel Association	61
6. Discussion on the findings	66
6.1 Answering the underlying questions	67
6.2 Answering the research question.....	69
7. Conclusions	72
7.1 Future research suggestions	73
8. Bibliography.....	74
9. Appendices	81
Appendix 1: Questionnaire for hotel managers.....	81
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the president of the Austrian Hotelier Association	83
Appendix 3: Interview with Anna Fedl.....	85
Appendix 4: Interview with Eva Burritscher	97
Appendix 5: Interview with Brigitte Trattner	119
Appendix 6: Interview with Michaela Reitterer.....	134

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Main differences between EMAS and ISO 14001 (EMAS, 2011)	p. 22
Table 2: Criteria of environmental performance	p. 29
Table 3: Boutiquehotel Stadthalle’s PDCA performance	p. 42
Table 4: Assessment of Boutiquehotel Stadthalle’s environmental performance	p. 43
Table 5: Der Wilhelmshof’s PDCA performance	p. 51
Table 6: Assessment of Der Wilhelmshof’s environmental performance	p. 52
Table 7: The InterContinental’s PDCA performance	p. 58
Table 8: Assessment of InterContinental Vienna’s environmental performance	p. 59

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: EMAS: How does it work (EMAS, 2019)	p. 14
Figure 2: ISO 14001: How does it work (BSI, 2016)	p. 19

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHA: Austrian Hotelier Association

CO₂: Carbon Dioxide

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

EMAS: Eco-Management and Audit Scheme

EMS: Environmental Management System

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

IHG: Intercontinental Hotel Group

ISO: International Standardization Organization

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

PDCA: Plan, Do, Check, Act

RFP: Request for Proposal

TOPSIS: Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution

UNWTO: United Nation's World Tourism Organization

WTTC: World Travel and Tourism Council

1. Introduction

In today's world of mass production, natural resources' depletion and environmental degradation, environmentally friendly practices are very popular among consumers as well as businesses (Sari & Suslu, 2018). In recent years, more and more companies incorporate green business strategies in their operations while also increased environmental awareness from the side of the consumers has also been noted (Han, Lee, Trang & Kim 2018; Choi, Kim, Kim & Agmapisarn, 2018). The pressure deriving from the latter is, according to Park and Kim's research (2014), one of the main drivers for businesses to shift to greener strategies in addition to economic benefits and top management's individual environmental concern.

Despite the fact that more attention has been paid on the manufacturing sector, businesses in the service industry are also in need of such strategies (Johnson, 2010 cited by Sari & Suslu, 2018). According to Choi et al. (2018) the increasing guests' awareness towards green practices has made the hotel industry realize that adhering to those requests means the attraction of a new niche of guests, the eco-conscious ones. To enhance this argument, one of the most popular accommodation search engines, Booking.com (2017), revealed in 2017 that 65% of its users worldwide showed preference to environmental-friendly lodgings.

Having realized the importance that a greener modus operandi and eco-friendly implemented policies have for the consumers, some of the biggest brands in the industry have embarked on a shift of their established operational practices. Starting with the largest one, Marriot International launched in 2017 its Serve360 platform with the promise of "doing good in every direction" (Marriott, 2017) which has set 2025 as the deadline for the company to achieve various environmental goals, such as reducing water and carbon intensity and landfill waste. Accordingly, AccorHotels have initiated the "Planet 21" research platform sharing information regarding their environmental footprint and their future goals (AccorHotels, 2018) while Hilton has extended its "Travel with Purpose" initiative until 2030 following United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Hilton, 2018).

This paper will investigate and assess current green business strategies adopted by three different hotels, belonging to different tiers and categories (3-, 4- and 5-star and chain,

family ran, luxury, traditional, modern hotels) in Vienna, Austria. Furthermore, it will attempt to examine their efficacy and effect on the examinees' environmental performance while also demonstrate the perceived impact on the destination.

The aim of this paper is to thoroughly research one of the world's most lucrative businesses, the hotel industry, not from the scope of total revenue or bed-nights, but in terms of integrating green business strategies in their strategic planning. The author attempts to pinpoint the practices implemented by hotels that already are or are transitioning to a business incorporating green practices on multiple levels of their operations. Han and Yoon (2015) provide a comprehensive description of what an environmentally responsible hotel is by defining it as a "lodging accommodation that actively implements green management/marketing strategies, follows environmentally friendly guidelines, and engages in eco-friendly practices/activities, abating its harmful impact on the environment".

The research question that governs the paper is constructed as follows:

How are eco-friendly strategies being adopted and implemented by hotels and how are they affecting their environmental performance?

The paper focuses on two main stakeholders, the businesses and the environment. Despite the increasing number of hotels that implement environmental practices and pursue various green certifications that testify their accomplishments, there is still a lot that can be done in that direction according to Geerts (2014). This research can provide valuable information to the management of a hotel regarding the criteria upon which it could base its assessment for an individual environmental performance. At the same time, readers can familiarize themselves with ways hotels integrate environmentally friendly practices in everyday processes and witness some of the benefits on the destination's stakeholders such as the hotel employees. In the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, according both to their corporate responsibility report (CSR) of 2018 (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2018) and to Ms. Fedl's statement during her discussion with the author (personal communication, 3 May 2019), the company manages to pay its staff members salaries above the amount provided in accordance to the collective agreement in Vienna.

Furthermore, the lack of concrete results and the limited amount of research papers regarding the assessment of hotels' green business strategies and their impact on destinations (Choi, Kim, Kim & Agmapisarn 2018) means that this study might be able to extend the existing literature in several ways. To begin with, no similar study has been conducted

within the Austrian region incorporating hotels of different quality range on the industry's spectrum. In addition, the research paper will demonstrate the way green business practices are integrated in the core of the hotels under examination but also about the merits of shifting to greener business models in the industry in relation to the hotels' environmental performance. Apart from the hotel representatives, however, an expert in the field, the president of the Austrian Hotelier Association (AHA) is interviewed by the author in order for the latter to find out more about the way hotel businesses view the idea of adopting greener strategies to their core.

The paper commences with the presentation of the theory regarding green business strategies under the scope of the hotel industry, how they are defined and what they practically mean. After that, findings, deriving from the research through interviews with the individuals in charge of the environmental management from the chosen hotels, will be demonstrated and analyzed. The analysis of the policies of every hotel will take place utilizing the criteria that the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), the instrument developed by the European Commission for companies who wish to track their process in terms of their individual environmental performance, has established. More specifically, the author examined what the European certification scheme is basing its evaluation on in order for a business to be awarded their logo. The European Commission has set a number of criteria which a company needs to meet in order to get certified and which revolve around 4 main axes. The author came up with a number of questions whose goal was to assist him in investigating the hotels' performance according to these 4 axes. After the analysis of his findings, the author will proceed in evaluating the hotels' performance in relation to each of these 4 axes of criteria. The assessment will take place using the traffic light assessment tool which labels the hotels' performance as Good, Moderate or Bad. Detailed description of the scheme as well as the reasons the specific method was chosen from the author, are listed on a forthcoming chapter.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the green business practices the hotels under examination have embarked on and reports on the hotel managers' answers to the questions provided. Lastly, the president of the Austrian Association Hotelier, Mrs. Michael Reitterer, will add to the research the perspective of the Austrian businesses regarding the matter of green practices in the industry. In the end, the author explains the lessons learned from his research and reflects upon its results.

2. Literature review

The literature necessary for accomplishing the thesis' aim derives mostly from scientific journals that deal with tourism management, hospitality and environmental management topics. Moreover, this part of the thesis will be broken down to three distinct subcategories all of which contain the most important sources and information for the composition of the present thesis.

The first part of the bibliography used includes all of the key-concepts necessary for the better understanding of the research and its purpose in addition to a brief historical overview of the origins of hotel sustainability. More specifically and in the beginning, the effects of the tourism industry on the environment as well as the importance of the latter will be discussed while also the Porter Hypothesis will be briefly explained. The initial sector will also describe what constitutes a green business strategy and what defines an environmentally friendly accommodation. Lastly, the analysis of the term Environmental Management System (EMS), a concept that will come up a few times throughout this paper and play an important role in the assessment of the hotels' environmental performance, will follow.

In the second part of the literature review, the presentation of EMAS, upon the criteria of which the assessment of the hotels' green policies is based, is at place. During his preliminary research, the author came across three auditing schemes out of which he chose EMAS as the most appropriate one for the present study. Even though the Green Hotels Global was primarily taken into consideration, it was considered the least impactful and recognized and was hence rejected. However, the two remaining contestants share some common ground, having been used by numerous businesses and both enjoy international recognition. And despite the fact that EMAS was chosen over ISO 14001, the certification scheme by the International Organization for Standardization, both processes are discussed and later compared in the second sector. The 4 main groups of criteria that set the grounds for the evaluation of a company's environmental performance provide here the basis upon which the assessment, conducted by the author who judged according to the information provided during the interviews, will take place and is done with the help of the traffic light system. The

latter will also be briefly presented while in the end of the chapter, the author will provide a justification for the selection of both the criteria basis and the tool selection.

The third and final part will be examining the results of previous studies regarding the significance of green business strategies in the hospitality industry. This is also where contradicting results are traced and demonstrated, with the biggest part of scholars, however, being in favor of implementing green practices in hotels stating that the advantages are numerous while a smaller group does not acknowledge some or most of the benefits.

2.1 Historical overview of hotel sustainability and key concepts

Within the past years, the number of eco-conscious hoteliers and investors who take into account the environmental and social effects of prospective hotel development plans and operations has risen (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012). In fact, sustainability in general and green operations in specific has played an important role in the decision-making of the relevant stakeholders in the industry for various reasons. The reduction of costs, the greener mindset of leadership, as well as the many changes in the regulatory systems around the world that dictate cleaner and more sustainable operations are some of the reasons that explain the shift towards the implementation of green business strategies (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012).

The roots of environmentally friendly practices in the hospitality sector date back to the early 60s according to Goldstein and Primlani (2012). The two, in their first in a series of articles under the theme “Current trends and opportunities in hotel sustainability”, have noted down the evolution of hotel sustainability and have distinguished between three distinct periods in its lineage. The first one commences in the early 60s and reaches up to the late 70s. This is when the general realization of the severity of human activities on the environment along with the oil crisis of 1973-74 created an environment of uncertainty in regard to utility costs and energy supply in the ranks of the hoteliers who started implementing energy conservation strategies.

The two decades that followed are characterized by the highlighting of the term sustainability which was in turn highlighted in the infamous Brundtland report of 1987.

The report that was named after the chairperson of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Gro Harlem Brundtland, talked for the first time about sustainable development which was defined as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It was the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and the adopted declaration that strongly encouraged environmental ingenuity from the perspective of businesses and their operations (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012). Such initiatives included the erection of green buildings or modification of the already existing ones and hotel-oriented certification schemes that would testify for a lodging’s proper environmental management.

The last period is covering the beginning of the new millennium and is extended to the present day. Within this time, hotels, big and small, have embarked on the publishing of sustainability reports, have built strong relations with environmental organizations and have embraced greener methods in their operations in several ways. Another crisis, the financial crash of 2008, played once more an important role for the way hotels would control their costs and attempt to reduce them. This is where a shift to more affordable and greener practices was deemed as a viable solution (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012).

As already mentioned above, regulatory frameworks were developed around the world where governments would try and foster a supportive environment for businesses that would wish to convert into greener models. That is, also, what the Harvard Business School economist and strategy professor Michael Porter suggested in his work “America’s green strategy” in 1991. More specifically, Porter considered that “well-designed environmental regulations can stimulate innovation, which may lead to efficiency gains or even profit increase in regulated firms” (Qiu, Zhou & Wei, 2018). The American professor also argues that this type of regulation can be beneficial for the environmental quality as well as a firm’s international competitiveness (Porter, 1991).

The present research deals with the tourism and hospitality sector and more specifically investigates how green business strategies can affect a hotel’s environmental performance and how can one assess them. It is necessary, however, to provide some working definitions for some of the terms already mentioned a few times so far.

2.1.1 Tourism: definition and its effects on the environment

The United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) provides a comprehensive definition for the concept of tourism where the latter "comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes." (UNWTO, 2015 cited by Goeldner & Richie, 2009 p. 7). By using the term "usual environment" this definition excludes trips "within the area of usual residence, frequent and regular trips between the domicile and the workplace, and other community trips of a routine character" (Goeldner & Richie, 2009 p.7). It wasn't, however, until the 90's that the notion for a different type of tourism, the sustainable one, became a topic despite that fact that its origins can be traced back to the emergence of the sustainable development concept (Swarbrooke, 1999). Sustainable is the kind of tourism "that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005).

Since the late 1970s, and more vividly during the 1980s, it became clear that businesses are not immune when it comes to taking responsibility for the environmental degradation and consequent disasters (Hart, 2008), including undeniably the hotel industry. The moment a guest walks into an accommodation, energy consumption already commences (Tsai, Lin, Hwang & Huang, 2014 cited by Hsiao, Chuang & Huang, 2018). All the endeavors a hotel engages in, to provide its guests the service they have paid for, result in a significant impact on the environment. This impact is translated into excessive consumption of natural resources and especially water, energy and non-biodegradable products that result in amassed waste that consequently pollutes the environment (Hsiao, Chuang & Huang, 2018).

The latest report from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) testifies that travel and tourism is responsible for one out of 10 jobs worldwide and accounts for 10.4% of the world's GDP (WTTC, 2018). Moreover, according to STR Global, an analytics company based in the United States, over 190,000 hotels providing over 17.5 million rooms (STR, 2018) worldwide accounted for an estimate of 495.17 billion U.S. Dollars of revenue in 2016 (Statista, 2016), occupying a significant share in the global market. It is, therefore, fair to say that the hotel industry is a force to be

reckoned with in terms of environmental footprint but also as a potential key player that can generate or at least encourage positive change for a destination. That is the rationale behind the author's motive to embark on investigating what hotel businesses in Vienna are doing to reduce their share in terms of contributing to the environmental degradation and how well they are performing.

2.1.2 Importance of green business practices in hotels

What most businesses seek today in order to prevail against rival companies is a competitive advantage and the hotel industry does not differ in that sense. Hotels are no exception, and according to the study of Molina-Azorín, Tarí, Pereira-Moliner, Lopez-Gamero and Pertusa-Ortega (2015) environmental management practices may help reduce the units' environmental footprint but this is not the only benefit. More specifically, "improved environmental performance contributes towards a greater development of cost and differentiation advantage" (Molina-Azorín et al., 2015 p.49) and can also turn out to become a differentiation factor.

For the purposes of the current study, the hospitality sector is viewed as a niche in the service supply chain and as such will be examined. The supply chain includes "all those activities associated with the transformation and flow of goods and services, including money and information flows, from the sources of materials to end users" (Bowersox, Closs and Cooper 2002, cited by Al-Aomar & Hussain, 2017).

In their research, Park and Kim (2014) state that there are three plus one significant drivers that make hotel lodgings want to become greener. Economic benefit, management's personal interference based on individual environmental concerns and stakeholder pressure are accompanied by the different forms of ownership and compose a valid triptych of reasons that convince top management to shift to green forms of administration. Towards the same direction, the paper of Kim, Hlee and Joun (2016) enumerates this time several benefits from a change like the one mentioned above. Cost saving policies, lessening of energy consumption and waste reduction are some of the profits mentioned in the work of the three who, however, mention the drawback in the whole concept which might be an increased level of discomfort amongst the guests.

In addition, Han, Lee, Trang and Kim (2018) highlight another important factor, customers' loyalty, favoring the implementation of green business strategies by hotels. According to their study, a new and rapidly growing niche of ego-conscious consumers, that acknowledges the significance of green practices in hotel operations, are exhibiting increased level of loyalty for establishments that seem to be in accordance with their personal environmental standards.

Yet another potential benefit that the implementation of eco-friendly practices entail, is practically a victory over the competitor or better known as the competitive advantage. This statement has been supported by various scholars (Al-Aomar & Hussain, 2017; Hsiao, Chuang & Huang, 2018; Molina-Azorín et al., 2015) and serves as one of the most convincing reasons for hotel businesses to be in favor of changes in their operations towards a greener and more sustainable model.

Similar qualitative studies have already taken place, examining various hotels and destinations. Al-Aomar and Hussain (2017) attempted to evaluate green practices of hotels located in the United Arab Emirates while Sari and Suslu (2018) used a fuzzy Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) method in order to calculate a green performance score and a ranking for hotel supply chains after the contribution of 20 hotel managers in Turkey.

Despite the majority of the existing literature supporting the advantageous side of implementing green business strategies in a hotel, there are also oppositional voices to the specific concept claiming that people tend to underperform in terms of environmentally friendly behavior when on vacation (Wearing, Cynn, Ponting, and McDonald 2002) or Chan's (2013) theory that disproves the above statement regarding guests' willingness to pay more for eco-friendly services.

Additionally, Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeay (2014) oppose the pro-green arguments analyzed above and instead claim that consumers of luxury products are indifferent to the social and environmental aspects of their purchases. Additionally, Bruns-Smith, Choy, Chong and Verma (2015) consider the mainstream indicators, such as food and room quality, amenities et cetera, to be more important to the eyes of the consumers rather than environmentally friendly practices.

2.1.3 Environmentally friendly accommodations – definition and examples

In order to create a proper image of what constitutes a green hotel, a few definitions can be quoted here, the combined context of which describes in an articulate way the essence of eco-friendly lodgings. According to the Sarah Alexander (2002) a green hotel describes “strives to be more environmentally friendly through the efficient use of energy, water, and materials while providing quality services”.

Moreover, the Green Hotel Association (2008; cited by Lee, Hsu, Han & Kim, 2010 p. 902) provides a more illustrative yet concise definition, stating that green hotels are “environmentally friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste – while saving money – to help protect our one and only earth” introducing the aspect of the monetary advantage. This particular definition chooses to focus on the roles and the involvement of the managers in regard to the implementation of green practices, an aspect that is also of high importance for EMAS and in fact constitutes one of the criteria upon which the assessment will take place.

Perhaps one of the most famous examples of eco-friendly lodgings in Europe is the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle which is one of the hotels under investigation in this report. The 3-star hotel in the 15th district of Vienna is known to be one of the most sustainable hotels in the world. In 2009 it achieved a zero-energy balance and is known for its original and cutting-edge green initiatives (Parpairi, 2017). Further information regarding this specific hotel and its green practices will follow in the analytical part of the paper.

2.1.4 Green business strategy and environmental performance

In his work “Better green business” Eric Olson (2006, p.23) defines greens business strategy as a policy that “fundamentally helps an enterprise make decisions, transform its operations, and sustain improved performance so that it makes a positive impact on the environment” which also “helps the organization define its role in environmental stewardship, communicate its role to the world, and determine how aggressively opportunities and investments to go green will be pursued”.

According to Olson (2006), converting to a greener model might mean a direct effect on total revenue through the offering of environmentally friendly services while at the same time, the same transition might also result in a significant reduction of bottom-line costs through more efficient management of natural resources and energy consumption. Side effects can also include establishing a more competitive position in the market and a different brand image while also gaining ground in the global community (Olson, 2006).

Having examined most of the terms found in the research question as formulated in the first chapter, the last and perhaps most important but also difficult to define element is missing. Starting from the second word, performance is defined by Milgrom and Roberts (1992 cited by Schultze & Trommer, 2011) in a managerial context as the “extent to which companies achieve their principals’ targets, i.e., fulfill their expectations” (p. 13). This notion, if put in an environmental context, could be perceived as a company’s “fulfillment of environment-related requirements of stakeholders” (Schultze & Trommer, 2011 p. 13). In that case, the stakeholders represent all those who are influenced or actively affecting a company’s actions (Freeman, 1984 cited by Schultze & Trommer, 2011). A more comprehensive definition can be found in Judge and Douglas’ work in 1998 who described environmental performance as “a firm's effectiveness in meeting and exceeding society's expectations with respect to concerns for the natural environment” (p. 245) including the societal aspect on the concept. The difficulty that also arises apart from defining the concept of environmental performance is measuring it. As a matter of fact, McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006) claimed that „it is impossible to measure what we cannot define and, as long as we use different definitions, we will get empirical results that cannot reliably be compared”. Therefore, for the purposes of the research, the author does not attempt to measure the hotels’ environmental performance but instead evaluate it according to criteria and making use of a specific assessment tool (the traffic light model) analyzed later in this chapter.

2.1.5 Environmental Management System

Yet another term that comes up frequently throughout the present research paper is Environmental Management System which is defined as “the study of all technical

and organizational activities aimed at reducing the environmental impact caused by a company's business operations" (Cramer, 1998 p.162). EMAS (2019) provides a different and more elucidative definition stating that environmental management system is "built upon a set of environmental actions and management tools. Those actions depend on each other to achieve a clearly defined goal: improving environmental performance. An EMS establishes a continual cycle of planning, implementing, reviewing and improving the environmental performance of an organization". According to the research of Ramanathan, Ramanathan and Zhang (2016) efficient environmental management can prove to be rather beneficial for hotels in several ways, such as cost reduction, differentiated services, favorable reputation and can assist towards the creation of a coveted competitive advantage.

The EMS is a tool in the hands of hotel managers who want to improve their environmental performance and keep track of their company's process in terms of fulfilling their environmental commitments. It is methodically planned and constitutes a constant reminder of what can or should be improved in the race for a more efficient environmental performance. It should be noted that for both certification schemes, analyzed in the next chapter, an established EMS is a requirement for a company in order to get certified.

2.2 Criteria for assessment – EMAS versus ISO 14001

The present thesis not only attempts to identify what kind of green business strategies have been adopted and implemented by the businesses under examination, but it is also the wish of the author to evaluate the recorded practices in terms of affecting the participating hotels' environmental performance. Therefore, a proper assessment tool had to be identified and used upon the cases of the three hotels.

The author chose the qualitative approach for his research and more specifically the method of the interviews, meaning that he would not embark on an analysis of revenue spreadsheets, number of bed-nights or occupancy rates. Therefore, the assessment tool would not look at numbers that hotels have produced the past years. Instead, certain criteria had to be chosen upon which the author would have to base his assessment of the green practices. That gave birth to the initial dilemma between two

world renown certification schemes, the European Commission's Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001 Series of Standards in its latest version; namely ISO 14001:2015. Both of these environmental performance evaluating systems are operating on a number of criteria which are displayed in this chapter. Despite a certain level of similarity between the 2 systems regarding the criteria they are using as a basis for evaluating an organization's process, the author chose one of the two for reasons that will be described in the end.

The two certification and auditing schemes present many other similarities and a few distinct differences. The most important, however, is the main goal behind them which in none other the certification of standardization for businesses that are able to meet the corresponding criteria. In this chapter, both systems will be described with a special focus on what each of those two schemes takes into consideration when examining if one fulfills the requirements in order to be certified.

2.2.1 EMAS

In 1993 the European Parliament and Council with the regulation No. 1221/ 2009 created EMAS, a voluntary scheme that examines businesses' environmental management performance (EMAS, 2014). After the second revision of its Annexes in November 2009 and the introduction of EMAS III, the European certification scheme was open and could apply to any organization, private or public, anywhere in the world (EMAS, 2014). EMAS is the EU's "voluntary scheme designed for companies and other organizations committing themselves to evaluate, manage and improve their environmental performance" (European Commission, 2011).

The European certification scheme is based on a performance-oriented system where the business that chooses to run for it has to constantly prove its improvement in terms of its environmental performance. Therefore, the inclusion of employees and management are deemed important for the achieving of this goal. In order for the certification to be achieved, a series of lower-scale auditing endeavors (eco-audits) take place (EMAS, 2019). The journey to the certification is rather long and has many steps on the way and is illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: EMAS: How does it work (EMAS, 2019)



Firstly, the interested party (the business) needs to contact a local *Competent Body* that will assist the first by providing technical support and even seek for funding prospects. After that, the firm needs to perform an initial review of their status quo and detect the environmental problems occurred by their doings until recently. This review has to focus on five key aspects:

- Determining the organizational context by identifying possible internal and external matters that could have affected the firm's environmental management.
- Pinpoint the stakeholders that are most interested and affected as well as their individual aspirations while also it is necessary to identify the legal environmental requirements.
- Identify legal environmental conditions and check for corresponding compliance
- Scrutinize firm's actions that lead to or involve consumption of raw materials and energy, waste and emissions which consist the direct impact.
- Examine the indirect impact, actions that affect the environment but in a way that the company is not actively involved.

The completion of these initial tasks brings the company to the first big step, the “Planning” phase where it needs to create its own environmental management system and establish an environmental policy and an environmental program. EMAS (2019) defines the environmental policy as a public document “which describes your commitments to the environment and specifies your organization's overall intentions and direction in terms of environmental performance. It also provides a framework for setting objectives and targets. An environmental policy should be adopted at the highest managerial level, be revised periodically and specify: compliance with legal requirements and beyond, commitment to continuous improvement in environmental performance and engagement in preventing pollution”.

Regarding the environmental program, this refers to “an action plan that translates your organization’s environmental policy into specific objectives – overall environmental goals directly arising from environmental policy – and targets – performance requirements that emerge from these objectives...should contain concrete measures that designate responsibilities and identify the means to achieve the defined environmental objectives and targets, as well as to meet deadlines. The programme integrates improvements in environmental performance into the day-to-day operations of the organization – it leads to activities that promote better environmental performance” (EMAS, 2019). The defined objective should be SMART, meaning that the need to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. This part calls for the management to step forward and pledge their commitment to their EMS.

Moving to the next phase, called ‘Do’, the firm, after the completion of step 1, is introduced to the implementation phase where it is time for action. The company needs to make sure that the goals described in their environmental policy document in order to improve their environmental performance are backed by their internal structure and processes. Top-management is responsible for the proper allocation of responsibilities amongst the departments who also need to be appropriately educated in terms of what the company is planning to do and how they plan to do so. Therefore, is it advised that every department has an authoritative figure that oversees the procedures in their respective field while all of them answer to one person that has been given the responsibility to be fully in charge of the whole process.

However, a big role in this step is played by the employees. EMAS deems important the participation of the latter and the proper development of a relative work ethic. This derives from a proper dissemination of knowledge around the reasons why the company has chosen to embark on this journey and the efforts to raise awareness amongst them. The entire personnel need to be included through interactive and transparent communication channels and individuality of the employees should be taken into consideration both in terms of personalities but also regarding the department they are working for. In an example of a hotel, information should be handled differently to the housekeeping team than, for example, the front office clerks, as Ms. Fedl (personal communication, 3 May 2019) confirms.

The third big step titled ‘Check’ is rather self-explanatory. The organization after the implementation of certain changes, that were made in the spirit of shifting to an efficient and operational environmental management system, now needs to establish a self-check system that examines the effectiveness of the measures taken in the form of internal environmental auditing.

For the auditing to happen, the firm needs to come up with specific environmental performance indicators which will help them manage, control and direct their environmental performance. For that, unobstructed sharing of information as well as an amassment of big volumes of it is deemed necessary. The same level of attention requires a monitoring initiative which should be constant in order to avoid any potential mishaps. EMAS ardently urges companies to act proactively and not to wait until something comes up. Therefore, continuous internal environmental audits should be taking place at frequent intervals consisting of “periodic assessment of how well the EMS is functioning and how environmental performance is being improved” (EMAS, 2019).

The last major step bears the title ‘Act’. By now organizations should have already established an EMS that fits their type of business, implemented it in their various operational levels, launched a progress-check program and perhaps already seen an improvement. During the last important phase, EMS should already be a part of the daily life of the organization and its employees. Top management should be running periodic checks regarding the process of the endeavor and judge upon the possibility

of achieving all goals set on the early stages. Any mistakes should be identified, documented and analyzed.

Lastly, the company has to draft an environmental report where it will be providing insights to what they did and what they achieved. This report will be providing the stakeholders a view of how the organization did towards their environmental objectives and a description of all the necessary steps and actions that had to be taken. This is the last part of the process that remains on an internal basis. The EMS of the company will be scrutinized and assessed by an independent environmental verifier who will decide if the latter is in conformity to the EMAS provisions and terms. Compliance might eventually mean verification and accreditation of the EMAS certification.

2.2.2 ISO 14001

The International Standardization Organization (ISO) was established in 1946 when delegates from 25 countries came together at the Institute of Civil Engineers in London and discussed about creating an international organization whose purpose would be “to facilitate the international coordination and unification of industrial standards” (ISO, 2019a). A few months later, the official organization was given birth and has since published 22,657 international standards affecting various industries such as the manufacturing, the technological as well as the hospitality one (ISO, 2019a). Its members today are originating from a plethora of countries (164 thus far) while the organization consists of 783 technical committees and subcommittees.

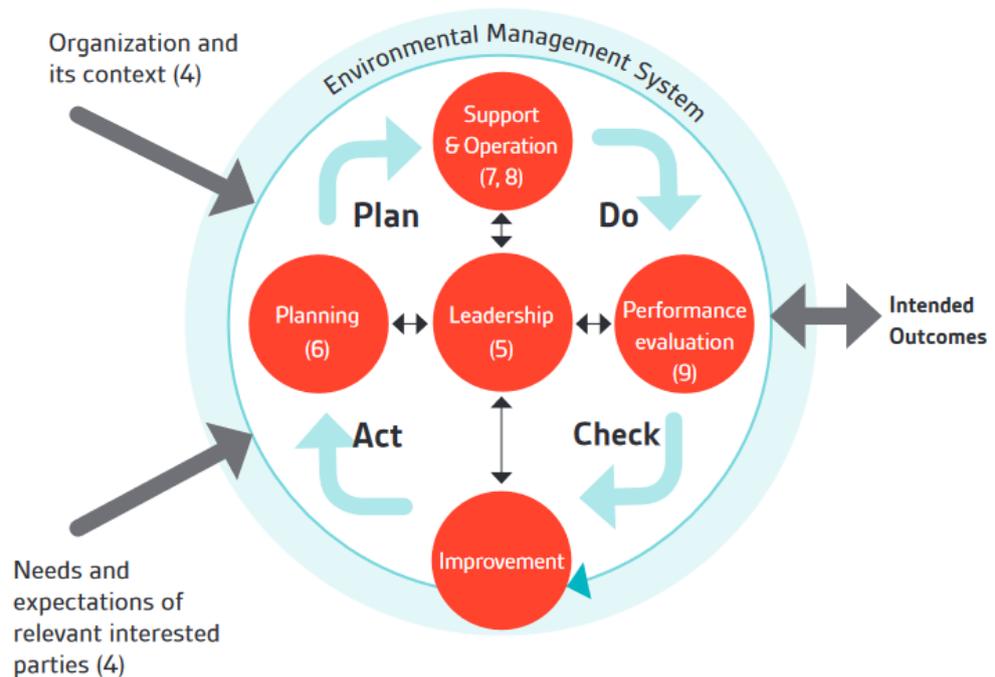
Throughout its 73 years of existence, ISO has published numerous international standards for a variety of industries including the hospitality one. Some of the most important schemes related to environmental management standards are the ISO 9001:2008 that set the standards for quality management, ISO 50001 that assists business who wish to have a more efficient energy management system and ISO 14001 which sets the grounds for the establishment of a well-performing environmental management system (Hotel News Resource, 2014). The latter was firstly introduced in 1996 and has since been revised a total of three times, revisions that happened at

five year intervals which comply with the organization's rules regarding standardization reviews and ensure that standards remain up to date and do not fall behind in the modern marketplace (British Assessment Bureaux, 2013).

The latest version of the standardization system under examination was revised in 2015, thus the whole title of it is ISO 14001:2015. It can be used by both large and small-scale organizations worldwide and the rationale behind choosing to run for it is the decrease of one's environmental footprint while striving for the establishment of a sustainable operational practices (BSI, 2016). More specifically, ISO 14001 "sets out the criteria for an environmental management system ... it maps out a framework that a company or organization can follow to set up an effective environmental management system" (ISO, 2019b).

As already mentioned during the analysis of the EMAS certification and standardization scheme, the two have a lot in common in terms of how the whole process is set and the flow it follows which can be ascertained by the following illustration (figure 2) of the ISO 14001 course to certification. It should be noted here that both systems are based on the same foundations of the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" model but demonstrate a few variations in their respective processes.

Figure 2: ISO 14001: How does it work (BSI, 2016)



The beginning of the ISO 14001 procedure requires that the business that has not formerly established an EMS identifies its environmental stance. However, there are no other prerequisites that are of interest or need to be considered. At this stage the company needs to reflect upon possible factors of its operations that might have an impact on several management system aspects. These include the environmental conditions (climate, air and water quality, natural resource availability, etc.) that can affect and can be affected by the company's actions, external conditions (society, politics, regulatory frameworks, economic status quo, etc.) and lastly internal aspects (systems, employees, knowledge, etc.). The organization then needs to identify the interested stakeholders, both external and internal that are related to their EMS and could apply to customers, suppliers, NGOs, employees, shareholders et cetera.

ISO 14001 also deems the involvement of top management crucial and calls for its active participation and full commitment to the EMS. Top management is also responsible for the drafting of the environmental policy document that will direct and officially set the targets and commitments the company sets and vows to fulfil. The environmental policy document ought to include meaningful goals and be overall

straightforward. It is also top management's duty to properly communicate the goals set and ensure that responsibilities are allocated throughout the company and amid the employees. At the same time, department heads need to have an authoritative role and overlook the processes in order for the firm's goals to be achieved.

The "Planning" phase for the ISO 14001 is perceived somewhat different than in EMAS. During this stage, the organization needs to identify and address risk and opportunities relating to environmental aspects. A well-designed strategy can limit the risks for the company and assess opportunities for the future in many areas. Lastly, the company must also anticipate and be prepared for any potential changes in any level of its operations internally or any in external factors. ISO additionally refers to something that EMAS does not include in their step-by-step model and this is the element of support. This can be translated to having adequate resources, competent and aware teams, good communication channels and documented information characterized by a seamless flow. All these set the grounds for an effective EMS that can be maintained and continually improved.

When all strategies and actions are set in motion, the organization must make sure that in the end all environmental objectives set are able to be achieved. That, in turn, requires, a control system over the entirety of the endeavours taking place within the company and, at the same time, a reality check upon the impacts of these actions. Internal audits are also important for ISO 14001 while top management once again plays a major role and is responsible for the launching of a management review that ensures the effectiveness of the newly implemented EMS.

The certification scheme is a continuous process and requires constant development to be considered successful. The concept of constantly improving is important for ISO 14001 which urges the companies to predict and react to misfortunes.

2.2.3 Comparison

The two environmental performance evaluation systems are, on a certain level, working according to the same principles and share a common main objective; the improvement of the businesses' environmental performance through the establishment of effective and efficient environmental management systems. It should, however, be noted here that it is quite easier for a company to run for the European counterpart of ISO since the requirements of the latter are in fact included as an integral part in one of the first's Annexes (EMAS, 2014).

Both certifications schemes are on a voluntary level. This also means that the data every company chooses to share every time by publishing or sending it over to the certifying organization is chosen by the company and not the organization and so is the volume of it. As already mentioned above, since its revision, EMAS is also universally applicable just like ISO. However, the first is monitored and executed by an official body of the European Union while the second falls within the authority of an international organization.

Schematically illustrated, some of their main differences can be found in table 1.

Table 1: Main differences between EMAS and ISO 14001 (EMAS, 2011)

Elements	EMAS	ISO 14001
General aspects		
Legal status	• European Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009	• International, commercial standard under private law
Participation	• Voluntary	• Voluntary
Geographical Outreach	• Globally applicable	• Globally applicable
Focus and objective	• Focus on continual improvement of environmental performance of the organisation	• Focus on continual improvement of the Environmental Management System
Planning		
Environmental aspects	• Comprehensive initial environmental review of the current status of activities, products and services	• Requires only a procedure to identify environmental aspects • Initial review is recommended, but not required
Legal compliance	• Proof of full legal compliance is required	• Only commitment to comply with applicable legal requirements • No compliance audit
Employees involvement	• Active involvement of employees and their representatives	• Not required (ISO 14001 and EMAS both foresee training for employees)
Suppliers and contractors	• Influence over suppliers and contractors is required	• Relevant procedures are communicated to suppliers and contractors
External Communication	• Open dialogue with external stakeholders is required • External reporting is required on the basis of a regularly published environmental statement	• Dialogue with external stakeholders not required • External reporting is not required
Checking		
Internal environmental auditing	• Environmental Management System audit • Performance audit to evaluate environmental performance • Environmental compliance audit	• Includes only the Environmental Management System audit of the requirements of the standard
Verifier/Auditor	• Environmental verifiers are accredited/licensed and supervised by governmental bodies • Independence of the environmental verifier is required	• Certification bodies are accredited through a national Accreditation body • Independence of the auditor is recommended
Audits	• Inspection of documents and site visits to be carried out according to Regulation • Check for improvement of environmental performance • Data from environmental statement needs to be validated	• No certification rules in standard (other standards for auditing and certification) • Check of Environmental Management System performance, but no frequency specified or required
Derogations for SMEs	• Extension of verification intervals from three to four years • Updated environmental statement needs to be validated only every two years (instead of every year) • Environmental verifier takes into account special characteristics of SMEs	• No derogations foreseen
Official registration by authorities	• Publicly accessible register records each organisation • Each registered organisation receives a registration number	• No official register
Logo	• Yes	• No

2.2.4 Criteria assessment and tool selection

The author, after carefully examining both certification schemes, and weighting their merits, decided to use the criteria which EMAS has defined and utilizes for evaluating hotels' progress in their way towards achieving better environmental performance. Despite the fact that both schemes are on a voluntary basis and (after the expansion of the EMAS in 2009 where firms from all over the world and not specifically from the European region could participate) worldwide applicable, EMAS was chosen by the author for reasons of applicability to the present research.

Firstly, as already mentioned, EMAS is a scheme under the auspices of European bodies and more specifically the European Council but more intensely the European Commission. Its criteria are, therefore, considered more applicable to the present study since all hotels under examination are situated in Vienna, a European metropolis, and the capital of Austria that is part of the European Union. Secondly, the steps to the achievement of the certification in the case of the European instrument are, in the view of the author, more clearly defined and structured than in the case of ISO. Also, having examined both systems the author strongly believes that the aspects upon which EMAS focuses the most, such as top management and employee participation as well as the drafting of an official environmental policy and implementation of an environmental program, are valuable but also easy to objectively assess criteria.

The author chose to interview the hotels' general managers and consequently provided in advance a document with questions that revolved around all four main axes (Plan, Do, Check, Act) of the European initiative. Their goal was to provide valuable information for the purposes of this thesis on how the hotels under examination would perform in relation to these four pillars. For the sake of brevity, the author will be referring to the four axes as PDCA.

Regarding the evaluation of the hotels' environmental performance, the author examined the most important aspects of each of the axes and created a set of corresponding criteria upon which the respective actions are assessed. The ranking is done with the use of the traffic light assessment tool which is described in the next chapter.

3. Methodology

The particular thesis attempts to record all the green practices that hotels incorporate in their operations and provide an assessment of the latter in order to investigate how they affect the hotel's environmental performance. In addition, during his research the author also tried to extract information on what kind of effects and on whom these implemented policies might have. For the purposes of this research and in order to acquire more in-depth and profound intel, the author has selected the qualitative approach. More specifically, interviews with the individuals in charge of the selected hotels' environmental management took place where the interviewer chose to provide an indicative list of questions which served as guidelines for the duration of the conversations.

Furthermore, the author also provides information about the hotels under examination having made use of secondary data. More specifically, an informational note precedes the outcomes of the interviews for every case the content of which mostly derives from online sources such as the hotels' own official websites or CSR reports. Therefore, apart from the use of the interviews as a technique to extract information, the author also made use of the case study method. Creswell (2013) defines this process as an "in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (p.44).

The analysis starts with a demonstration of what each of the lodgings is currently doing in terms of green practices in their operations. This part is also deriving from both information provided during the discussions with each one of the hotel managers as well as information the latter have already made accessible to the public online. It should be noted here that there is a difference between the first two and the third case investigated. In fact, the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle and the Der Wilhelmshof are both hotels known for their originality and extensive investment in reference to green business strategies. A testimonial of that is the inclusion of both hotels on the Sleep Green Hotels website, a platform especially designed for tourists who want to browse through green options vis a vis their accommodation when travelling (Sleep Green Hotels, 2019). The InterContinental hotel, part of the IHG group, was chosen specifically by the author with the rationale being that the hotel has only recently started shifting to greener practices. Therefore, the author was interested in investigating the initial steps a hotel might take in their effort to improve

their environmental performance but also the possibility of seeing early effects on the latter.

The analysis then goes deeper and the interviews with the hotel managers (the full content of which can be found in Appendices 3 to 5), are examined under the scope of the PDCA criteria, described in the previous chapter. The questions sent to the interviewees have been formed in a way that all aspects (Plan, Do, Check, Act) are being investigated. In addition, a table created by the author, where the most important criteria according to EMAS are listed, is used in order to assess every hotel's performance. For every criterion a hotel's activities might be ranked as good, moderate or bad. The last part of the analysis for the hotels is where the author sums up the effects that each of the hotels has attested their green practices have led to.

Apart from three hotel general managers it was also the belief of the author that another figure, that plays an important role in the drafting of Vienna's strategic map in tourism and hospitality, should be interviewed to shed more light on the investigation. That person is the president of the AHA, Mrs. Michaela Reitterer, who also happens to be the owner and acting CEO of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle. Mrs. Reitterer was provided a different set of questions, that can be found in Appendix 6, which, however, aimed to extract information regarding the point of view of the businesses vis a vis green practices and her own opinion on what kind of impact such policies might have. In the second chapter of the analytical part, the role of the AHA is explained and the author proceeds in the analysis of the outcome deriving from the interview with the association's president.

This part of the thesis describes comprehensively the research design and the methodological tool selected for conducting the research. Firstly, the author provides a description and the reasoning behind his choice of a qualitative approach for the purposes of this paper. In addition, the research components of the thesis are demonstrated among with a brief description of the set of questions formed to guide the interviews. Lastly, the research question is discussed among with the validity threats and limitations stemming from the chosen approach.

The present paper can end up being a helpful guide for the locals of Vienna, who get an insight of their city's hotels and how they act in order to fulfil their requirement towards the environment. In addition, such document poses as a potential tool for other businesses

in the hotel industry who think or wish to adopt green business practices for their own but maybe doubt the merits of doing so.

3.1 Qualitative approach and the research components

In their work, Jackson, Camara and Drummond (2007) are talking about the origins, practicability and value of qualitative research and state that “the function of all science is to investigate answers to questions about the evolution of an experience or phenomenon” (p. 21). The origins of the specific approach, according to Creswell (2013), can be traced in social studies such as anthropology, sociology and evaluation. Qualitative research is the approach that allows for the collection of raw data in cases where researchers aim at either detecting a problem or opportunity or collecting intel in order to gain primary insights (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2000).

For the purposes of the present research, the author is mainly using primary data that were collected by himself via interviews. In 1954 Maccoby and Maccoby (p. 449) defined interviews as a “face-to-face exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expression of opinion or belief from another person or persons”. Nowadays, the forms an interview might take, however, are different and not necessarily describe a face-to-face interaction. A person can also be interviewed via the telephone or the internet making it possible to overcome geographic boundaries. In the specific case, the interviewer visited four different sites and collected data not solely of numerical value which would be analyzed accordingly, but mainly text information resulting in recording and reporting of interviewees’ voices. The information obtained was a result of an open-ended set of questions, that was sent to the interviewees prior to the respective meetings, whose main role was to give the interviewer the chance to guide the interview and gain specific intel valuable for his research.

To avoid any ethical misfortunes, it should also be noted here that the interviewer was officially granted access to the permits of the sites where the interviews took place having previously requested permission. Furthermore, all participants at the end of each interview were asked for permission to be quoted by the author for the purposes of the current research.

3.1.1 Justification of the approach and method chosen

The qualitative approach is chosen here for several reasons. Firstly, similar research papers in Asia and the Middle East (Choi, Kim, Kim & Agmapisarn 2018; Al-Aomar & Hussain, 2017) used the same approach and chose interviews with top managers as their method for the corresponding case studies. It should be noted, however, that in his effort to assess the 3 hotels, the author made use not only of the intel that was extracted during the interviews, but also of information that derive from official documents the interviewees have composed and the existing literature that revolves around the topic of hotel sustainability.

Throughout the interviews the individuals were given the opportunity to go into detail regarding their businesses and how they are operating and were able to reflect upon some of the effects of the environmental-friendly practices followed. Interviews are mainly distinguished as either structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The first one is describing a rather extreme case where questions are fixed in a specific order and with the use of standardized wording while the answers to those questions are to be selected between a small number of alternatives (Robson, 2011). However, Parker (2005 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) doubts the existence of such thing as a structured interview since people “always say things that spill beyond the structure, before the interview starts and when the recorder has been turned off” (p. 53). At the same time, considering the other extreme form, a totally unstructured interview is also unrealistic since the interviewer must have an image of what will be discussed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Interviews during which the interviewees are allowed to be more flexible in their responses are the semi-structured ones (Robson, 2011). This model is also the one applying to the present research and the form all interviews took and is further explained in sub chapter 3.1.3. For the outcome of the discussion to be of value, the appropriate interviewees had to be identified. A potential expert must have a deep understanding of the under-discussion topic which stems from either personal research on it or experience in the corresponding field (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The expert must also be keen on sharing their knowledge regarding the matter and providing their personal views on it while the number of interviewees, in order for the sample to be considered reliable, depends on the quality

of the information provided during the discussions claim Rubin and Rubin (1995). Therefore, it was the author's choice to ask the general managers of all 3 hotels for an interview in the hope of gaining insight from the companies' leaders in terms of top management.

In order for the gained intel to be accurate, it is recommended that the interviewer, except for writing down notes, should also record the dialogs (Babbie, 1998). The author recorded and transcribed all 4 interviews, which can be found in the appendix section. For the transcription of the discussion the author followed specific rules that correspond to the Intelligent Transcription model (New Media Services, 2019). The author omitted all unnecessary elements that naturally come up during conversations including mumbled or garbled speech ("ums", "oms", "errs", laughter) along with pauses, repetitions, non-standard language ("gonna", "cause") or interruptions in speech (coughing, throat clearing). The author decided to lightly edit the conversations in order to produce more straightforward and concise texts that would be free from excessive or incorrect sentences and would read intelligently.

In the empirical part, the author will use the four stages to explain and provide information on what the hotels have been doing thus far in relation to each one of them. The reasoning behind this was that the author would play the role of an unofficial auditor by recording and evaluating the companies' processes. After reporting on the hotels' doings in relation to the PDCA criteria, the assessment face conducted by the author will commence. The latter has created a list of indicators for each one of the 4 criteria illustrated in table 2. These indicators derive from the aspects that are considered crucial for EMAS according to their own guidelines. The author included the initials of the corresponding axis in a parenthesis next to the indicator for a better understanding of which category every criterion stems from.

Table 2: Criteria of environmental performance

Criteria on hotel's performance			
Established EMS (P)			
Established environmental policy and program (P)			
Clear allocation of responsibilities by top management (D)			
Authoritative figures and staff education (D)			
Employees' participation and inclusion in the process (D)			
Self-check system to assess effectiveness of measures taken (C)			
Establishment of environmental performance indicators (C)			
Proactive stance in face of potential mishaps (C)			
Pursue constant improvement and record any mistakes (A)			
Drafting of an environmental report (A)			

Briefly analyzing the criteria demonstrated above, the first two belong to the “Planning” step of the EMAS process and refer to whether the hotel has established an EMS and drafted an environmental policy and program. The next three are part of the “Doing” phase and examine if top management has picked certain members of the staff to be charged with the responsibility of overseeing the progress of the implementation of green policies and making sure that it is advancing. The third criterion refers to the level of

inclusion of the rest of the employees and their involvement in the process of working in a greener manner including the provision of trainings and distribution of information regarding the hotel's green strategies. The next set of 3 criteria which cover the "Checking" stage refer to the measures taken by the hotels in terms of assessing the effectiveness of their processes, an assessment which should be done according to specifically set indicators while they also examine the companies' readiness level in the face of a possible misfortune. Lastly, the 2 final criteria that belong to the "Act" axis examine the hotels' commitment to continuous improvement and the issuing or not of an environmental report, accessible to the public which provides insight on their environmental performance.

Every hotel will be evaluated upon these criteria according to the traffic light assessment tool. The latter constitutes a rating system that allows for evaluating the performance of a process in relation to an objective. This system uses the 3 colors green, yellow and red to designate the performance in regard to the corresponding goal. In the particular case, green stands for performing good, red for performing poorly and yellow indicates an aspect where the company is performing moderately and requires attention. This model was chosen because of its simplicity which allows the author to evaluate upon the information he extracted from the interviews with the hotel managers and the material he managed to retrieve from secondary sources like CSR reports or data on the hotels' websites.

3.1.2 The selection of hotels and study site

More specifically, a total of three hotels was selected, each of which represented different tiers and styles of hotels. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with the general managers in charge of the hotels' strategic management planning who provided answers to a series of questions aiming to pinpoint when the company decided to start implementing eco-friendly practices and the reasons that led to this decision, what kind of strategies are currently being followed and what have been the effects of the implementation of such initiatives.

The location chosen for this study is the city of Vienna. Vienna has for a long time dominated the Mercer's list as the city with the best quality of life (Mercer's, 2019) where sustainability is a sought-after goal. In the choice of the destination proximity played an important role as the author was based in the Austrian capital at the time of conducting the research and writing this paper.

Vienna is the home to one of the most sustainable hotels in the world that runs on zero energy balance and is known for its unique upcycled interior design (Parpairi, 2017), the Boutique Stadthalle, which is one of the hotels under investigation in this report. Vienna's greenest hotel has been under the management of Mrs. Michaela Reitterer for a little less than three decades and has been making a name for itself in the green hotels' market.

The second hotel is the Der Wilhelmshof, a family-ran business that belongs to the Mayrhofer family for more than 50 years. (Burritscher, personal communication, 4 April 2019). Der Wilhelmshof is also the second hotel, along with the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, in the Austrian region on the Sleep Green Hotels' list (Sleep Green Hotels, 2019). Sleep Green Hotels is an association of independent hotels who all share the vision to "set the sensitive and careful handling with valuable and natural resources, on a holistic level, as a standard in tourism and revolutionize the whole industry" (Sleep Green Hotels, 2019).

The last hotel is the InterContinental, a hotel that belongs to the British giant in the hospitality sector, the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG, 2019a). The hotel was chosen by the author not because of its green image but, on the contrary, because it has only recently decided to engage into implementing green business strategies to its operational levels. In that way, the author attempts to examine any early effects the aforementioned shift might have had, as well as to identify the rationale behind the decision.

The fourth interviewee might be a hotelier herself but was invited for a discussion because of her current position as the president of the Austrian Hoteliers' Association. Mrs. Reitterer not only owns and acts as the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle's CEO but was also reelected in January 2019 as the association's leading voice (AHGZ, 2019). The questions posed to Mrs. Reitterer were, to a certain degree, different than the ones posed to the hotel managers.

3.1.3 The governing guidelines to the interview

For the purposes of this research the author chose not to compile a questionnaire with multiple enquiries. Instead, a list of just a few more than 10 questions was drafted to constitute the guiding principle for a constructive and fruitful conversation. The questions can be found in Appendix 3 to 5, for the hotel general managers, and 6 for the president of the AHA, Mrs. Michaela Reitterer.

Having chosen the semi-structured as the type of interview he would conduct, the author/interviewer provided an interview guide, outlining a checklist of topics that he deemed worth to be discussed and which would allow for a comparison of the answers. In spite of a certain order given to the questions in the document, the interviewees received in advance, both the wording and the order were modified during the interviews since the author did not feel bound to it and instead tried to add up to the natural flow of the discussion. Additionally, plenty of unplanned questions came up during each of the interviews adding to the characterization of semi-structured. The open-ended type of questions was chosen because of the advantages they entail. According to Robson (2011), such questions are flexible, meaning that they do not limit the content or manner of the answers, enable the interviewer to go into more depth and test the limits of the interviewee's knowledge on the matter while they also allow for truer evaluation of what the respondents really think. Of course, on the other hand, open-ended questions entail the danger of losing control of the discussion's flow which might lead in disregarding main points. It must also be noted that use of scale type of questions was posed to Mrs. Reitterer where the president of the AHA was given a number of statements from different scholars and researchers and was asked to respond in a form of level of agreement or disagreement.

3.1.4 Limitations and validity threats

The present research was time limited and therefore a larger number of hotels is not possible to be investigated. The sample of three hotels chosen to be examined through the paper is a tiny percentage of the total number of hotel lodgings in the city. The small sample could also be considered a reason to expect biased results, since the hotels are hand-picked by the author.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach, which is usually found in social studies, means that no hard facts, including revenue spreadsheets, payroll reports or even satisfaction surveys (if conducted by the hotel) showcasing the associates' view on the hotel they work for, were examined. This makes the current research paper vulnerable to subjectivity of the individuals taking part in the interviews or even possible whitewashing of problems and concealment of relevant facts.

In addition, the interviewees received questions and were asked to have a discussion with the author in English. That leaves space for questioning the level to which all questions were understood by the participants.

3.2 Research question and supporting questions

As mentioned above, the research question has been formed in the following manner:

“How are eco-friendly strategies being adopted and implemented by hotels and how are they affecting their environmental performance?”

The present research has two goals. Firstly, the author attempts to record how green business strategies are being implemented in the hotels under examination, meaning what kind of green practices are integrated in different operational levels of the businesses. The second objective is, using specific criteria and an assessment tool of the author’s choice, to evaluate how the hotels’ actions have affected their environmental performance.

However, the author wished to provide answers to a number of other questions that can be viewed as the sub-questions governing that direct the paper. These important but secondary questions are the following:

- What eco-friendly strategies are followed in the hotels under examination?
- What kind of effects do these green business strategies have and on whom?
- How does competition in the hospitality industry look like in Vienna?
- Is Vienna regarded as a green destination from the experts?
- Does a hotel’s green image affect the guests’ booking behavior?
- Is a lodging’s green image a competitive advantage?
- How do the leadership and ownership affect businesses’ choice of shifting to a greener modus operandi?
- How costly is the transition to a green operational model?

4. Case studies

This chapter comprises the empirical part of the present research. As already described in a previous chapter, the author hand-picked three hotels situated in Vienna and discussed with the respective general managers about the kind of green business strategies that are followed in the companies. The author also attempted to detect any sort of impact these policies might have had already which the interviewees could describe.

A brief description of each of the hotels precedes the analysis during which, the way green practices are followed in the examined hotels will be demonstrated. Afterwards, the author, using the PDCA criteria and the traffic light assessment tool described comprehensively in previous chapters, attempts to evaluate the hotels' approaches and strategies individually.

In the end of every case study, the author reflects upon already observed, expected or potential effects, that the examinees consider their hotels' green practices are accountable for.

4.1 Boutiquehotel Stadthalle

The first hotel under examination is the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, the hotel that claims to be the greenest lodging in the city. The meeting took place on the 3rd of May 2019, in the office of Ms. Anna Fedl, director of the hotel, located in the 15th district of Vienna at Hackengasse 20. Ms. Fedl has been working in the hotel for more than seven years and has been leading it from the position of the hotel director for the past two (Anna Fedl, personal communication, 3 May, 2019). Prior to that, she worked for the service and housekeeping departments, gaining hands-on experience on the hotel's operations. The discussion lasted 42 minutes while the interviewee was sent the questions, which the author compiled as guidelines that would govern the conversation, one week in advance. More information regarding the hotel's environmental performance and actions was retrieved from the lodging's official website but mainly from its 2018 CSR report and the 2019 Sustainability report which is not yet published. Regarding the latter, the author had the chance to work as an intern at the hotel during the time of composing the present

paper and assisted in the drafting of the aforementioned report which is set to replace the previous report on the hotel's website.

4.1.1 Informational note

The "Zur Stadthalle" was purchased in 2000 by Michaela Reitterer from her parents and was two years later renamed it to what is known today as Boutiquehotel Stadthalle (Boutiquehotel, 2018). Initially the lodging numbered 39 rooms and 33 employees, while today, after a big expansion in 2007, the hotel offers its guests the possibility to choose between 79 rooms. Also, the hotel's team consists of 31 staff members, working across five different departments; namely housekeeping, front desk, engineering, service and management (Anna Fedl, personal communication, 3 May, 2019). A spacious garden is situated in the middle of the property, connecting all the surrounding buildings. In 2009 its Passive House turned 100% energy efficient (Boutiquehotel, 2018). This zero-energy balance, meaning producing as much energy as need in order to operate, is one of the most characteristic attributes of the hotel among with its seven upcycled rooms and its lavender field on the rooftop where six beehives are located (Boutiquehotel, 2018). The hotel bears both the European and Austrian eco labels.

The hotel has chosen to remain a 3-star hotel and not advance to the 4-star category for reasons that will be explained later and relate to the potential effect on the environment among with the fact that it fits to the owner's worldview where "it's better to be the best 3-star hotel in the city than just another 4-star hotel, of which Vienna has plenty" (Boutiquehotel, 2018).

4.1.2 Green business practices

The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is operating according to the five main principles described in Bea Johnson's book "Zero Waste Home"; refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and rot are the guidelines paving the path to sustainability according to the hotel's latest CSR (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2018). According to these rules, the hotel tries to avoid waste amassment, use less products and in fact try to give the ones that are supposed to have served their time a different purpose choosing not to throw them away but rather recycle

them. When nothing more can be done, products that can no longer be used are properly discarded.

These five golden rules, however, can be translated into various green practices the hotel has been implementing. To begin with, the hotel that is considered to be the greenest one in the Austrian capital, is known to offer the possibility to stay in an energy efficient building, the Passive House, which is the main building and consists of 40 rooms. The façade is covered with 93m² of photovoltaic panels which produce enough energy throughout the year for the Passive House to be able to operate, making it a zero-energy balance building. In fact, one of the first things a guest is informed about when walking into the hotel is that even the green sign outside the hotel is working on energy produced by the hotel itself (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2018). Latest measurements showed that a total of 15.348 kW (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019) was produced the past year while the energy that needs to be bought for the rest of the hotel is, according to Ms. Fedl, “environmentally friendly energy”.

At the same time and regarding the topic energy, LED lights are decorating the hotel’s corridors which are using motion detecting technology and light up only when activated. Lastly, the hotel, as already mentioned above does not offer individual minibars in each and every one of its rooms and instead offers its guests the possibility to store items they wish at the hotel’s main refrigerator. Apart from the fact that this results in a lesser need for energy, the absence of minibar fridges has been estimated to save the environment from up to 21.024 kilograms of CO₂ (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019). Additionally, a sought-after benefit in this case is the avoidance of the amassment of expired products.

Even though the hotel is known for its innovative design and its original green *modus operandi*, according to Ms. Fedl it was Michaela Reitterer’s own ambition and dream that brought this change upon the hotel. Before the acquisition from the latter, Mrs. Reitterer’s parents had already implemented a waste separation and recycling system and had even run for the Austrian eco label. However, in 2009 the construction of Passive House meant a shift for the hotel’s way of doing business. Since then, a few decisions were made towards the same direction and included various aspects of the hotel’s operations. For the Food and Beverage department this new era was combined with a shift to an organic buffet at breakfast where nothing would go to waste after the early hours. Furthermore, all produce reaching the guests’ plates would now be under scrutiny regarding its origins.

More specifically, the hotel decided to establish partnerships with companies that share the same virtues and guarantee that their foodstuffs are fairly and sustainably produced.

The end of the official breakfast hours has been – and still is – signalling the beginning of the employees' break time where they get to enjoy the buffet's produce with the goal of being on one hand able to create strong and healthy relations amid the staff members but on the other hand, the reduction of waste. In addition, for the amount of food that ends up in the waste bins, the hotel makes sure it gets properly discarded and collected in special bins which are then sent for decomposition ending up in high quality fertilizer. The breakfast buffet is serving, among others, the hotel's own honey, produced in the beehives on the building's rooftop which, in fact, amounted to 95 kilograms in 2018 (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019). The same rooftop is filled with lavender which the hotel has been depending on for cooling the building during the summer season since air conditioning is not an option.

As well as the photovoltaic panels, Boutiquehotel Stadthalle has also invested in solar panels; over 100 m² of them (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2018). These panels are responsible for providing hot water to the entire hotel while also water flow restrictors have been installed in the bathrooms in order to save up to 35% of water consumed (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019). According to a report issued by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research entitled "Energy management in the hotel industry and gastronomy" (2016) a 3-star hotel is supposed to be spending less than 240 litres of water per overnight stay. The latest measurements showed that Boutiquehotel Stadthalle only needed 129 litres in 2018 for its operational needs (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019). Moreover, a well can be found at the hotel's basement where water is being pumped and flows through pipes that go all over the property and naturally cools it down.

Ms. Fedl stated that one of the problematic areas in the hotel where green practices are harder to be implemented is the one that falls under the duties of the housekeeping team. However, compared to 2017 the hotel has managed to reduce the use of chemicals by 10% which accounts for 50 kilograms (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019). In terms of waste management, the hotel has established a segregation system that has allowed them to monitor the amount of plastic, paper, biological waste and metal being disposed every year.

One of the hotel's projects that is set to further develop within the next year is the re-vamping of its rooms under the theme of Upcycling. More specifically, so far seven rooms of the hotel have been redesigned and decorated with upcycled items, stuff once deemed obsolete or useless which are now used in a different manner (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2019). In addition, fabrics used for the modernization of the rooms have been produced under the cradle-to-cradle model. According to Ms. Fedl, the hotel plans to redesign 16 more rooms and the breakfast area according to the same principles and based on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. In terms of upcycling obsolete items, Boutiquehotel Stadthalle in their effort to save paper have even revamped old pieces of wood into signs guests get to put on the bed every time they want to have their linens changed, also saving up on energy and reducing use of detergents and chemicals, while for the cases that paper use is deemed necessary the staff uses recycled one.

4.1.3 Assessment

The first letter in the acronym created by the author stands for "Planning" which is the first category of criteria that will be examined. According to the EMAS provisions, an efficient environmental management needs to start off by defining an environmental policy and programme. Since the establishment of a specific EMS and the drafting of both the environmental policy and action plan require the active participation from the side of top management, Ms. Anna Fedl as the highest authoritative figure in the hotel was the one to ask about the existence of any of these.

To the author's question about the formation of an EMS from the side of the hotel, Ms. Fedl replied that the hotel has not established a specific system under which it operates, and which dictates what decisions must be made or what goals need to be achieved. Instead, the hotel is running for the Austrian and European Ecolabels that correspond to the specific industry. More specifically, the Austrian Ecolabel (Umweltzeichen) is scrutinizing hotels' actions that refer to specific aspects of hotel operations such as offered products as well as energy and water usage (Austrian Ecolabel, 2019). On the other hand, the European Ecolabel awarded to tourist accommodations is also examining lodgings' performance in terms of energy and water consumption but also focuses on waste management, guest inclusion and sharing information and general management which includes various general aspects such as equipment service and maintenance, staff training, no use

of disposable items, et cetera (European Commission, 2009). Ms. Fedl went on to say that using the chance of having to get recertified, management gets to evaluate their process every time they rerun for a certification. Moreover, regarding the goals set annually for every department, the hotel team gets together at the end of every year and each of the departments presents their progress. In fact, if the department managers manage to achieve their goals, they are offered special rewards.

One rather important aspect for the EMAS process during the “Planning” process is the involvement of top management which is asked to “demonstrate leadership and commitment to the EMS” by taking “accountability for the effectiveness of the environmental management system” (EMAS, 2019). To the question “who is responsible for making sure that the goals are achieved” Ms. Feld mentioned the department managers but also included herself confessing that in the end of each year she is charged with the responsibility of drafting a report with all the details regarding the hotels’ progress in terms of achieving the objectives set.

In summary, Boutiquehotel Stadthalle might not have come up with an official document or a generally accepted EMS but management makes sure that every department has a set of clearly defined goals that need to be achieved within a timeframe of one year. Top level management is also engaged and plays the role of the supervisor of the running projects assisting department managers and employees in their work.

The next aspect this segment will be examining is the “Doing” phase which necessitates that the company is making sure that all internal processes are structured in a way that the defined goals will be attained. For this specific aspect, EMAS highlights the importance of the employees but especially the ones who are in charge, hence responsible for the plans to come to fruition. As already mentioned, the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle consists of five departments and every department leader is responsible for coming up and successfully reaching a target that correspond to the activities of their division. Ms. Fedl answered enthusiastically when asked how devoted managers and employees are in terms of working in a greener and sustainable manner. As a matter of fact, her initial response “They are really motivated” was also followed by a statement that sometimes they might be less which she, herself, found logical. According to Ms. Fedl the fact that the green goals are not centrally and monopolistically decided by one individual but instead every

manager is contributing, makes the latter want to work harder to achieve them. In addition, every time a new idea or plan is on the table Ms. Fedl chooses to firstly talk it through with the respective department manager and when the project is given the green light, the latter would share it with the rest of the staff giving the approach a top to bottom character.

What might be problematic for the hotel with the 31 employees is the housekeeping team, says Ms. Fedl, which sometimes finds it hard to understand the rationale behind the firm's modus operandi. However, management constantly tries to instil the green values to the specific employees. To do so, they provide them a small leaflet where the hotel's reasoning behind it is explained in various languages and to generally try to keep their spirit lifted with various activities so that they can do the extra work that being a green hotel entails.

The second pillar provisions seem to be applying in the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle. Management is going the extra mile to include their employees in the process of establishing green strategies and even goes as far as to make sure they are satisfied enough in order to be able to cope with the additional effort that needs to be put. Regarding the department leaders, transparent communication and inclusion in the decision-making process empowers and motivates the supervisors' team.

Moving to the third pillar, it becomes clear that all these green business practices implemented by the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle need to be monitored. That is considered vital not only because of the necessity of measuring the impact of each of the hotel's initiatives but mostly because of the fallacy chances. For this, an organization needs a set of individually defined indicators that will provide insights on the performance of procedures and practices in terms of environmental aspects (EMAS, 2019).

Early in the interview Ms. Fedl mentioned that her tasks are multiple around the hotel. Except for guest care and employee management she embarks on continuous status checks among with the department heads regarding operational processes. For the evaluation of the processes, Ms. Fedl admits that there are no defined indicators upon which she might judge on a policy's progress or impact. Instead, for Ms. Fedl what is important is the end result which can occasionally be measured but now and then it can just be felt depending on the objective. At the same time, referring to possible coping mechanisms

in case of a misfortune, Ms. Fedl also states that there is no predefined and planned reaction or set of actions. On the contrary, the solution in such a case might come on the way and according to the gravity and nature of the budding calamity.

In the sense of establishing an efficient self-check system and embarking on adequate groundwork, the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is doing moderately well. Despite the persistent controls Ms. Fedl claims to set in motion personally, the lack of a Plan B for the cases where something might not go to as expected is not in compliance with what EMAS deems important.

The last part, “Act”, has an advisory character. Boutiquehotel Stadthalle and its managerial team must initiate periodic checks in order to be able to monitor the process of the whole, even informal, EMS. EMAS highly recommends the documentation of any problems or mistakes that might be triggered from either internal or external sources. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the hotel has been issuing an annual environmental statement in the form of a CSR report. The 2018 version, however, did not include any facts or number regarding the hotel’s environmental performance.

To summarize, in table 3 the author provides an overview of the hotel’s actions in relation to the criteria of each one of the 4 axes.

Table 3: Boutiquehotel Stadthalle's PDCA performance

Plan	Do	Check	Act
No established EMS – compliance with Austrian and European Ecolabel	Employees and department leaders are actively participating	Status checks conducted by the general manager	Commitment to continuous improvement – need for periodic status checks
No environmental policy or program	Top management is involved and plays an important role in the process. Top to bottom decision making processes	No defined indicators for assessing the progress	Issuing of environmental report – lack of concrete and measurable data
	Transparent communication systems	No reaction plan against potential emerging problems	
	Continuous education for the employees and effort to instill green virtues		

For the assessment phase, the author, having extracted and analysed the information from the interview with the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle's general manager, proceeds in the evaluation of its environmental performance in accordance to the 10 criteria listed in table 4. The hotel's actions are ranked as either good (green), moderate (yellow) or bad (red).

Table 4: Assessment of Boutiquehotel Stadthalle's environmental performance

Criteria on hotel's performance			
Established EMS (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established environmental policy and program (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clear allocation of responsibilities by top management (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authoritative figures and staff education (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees' participation and inclusion in the process (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-check system to assess effectiveness of measures taken (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishment of environmental performance indicators (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Proactive stance in face of potential mishaps (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pursue constant improvement and record any mistakes (A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drafting of an environmental report (A)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.1.4 The effects

Perhaps the toughest question the hotel director of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle had to answer during this 45-minute discussion was if and how the company's green practices, observed in its multiple operational levels, have had some sort of impact and on whom.

To begin with, the past years the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle has been positioning itself at the market as a green and sustainable lodging. In doing so, it has made use of social media channels like Facebook and Instagram while they also make clear that they are the greenest hotel in Vienna through their official website. However, especially since the erection of Passive House, the zero-energy balance project of Mrs. Reitterer, many guests started coming because, according to Ms. Fedl, they wanted to stay in one of its rooms. Additionally, the hotel director attests that almost 40% of its guests in that period would come just because of the green way the hotel was operating. The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle was the recipient of visitors attracted to the idea of green alternatives in accommodation, a niche segment in the market described in a previous chapter, having an occupancy rate of 82% already by the second year since the Passive House begun its operations (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, 2018).

The fact that the hotel has invested in green technologies and policies has periodically meant an increase in the total costs. It is, however, the owner's belief that the financial aspect should not be seen as a discouraging factor because in the end it should be the nature of the action and the reasoning behind it that counts. Also, at some point these practices might pay off as both Ms. Fedl and Mrs. Reitterer confirm. Furthermore, Ms. Fedl stated that the fact that the hotel operates in a green manner has enabled them to pay their employees a wage above the amount provided in accordance to the collective agreement in Vienna.

A guest that walks in the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle realizes almost immediately that this is a lodging where the idea of environmentally friendly practices is deeply integrated. If the garden does not serve as a testimony, then the informational note in their room where the hotel explains why their guests sleep better in their green establishment might do. Guests who visit the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle are constantly reminded that this is a green lodging and it is working in a way that is respectful to the environment and this, according to Ms. Fedl, is something the guests are taking with them when they leave.

However, it is not only the guests who are introduced to the green way of performing numerous everyday activities. The employees of the hotel, who constitute the local society within which the company operates, also incorporate the lessons learned at their workplace in their private life, according to both Ms. Fedl and Mrs. Reitterer who both provided examples to justify their sayings.

It should also be noted that the garden serves as a green space where anyone, including external guests, can enjoy. That is an achievement in terms of complying with the United Nation's sustainable development goals and more specifically goal number 11 titled Sustainable Cities and Communities sub-target 11.7, where the need of green spaces is explicitly mentioned (United Nations, 2019).

Lastly, the upcycled rooms of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle not only help the environment in a sense that not more waste is collected since old items take a new form but also the society. In fact, the hotel is collaborating with the Austrian company Gabarage for the designing of its upcycled rooms. Gabarage is a small business that invests part of its profits to support previously addicted people get back on their feet by giving them a place to work (Gabarage, 2019).

The rationale behind the hotel's action is to try and reduce its own environmental footprint. Numerous of the hotel's endeavors have already been described earlier in this chapter. Except for some estimations like the amount of CO₂ saved from not using minibars in the rooms, the majority of the strategies' impact cannot be translated to a numerical value. However, it would be unfair to say that because of that flaw, the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle's contribution to the race against environmental degradation is insignificant.

4.2 Der Wilhelmshof

On the 4th of April 2019, the author met with the general manager of the hotel Der Wilhelmshof, Ms. Eva Burritscher who has been working for the hotel the past 13 years, five of which in her current position. Ms. Burritscher started off as front office clerk and became assistant manager before claiming the leader's position. The interview took place at the hotel's lobby bar situated at Vienna's second district at Kleine Stadtgutgasse 4 and lasted one hour and eight minutes. Ms. Burritscher was also handed the proposed topics of discussion one week prior to the meeting. More information regarding the hotel's environmental performance and actions was retrieved from the lodging's official website

4.2.1 Informational note

The building where today's Der Wilhelmshof has been established has a long history that dates back to the end of the 19th century when it was still called "Hotel Moskau" (Der Wilhelmshof, 2019a). Acquired by Johann Holzinger in the 1950s, the hotel took its current name after Wilhelm von Tegetthoff and was run by the family until the 1980s when it was passed on to Johann and Maria Holzinger's niece, Auguste Mayrhofer (Der Wilhelmshof, 2019a). The latter, along with her husband Ernst, turned the hotel into a 3-star hotel and passed the lodging on to her sons, Christian and Roman who have been the current owners since 1997 (Der Wilhelmshof, 2019a). After major renovations and room additions, the hotel has a total of 105 rooms and it also gained its 4-star status (Der Wilhelmshof, 2019a). In addition, it employs 40 people and consists of four departments; namely service, reception, housekeeping and management. Lastly, the hotel has been awarded both the Austrian and the European eco labels (Der Wilhelmshof, 2019b).

4.2.2 Green business practices

Der Wilhelmshof is the second, out of the two, hotels on Sleep Green's list of green hotels in the city of Vienna, with the other one being the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle. It will also become obvious that the two hotels have much in common when it comes to green practices in their operations. In fact, Ms. Burritscher mentioned a few times during her interview with the author that the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle not only does not play the role of the competitor but on the contrary, is being envisaged as a "hero" whom they can ask for advice since they are the "master" of the topic green hotel business strategies. Apart from organizations, such as Private City Hotels or the AHA that bring hotels and more specifically hotel owners together, Der Wilhelmshof is using the intranet platform Hotelkit in order to exchange ideas and recommendations with other firms in the industry including the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle.

The hotel situated at the third district of Vienna has been implementing green practices for already more than 40 years. In fact, the owners installed a heating control system able to seclude specific rooms from receiving any heating. An even bigger version of it is still being used up to now making it possible for the hotel to save a lot of energy for as long the rooms remained not rented, according to the hotel's director. In the same logic, the

hotel rooms require the room card to be placed in the specially designed socket in order for the room to have electricity trying in that way to avoid pointless energy consumption when the guests leave their rooms.

Furthermore, the general manager was proud to inform the author that the hotel is known to be home to the largest solar plant in Vienna for the tourism industry that occupies almost the entire façade of the building and is capable of supplying 50% of the hotel's need for warm water during the summer time. Despite the existence of an air-conditioning system, Ms. Burritscher stated that in spite of the inconvenience of some, the hotel is not allowing the use of it between October and May, a period which might be subject to change according to the weather phenomena.

Going against one of the big chain hotels' policy of providing a different menu daily at their canteens, Der Wilhelmshof is expecting their employees to have their break and eat from the breakfast buffet, hence reducing considerably the volume of food waste. The buffet offered at the hotel might not be wholly biological, but the majority of the food-stuffs has been locally and organically produced. Being a 4-star hotel, Der Wilhelmshof is providing its guests minibar fridges in every room. However, the mini refrigerators are equipped with organic beverages and even a "Good Chocolate" the company behind which plants a tree for every bar purchased.

The hotel steers clear from non-environmentally friendly detergents, while toiletries like shampoos, shower gels, hand soaps, etc. are not individually packed. Instead, large self-made dispensers are located in the bathrooms where organic products are used for the guests' hygiene. What is more, apart from instructing the staff to use as little amounts of water as possible, every shower and sink is equipped with water-saving technology that limit the flow.

Waste separation is also an important topic for the hotel. The bins are different for plastic, batteries, etc. and are checked frequently by every single employee including the hotel director herself.

4.2.3 Assessment

The hotel's general manager was, from the beginning, candid and was not afraid to admit that they have learned a lot from the first examinee, the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, in terms of managing the company in a greener manner. The fact that a plethora of similar environmentally friendly hotel concepts are adopted by both hotels, reasonably means that also the results from the particular assessment are quite parallel.

Just like in the previous case examined, the author commences the assessment of the Der Wilhelmshof's doings by examining firstly if the hotel has established an EMS and issued the corresponding documents as described by EMAS. To that question, Ms. Burritscher Ms. Burritscher referred the author, much like in the previous case, to the Austrian Eco-label and what the hotel was required to do in order to get certified. More specifically, according to Ms. Burritscher, in order to be awarded the Austrian environmental sign, a business has to follow specific instructions that change every five years and refer to the need of a renewed environmental program. More specifically, what a firm who wishes to get recertified needs to do is provide a new strategy plan which describes what will be done within the next years in terms of green and sustainable operations. This plan contains the targets every department sets as well as what needs to be improved according to the current situation. The Der Wilhelmshof was, at the time the interview took place, certified by the Austrian organization. This indicates that the hotel managed to achieve the previously defined objectives some of which, according to the general manager, referred to the avoidance of products with plastic wrapping and more organic foodstuffs in the breakfast buffet. The general manager could not disclose any more information regarding the hotel's progress or previously defined goals, the achievement of which led to the recertification of the lodging with the Austrian Ecolabel, since documents including this type of intel is only for internal use.

With reference to any official documents where the hotel's goals, action plans and commitment to the cause of reducing the impact on the environment, Ms. Burritscher referred to the firm's CSR report which can she claimed to be appearing online. However, in his research the author did not manage to find any report of that sort. According to the hotel's director, the content of the report is communicated to the employees in various forms while one of them includes the posting of specific information on the walls of the hotel where the people cannot miss it.

For the accumulation of information regarding the second part that refers to the “Doing” phase, the author had to find out about the approach of top management with regard to the distribution of duties, the people who have an authoritative role and are charged with specifically defined responsibilities as well as the level of inclusion of all employees in the whole process. These specific aspects are viewed as valuable parts for a company’s EMS to be successful. Ms. Burritscher considers the fact that every department has someone who has been in the hotel for a longer time rather important since the majority of the staff are students who work part-time and do not always stay for long periods in the company. Every department has a manager who is responsible for the whole team and, according to the hotel director, all of them had embraced sustainability before they were employed. In fact, Ms. Burritscher mentioned that not only was it not hard to instil the green virtues to her employees but on the contrary, prospective employees approached her and asked to work for the Der Wilhelmshof because of the hotel’s green image. That also resulted to a lessened need for extensive employee training programs since the staff members were motivated enough from the first place which made the work of the department leaders easier.

Apart from the aforementioned unobstructed distribution of information within the workplace targeting the employees, the company makes sure that the moment a new individual is recruited they are provided a handout with information regarding the hotel’s philosophy and work while they are also encouraged to browse through the company’s website and find out more about it. Moreover, a tour of the hotel is also included as a way of showing them in practice what the hotel does, how they are being green about it and why. During the monthly department meeting, supervisors are required to bring up a topic revolving sustainable practices and discuss it with the employees. In addition, the hotel’s employees have the chance to suggest ideas on the matter green business practices via the Hotelkit intranet which allows for internal communication between staff members including top management.

Every time the discussion with Der Wilhelmshof’s general manager referred to the need of adhering to specific requirements and following rules that aim at the achievement of the company’s environmental goals one word was mentioned more than any other: strict. Starting from the waste separation, firm rules apply during the early hours and more specifically during the breakfast where waste needs to be properly segregated and placed in

the corresponding bin. Having realized the importance of efficient and correct waste separation, Ms. Burritscher informed the author that every single employee is responsible for monitoring this process and making sure it runs as it should. Even for the big bins that can be found in the hotel's cellar, employees are urged to both separate the litter but also make sure that all the previous times there was no problem. In case of any complications, they need to report it to the hotel's management.

Department leaders are the ones who are required to have a more general controlling role over the processes. However, it is the hotel's general manager's responsibility to make sure that the EMS is indeed fruitful in its entirety. As already mentioned above, the hotel has specific rules regarding the heating system and Ms. Burritscher already in the beginning of the year needs to make sure that the system is operating properly. In addition, periodic checks of the invoices take place in order to control the energy consumption of the establishment. With regard to resource management, she is also making sure that efficient use of the water deposits is in place by controlling the water meter herself.

Perhaps, though, the establishment of a scheduled inspection system of all aspects of the EMS that would have the form of informal internal auditing would be advisable in order to help management have a clear and constant picture of the progress and help identify potential risks.

Ms. Burritscher deems constant and continuous controlling essential and that affects the last aspect of the PDCA assessment. For the Der Wilhelmshof never ending improvement is a priority and that is a responsibility of every member of its staff. The fact that the hotel has established specific green lines that need to be followed which are also communicated to both employees and guests are not reason enough to sit back and expect results, says Ms. Burritscher. Every target and the process on the way needs to be individually assessed and monitored. To sum up, for Ms. Burritscher the best way of acting upon the plan is to work in a proactive way involving constant micromanagement that helps avoid misfortunes.

To summarize, in table 5 the author provides an overview of the hotel's actions in relation to the criteria of each one of the 4 axes.

Table 5: Der Wilhelmshof's PDCA performance

Plan	Do	Check	Act
No established EMS – compliance with Austrian and European Ecolabel	Every department manager is in charge of their teams	Establishment of strict rules that oversee environmental related processes – no special indicators	Established periodic checks of processes
No environmental policy or program – only composition of report for the Austrian Ecolabel	Incessant dissemination of information to staff members – special focus in the beginning after initial recruitment	Status checks conducted by the general manager and department leaders	Lack of an environmental report accessible to the public
	Employees and department leaders are actively participating	Constant controls as a way of preventing any mishaps	Future plans for expanding of already existing practices (photovoltaic system, organic products)
	Transparent communication systems		

For the assessment phase, the author, having extracted and analysed the information from the interview with the Der Wilhelmshof's general manager, proceeds in the evaluation of its environmental performance in accordance to the 10 criteria listed in table 6. The hotel's actions are ranked as either good (green), moderate (yellow) or bad (red).

Table 6: Assessment of Der Wilhelmshof's environmental performance

Criteria on hotel's performance			
Established EMS (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established environmental policy and program (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear allocation of responsibilities by top management (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authoritative figures and staff education (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees' participation and inclusion in the process (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-check system to assess effectiveness of measures taken (C)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishment of environmental performance indicators (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proactive stance in face of potential mishaps (C)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pursue constant improvement and record any mistakes (A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drafting of an environmental report (A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.2.4 The effects

For the general manager of the Der Wilhelmshof, the green and sustainable virtues upon which the hotel has built its philosophy have resulted in the creation of both advantageous and disadvantageous situations. From the attraction of the eco-conscious guests and personnel that is willing to work for a green business there have been dissatisfied visitors who did not appreciate the strictly followed principles regarding the heating.

However, the hotel has managed to produce a certain effect particularly in regard to their employees and their individual lifestyle. As already mentioned, Ms. Burritscher claimed that jobseekers are willing to work for the Der Wilhelmshof because of its reputation as a hotel that works in accordance to the sustainable principles. Nonetheless, the people already working for the hotel have also embraced the sustainable ideals to a point where they decide to check upon the progress of certain activities, such as waste management, on their own or even proceed to a charitable action, like the hotel's team did by adopting a child from the African continent. That all stems, says Ms. Burritscher, from the fact that working for a hotel that fights the good fight and that is an advocate of sustainability provides a sentiment of self-fulfilment.

Just like in the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, Der Wilhelmshof is also providing a green space for the city, its own garden that opened up despite initial problems and opposition from the locals, contributing to the same sustainable goal mentioned earlier.

According to the hotel director, even though in certain occasions, being green is combined with less expenses due to efficient management of resources or attraction of guests willing to pay more, it is often the case, says Ms. Burritscher, that one might be saving from one side but spending on the other.

Lastly, like in the case of the first examinee, the hotel Der Wilhemshof could not provide specific data or measurements that could put a number on the face of environmental effects. However, their actions are contributing to various aspects in terms of environmental managements such as efficient resource management, responsible consumption as well as raising awareness.

4.3 The InterContinental

The last general manager that was interviewed for the purposes of the present research was Ms. Brigitte Trattner, hotel director of the InterContinental hotel of Vienna situated at the city's third district at Johannesgasse 28. Ms. Trattner has been in this position since 2014 and agreed to meet the author on May 6, 2019. The interview lasted 1 hour and Ms. Trattner received an email with the author's suggested topics for discussion one week before the actual meeting. More information regarding the hotel's environmental performance and actions was retrieved from the lodging's official website while also the author made use of the company's sustainability report. Keeping, however, in mind that is a document that refers to more than 5.000 hotels, the report was examined accordingly.

4.3.1 Informational note

The 5-star giant is located right next to Vienna's city park and occupies 1860 square meters (InterContinental Vienna, 2019). It was built in 1964 by the Austrian architect Carl Appel in functionalist style and has 458 exclusive rooms and suites to choose from (InterContinental Vienna, 2019). According to Ms. Trattner, the current number of employees exceeds 200 and are spread across seven departments; namely kitchen, service, house-keeping, front office, finance, human resources and sales.

The InterContinental is the only hotel examined in the present research that belongs to one of the world's biggest hotel chains, the IHG group, and therefore has to follow international guidelines drafted in the company's headquarters and take into consideration the firm's numerous stakeholders. In fact, the company firstly issued the IHG Green Engage System in October 2014 where they praised the importance of sustainability and vowed to bring drastic changes in their whole portfolio (O'Neill, 2014) which contains a total of 5,603 properties from 15 brands worldwide (IHG, 2018). The system referred to an online environmental sustainability system which provides hotels "the means to measure and manage their impact on the environment" (IHG, 2019b) and it was officially launched at the beginning of 2015. In addition, the hotels also have the opportunity to make use of over 200 "Green Solutions" especially designed to assist in reducing energy and water consumption, cut on amassed waste and all in all improve their environmental impact (IHG, 2019b). Moreover, this newly developed system also allows for the hotel to keep

track of its expenditures as well as what is being saved while the data is collected and presented to the corporation's clients under the Request for Proposal (RFP) framework (O'Neill, 2014).

The Green Engage system has established four levels of certification that any of the hotels that belongs to the IHG group can get run for. By the time it was initially launched, the company's aspiration was that every one of its properties would reach Level 1 certification by the end of 2015 (O'Neill, 2014). The first level encompasses initiatives such as "tracking consumption data, setting up a property green team and installing energy efficient lighting in guest rooms" (IHG, 2019b). It should be noted here that the InterContinental hotel of Vienna has only recently embarked on implementing greener practices in their daily functions.

4.3.2 Green business practices

The general manager of the hotel made it clear from the beginning of the interview that the InterContinental of Vienna is not a property that has embraced fully, or in a satisfying degree, the green and sustainable element in their operations. However, since this topic is on the company's agenda, the hotel needs to also embark on drafting and implementing strategies that are in compliance with the firm's line.

Mrs. Trattner does not consider shifting to greener practices a difficult endeavour. Nonetheless, in some cases it might prove more challenging due to practical complications. In the case of the property under investigation, the hotel director mentioned a few times the inability of becoming more energy inefficient because the building itself is a 50-year-old construction which would need to undergo radical changes to comply with modern green building standards.

What the hotel decided to do in the beginning of 2019 was to, firstly, start reconsidering a few aspects of its operational activities. That would include the amount of chemicals used and purchased, the quality and efficiency of the equipment, the volume of plastic and generally all the purchasing behaviours that might be having an effect on the environment until that point. One of the first actions was to cut down on the using of protective plastic foil around the uniforms which would arrive at the hotel daily by the hundreds.

With regard to cleaning supplies and equipment, new and more efficient washing machines which necessitate less water and chemicals were purchased.

4.3.3 Assessment

The InterContinental hotel of Vienna might not have embarked on implementing a series of environmentally friendly concepts in the degree the other two hotels under examination have. However, the three properties have something in common and that is that they have all been awarded the Austrian Ecolabel certification. Apart from that and once again in spite of the fact that the hotel is not, for now, doing much to reduce its environmental footprint, being part of the IHG means that it already has a rather standardized EMS that needs to be followed which, however and in contrast to the previous two cases, has been designed by the corporation and not the property managers or owners themselves.

The EMS in the case of the InterContinental has a name, Green Engage, and was briefly described in the beginning of this case study analysis. The main goal of the EMS is clear and is none other than reducing the environmental impact of the hotels belonging to the group's portfolio. However, Mrs. Trattner confesses that despite the quality of the specific initiative, the conditions and frameworks it creates so holistically cannot be followed to the letter by her hotel because of inherent weaknesses. In terms of drafting an environmental program and policy, the hotel is also counting on the corporation's CSR report which the general manager characterizes "generic" since not all hotels around the globe belong to one major company have the same traits, ways of operating or even guests. Therefore, for the shaping of the hotel's strategies towards the reduction of its environmental footprint, both the company's official guidelines but also the destination's legal requirements play an important role. In addition, the recency of the whole procedure does not allow for the establishment of specific targets.

The general manager of the InterContinental mentioned a few times during the one-hour conversation with the author that many decisions had to be reevaluated and revisited since the hotel decided to become greener. Most of these decisions included repurchasing of equipment and products. In this process the department heads are the director's assistants and their responsibilities include, among others, coming up with ideas and see to it that they are implemented in their respective divisions. Apart from the supervisors, who also

have a more authoritative role within the company, employees are encouraged to participate in the development course. The latter were given the chance to share their ideas with management and according to Mrs. Trattner more than 100 suggestions were brought up who also added that such topics are also discussed during the employee meeting which take place every second month.

The hotel's EMS might be at an early stage, but it is essential, as EMAS attests, that top management is actively involved and charged with specific responsibilities the objective purpose of which are to monitor and ensure a fruitful and efficient procedure. The rest of the staff needs to be properly informed and introduced to the nature and the rationale behind the idea of doing things differently especially when the manpower reaches such numbers.

Regarding the self-check mechanisms, a hotel needs to establish, the InterContinental has already some indicators in place which would draw the attention of the general manager in case of a mishap. Mrs. Trattner gave the examples of the cost of linen per occupied room and food cover per guest which occasionally tends to escalate. A certain abnormality would be visible in the monthly financial statements which would trigger an informal investigation of the matter.

Such initiatives need to be constant according to Act, the last pillar of the assessment. Once the hotel invests copiously in the implementation of its EMS and in green business strategies in general, continuous environmental performance improvement should be the target. To do so, the property needs to also invest in processes that identify and eliminate problems and also carry out its own internal audits.

To summarize, in table 7 the author provides an overview of the hotel's actions in relation to the criteria of each one of the 4 axes.

Table 7: The InterContinental's PDCA performance

Plan	Do	Check	Act
Established EMS from the corporation – hotel incapable of following it thoroughly due to generic nature	Department manager clearly regarded as the main facilitators of the change to a greener operational model	General manager and department leaders in charge of checking processes	Established periodic checks of processes
Green Engage program encapsulates what is expected from environmental policy and program	Top management is actively involved with the general manager as the leading figure	Established indicators for keeping track of progress and avoid unpleasant results	Lack of an environmental report that would describe the specific hotel's doing, achievements and general environmental performance
	Employees and encouraged to participate in the process		
	Limited distribution of information		

For the assessment phase, the author, extracted and analysed the information extracted from the from the interview with Mrs. Trattner but also the intel provided by the company's sustainability report. The latter refers its plans and objectives for the hotels', that belong to its portfolio, environmental performance. What follows is the evaluation of the environmental performance of the hotel under examination in accordance to the 10 criteria listed in table 8. The hotel's actions are ranked as either good (green), moderate (yellow) or bad (red).

Table 8: Assessment of InterContinental Vienna's environmental performance

Criteria on hotel's performance			
Established EMS (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Established environmental policy and program (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear allocation of responsibilities by top management (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authoritative figures and staff education (D)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees' participation and inclusion in the process (D)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-check system to assess effectiveness of measures taken (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishment of environmental performance indicators (C)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proactive stance in face of potential mishaps (C)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pursue constant improvement and record any mistakes (A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drafting of an environmental report (A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.3.4 The effects

The rationale behind the inclusion of the InterContinental in the present research was mainly to investigate the reasons behind a hotel shifting to greener ways of operating but also to try and detect any possible effects within the first months of this change. It would

also be interesting, in the eyes of the author, to see the difference between hotels that are already operating under this green philosophy for a few years and a new player.

Mrs. Trattner was unable to identify any effect of the hotel's early and undeveloped shift to more environmentally friendly ways of operating, proving the statement of a different interviewee, Ms. Fedl's. The latter stated that such an endeavour "is a process" while her hotel, the greenest one in Vienna, is not "finished yet" (Anna Fedl, personal communication, 3 May 2019) proving that it is a never-ending procedure that requires time to start proving itself and the merits of doing so.

5. The view of the Austrian Hotel Association

Having interviewed three different general managers from hotels operating in the Austrian and more specifically the Viennese market, the author decided to interview a fourth individual who would, this time, represent the interests of a different stakeholder. The Austrian Hotel Association is “an independent special interest group” that lobbies “for the concerns of the Austrian hotel industry” and therefore directly related to the hospitality industry but the hotels as well (AHA, 2019).

The AHA is a lobby group that receives funding from its members (Michaela Reitterer, personal communication, 25 April 2019) and has existed since 1953 with its general vision to promote, encourage and enhance sustainable growth in the tourism industry (AHA, 2019). At the same time, through its various functions it also helps its members better prepare to face present and future challenges of the sector. Today, it consists of more than 1,400 affiliates which represent leading resorts and group and private hotels in the wider Austrian region. This can be translated to 40,000 employees and a total of three billion Euros in business volume (AHA, 2019).

The main activities of the organization can be clustered into six distinct categories:

1. Service: the AHA supports its members providing continuous assistance regarding every day operational matters putting in use its industry and hands-on experience
2. Campus: the association’s campus offers trainings that help employees, owners but mostly the businesses themselves in order to meet the modern day needs of the industry
3. Convention: the AHA is organizing annually a convention where all of its members are invited to join and discuss pressing matters and upcoming challenges and technological advancements that affect the tourism and hospitality field
4. Initiative: the association organizes campaigns for the partakers to learn how to increase profits and have a better image in the industry
5. Innovation: as part of its innovative side, AHA is encouraging and initiating studies that can benefit the sector in multiple levels
6. Partner: it is the association’s responsibility to bring together hotel owners and potential partners forging strong and fitting relationships

The president of the lobby group, during the time of the interview, was Michaela Reitterer who presided for the third and last time closing a circle of almost a decade handling the stirring wheel of the association. Mrs. Reitterer was chosen by the author not only for the sole purpose of answering some of the underlying questions that govern the present research paper but because he deemed essential to gain insight on how the idea of implementing green practices in hotels is viewed in its entirety by the industry. The preliminary process of the interview was much like in the cases of the hotel managers. A document with questions that would set the framework for a productive discussion was sent to Mrs. Reitterer one week prior to the interview which took place on 25 April 2019 in the offices of the association at Apfelgasse 6, in the fourth district of Vienna. The discussion lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes.

The conversation started with Mrs. Reitterer providing a short description of what the association is doing in general but also what her duties as the president are. The discussion moved to the topic of competition in the hospitality sector in the city of Vienna. Mrs. Reitterer, who considers tourism one of Austria's most remunerative and well-performing industries, stated that hotels are not highly competitive with one another simply because "there is enough for everyone". That is also why they manage to co-operate and harmoniously co-exist in the AHA where they get to exchange ideas and help each other. On that matter, the president of the hotelier association might not be considering Airbnb a competitor, but she firmly believes that the same rules that apply on the Austria hotels should apply on the sharing economy platform. For her, competition is not the next-door hotel but neighbouring cities like Budapest and Prague. For Michaela Reitterer, the hotel owner of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, competition is also not the Viennese counterpart but green hotels in other countries. As a matter of fact, she also believes than when it comes to having more green hotels in Vienna, the more the merrier, a notion that was also supported by Ms. Burritscher. It would be better, both women attested, to have more sustainable business initiatives in the hospitality sector in Vienna which would add up to the already existing advocating voices of the two green hotels.

When asked about which hotels she would categorize as green, Mrs. Reitterer did not have to think too much before naming two of the hotels that are under examination for the purposes of the present research. Even though she could think of one more

hotel that is working towards this direction, the 3-star Hotel Capri situated at the 2nd district of Vienna, the owner of the greenest hotel in Vienna confirmed that turning into a hotel that is embracing and fully implementing environmentally friendly practices is a rather difficult venture especially for properties in Vienna because of specific reasons. The practical difficulties include not only the age and type of certain constructions in the Austrian capital but also the small number of individuals owning both the hotel and the building, the guidelines from bigger corporations that affect all hotels in their portfolio but most importantly the reluctance of investors or owners to spend more for something that cannot be seen by the guests.

The president of the AHA talking about the way the whole concept of green business practices in hotels is viewed by the owners, investors or directors, confessed that in the case of such stakeholders in the Austrian industry the reactions are rather modest. On one hand, her peers do congratulate and admire her for the work she is doing being themselves convinced about her “doing the right thing” but on the other hand they would not implement it in their businesses.

Moreover, Mrs. Reitterer claimed that shifting to a more environmentally friendly operational system and running a green hotel is not, in general, a cumbersome endeavour. In fact, the green way of doing business has given her hotel “a story to tell” with many guests choosing to stay in the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle because it’s one of the few green lodgings in the Viennese market. This leads to the conclusion that in the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, the green operational model has given the lodging a competitive advantage in the market.

What also interested the author was to find out if and how the AHA is encouraging hotel owners to take a green step towards the implementation of sustainable practices in their properties. Mrs. Reitterer highlighted the informative role that the association is mainly playing and referred to the annual conference that already took place in January 2019 under the topic “Re-think tourism”. The main talks during the convention focused on environmental pressing matters and possible improvements that a hotel can invest upon and which would be in accordance to the needs of the environment. It should be noted that the theme of the conference is also going to be the governing topic for the events that will be held by the association this year. However, despite the relative success of the conference, where hotel owners seemed to welcome such

changes and take an interest in it, Mrs. Reitterer came to the realization that they would not consider implementing such policies in their properties.

To the author's question if the environmentally friendly hotel concepts, adopted by the Viennese lodgings, have somehow and in any level had any kind of impact, the president of the AHA initially answered with a resounding "No". The main reason behind her thinking is that in the city of Vienna one can talk about only two green hotels which on their own, in a market with 426 hotels, according to the latest numbers provided by the Vienna Tourism Board (2018), does not make much of a difference. However, Mrs. Reitterer came to think of cases where employees of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle approached and explained to her how working for her changed the way they live their private lives. What is most important for the Austrian hotelier is to clearly communicate the message of green practices in the industry not only to the employees but also to hotel guests. The impact in the society, says Mrs. Reitterer, will come gradually and will derive from more and more people witnessing and eventually talking about it. At the same time, she believes that from a hotel revenue perspective, green businesses do have an effect but on specific guests which do not represent the majority.

Touching upon the topic eco-conscious guests, Mrs. Reitterer stated that the attraction of such a niche of customers should not be driven by marketing stunts which aim at their pockets but should instead be based upon authenticity and by deeply incorporated green values. To the results deriving from the research of Booking.com which stated that 65% of the guests would prefer to stay in an environmentally friendly hotel the AHA president found two major flaws. Firstly, the fact that the search engine itself is unable to embark on a clear distinction between green and not green hotels since it is lacking the ability to use specific indicators which would make this categorization justifiable. Secondly, the matter of willingness to pay was brought up where the interviewee expressed her doubts about guests wanting to spend more of their money just so that they can stay in a green hotel.

The interview with the president of the AHA went through a variety of topics relating to tourism and hospitality in the city of Vienna. Despite tourism being one of the most important sectors in the Austrian economy, Mrs. Reitterer believes that it is its constantly profitable nature that has made the authorities not heavily invest in it anymore,

thus creating ominous signs for its future. In terms of greener practices in the hospitality sector, only two players are known to be actively promoting and incorporating them in their strategic planning.

6. Discussion on the findings

The core objective of this research was to examine what are the most common environmentally friendly practices adopted by hotels and how they affect their environmental performance with a special focus on properties in the city of Vienna, assess them and examine ways they have affected various stakeholders in different ways. In order to extract information and come to a conclusion about the answer to the research question, desk research including secondary sources and the method of interviews with hotel directors among with the traffic light assessment tool were chosen by the author.

The second chapter describes how a certain shift in the way people used to conduct business was noted approximately 60 years ago already and how this change was developed throughout the years and until the present day. This chronological review highlights the big transformation of the hospitality sector in terms of how its impact on the environment and more specifically the deterioration of it used to be, and how it is viewed today. From the times that nature was not on anyone's agenda, to the present day where all major players of the industry issue annual sustainability reports reaffirming their firms' commitment to the fight against resource depletion and environmental degradation, a lot has changed. However, considering the size and environmental impact of the tourism and hospitality sector one could say that not that much is being done.

In the effort of detecting in what ways and what kind of environmentally friendly concepts are implemented in Viennese lodgings, the author interviewed 2 hotels that are known for their eco-friendly practices and are regarded as green businesses and 1 significantly bigger property that had been implementing sustainable policies for only a short period. The interviewees provided insight as to what they are doing in their hotels with reference to green practices and were also asked to report any observed effect. The main strategy of the hotels that focuses on their impact on the environment, the EMS, was analysed using on the one hand the criteria that EMAS has established for the certification of properties that wish to be awarded the green logo. Having analysed the hotels' performance in relation to these criteria, the author used the traffic light assessment tool to evaluate them. Lastly, the president of the AHA was interviewed and was asked to share her knowledge in regard to the hotel owners of properties in Vienna perceive the value of environmentally friendly hotel concepts.

6.1 Answering the underlying questions

In his effort to create a clear image about Vienna as a touristic destination, the competition as well as the role of hotel leaders and owners in the hospitality industry and also gain more insight on how hotels' green modus operandi is on the one hand perceived by guests and how it affects the total costs on the other, the author attempted to extract information from the interviewees also in relation to these matters. More specifically, a set of underlying questions was introduced in the end of Chapter 3, some of which remain unanswered.

Vienna is the city with the highest living quality for the past decade (Mercer, 2019) and host to 426 hotels and pensions that are able to provide up to 67,000 bed nights daily (Vienna Tourism Board, 2018). For most of the interviewees the number of properties in the city is not an issue while competition, one of the underlying topics in this paper, is not that tough. Ms. Fedl believes that the unique green philosophy the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle has embraced is also a unique selling proposition and not many others can compete it. Ms. Burritscher, on the other hand, considers it relatively harder to go against the big brads, the chain hotels that are able to raise or lower their prices at will while the manager of such a hotel, Mrs. Trattner believes that prices fluctuate according to the market's needs. For the president of the AHA competition is not significant amid Austrian properties. Instead the biggest antagonists are the neighbouring destinations.

The author in his effort to answer the sub-question on how the destination itself is regarded under the scope of adopting eco-friendly practices that aim to promote this type of tourism, asked the interviewees about their opinion. Some of the participants referred to the eco-friendly and developed transportation system of the city, while some others referred to the forest on the outskirts of Vienna that surround the city. However, they all agreed that a lot can and should be done in that matter, thus answering his sub-question about how Vienna is viewed as a destination.

Yet another one of the underlying questions of the present paper referred to the niche of the eco-conscious guests and the way a hotel's green image might be capable of attracting their interest. For the greenest hotel in Vienna, the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Ms. Fedl believes that people who are more environmentally aware and follow the same green virtues in their everyday life, choosing the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is a conscious

decision. Except for the people who visit the hotel and wish to stay in the building that is energy sufficient, also guests who happen to book this hotel for their staying and are not aware in advance of what it stands for might also come back after their first visit. Mrs. Reitterer also agrees that guests might initially come to her hotel because of its proximity to the Stadthalle concert hall but might indeed return because of the quality and authenticity the hotel can offer. It's this kind of people who are the company's ambassadors, said the hotelier. On the other hand, the general manager of the Der Wilhelmshof believes that in a city like Vienna the green image of a hotel might affect a prospect guest's decision to some extent but not as much as the price or the proximity to the city centre does. In other words, for Ms. Burritscher being green is not a competitive advantage for a hotel in the Austrian capital. For Mrs. Trattner this specific aspect still entails many elements of greenwashing techniques but does not disregard the people's rising demand for hotels that are certified for implementing efficient EMS, hence reducing their environmental footprint.

Regarding the sub-question about the effects of leadership and ownership, scholars admit that these are two aspects that affect hotels in various ways with reference to finally making the decision of shifting to greener ways of operating but also during the whole process (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012; Kim, Hlee & Joun, 2016; EMAS 2019). That is something the author also looked into during the interviews with the four women. In the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, becoming the greenest hotel of the city was the vision of the owner of both the company and the building, Mrs. Michaela Reitterer. The president of the AHA purchased the hotel from her parents in the beginning of the new millennium and managed to turn it into the greenest lodging in Vienna after just a decade. The way the hotel has decided to operate has reflected the owner's personal aspirations and lifestyle which has always been in accordance to the needs of the environment. In her endeavour to create a zero-energy balance building helped a lot the fact that the property belonged to Mrs. Reitterer and was not on a lease.

Similar is the case of the hotel Der Wilhelmshof, where the family Mayrhofer has been owning and running the hotel for the past 5 decades. Ms. Burritscher claimed that it was the family's own will to run a business with respect to the environment which is quite interesting considering that the hotel has been implementing green policies for almost all these years the family has been directing it. Since many of these practices are affecting

the hotel's construction, it is also quite important that the property belongs to the family. In the case of the InterContinental the situation is different. The hotel is part of a big chain among with more than 5,000 other properties worldwide. Therefore, the driver behind the hotel embarking on a change of the operational status is due to the corporation's international commitment to work more in the direction of helping the environment. In fact, it's the universal and holistic nature of the guidelines and goals set, that do not take into consideration possible geographical, ethnical or social differences amid destinations, that makes it harder for the InterContinental to adhere to.

One of the most sensitive underlying topics under discussion during the interviews was the financial aspect of choosing to go green. Despite many scholars and research papers indicating that green business strategies can contribute in saving money, most of the interviewees had a neutral stance towards that axiom. In the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, the money saved from the lessened need for energy might be allocated for a buffet that is 100% organic but more costly, explained Mrs. Reitterer. As Mrs. Reitterer attested and Ms. Fedl confirmed, for the first it is not a matter of money but rather the only way of doing business. In the same direction, Ms. Burrtscher also showed a more moderate attitude admitting that the early stages or in the case that something needs to be changed and a green substitute needs to be found, a bigger investment is at place. At the same time, she also confirmed the statement above that what one saves, once also invests in other ways. Lastly, Mrs. Trattner also did not distinct between black and white and instead stated that she was positively surprised when she and her and team realized that some products like eco-friendly detergents can be found in the market for a lesser or even price as the normal ones. Being in the early stages of the process, the general manager was not able to tell if there is indeed a major difference or not.

6.2 Answering the research question

Having provided a response to the supporting questions described in the end of the third chapter, the most important aspect remains to be examined. As already mentioned, defining and assessing a concept like environmental performance is a rather cumbersome project. However, the author tried to cover as many aspects as possible that affect and are of importance when examining an organization's efficiency.

The answer to the first part of the research question formulated as: “*How are eco-friendly strategies being adopted and implemented by hotels and how are they affecting their environmental performance?*” can be found throughout the 4th chapter where the already established green practices of the hotels under examination are described comprehensively by the author. For the second part, however, the response is given here according to the hotels’ scoring in relation to the 10 criteria the author based his assessment upon.

The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, the greenest lodging in Vienna, has built an EMS as the requirements for the awarding of the Austrian Ecolabel dictate. The hotel does not have a generally established EMS but instead chose to follow a system that necessitates different actions every five years. That is viewed by the author as something neither positive nor negative. On the one hand the EMS might not be constant and domineering but on the other hand the fact that it is renewed every 5 years helps the hotel stay up to date with modern environmental requirements. In the second set of criteria, the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is doing fairly good since it has defined a distinct authoritative line and employees in key positions are shouldered with the responsibility to see to it that the green processes are running smoothly. Also, of particular importance to the company is the inclusion of the employees and the provision of proper education regarding the green practices matter. The hotel is doing not as well in terms of performing self-checks based on specific indicators that allow for an efficient controlling of the strategies’ implementation progress. In addition, no reaction strategies seem to be at place in a case of a mishap occurring. Lastly, the management of the hotel seems to be looking into the future and has already specific plans that fall within the category of green practices. The last reports regarding its environmental performance might not have been enlightening but the author graded the performance of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle in relation to this criterion as good keeping in mind the upcoming sustainability report that includes more hard facts and details.

The hotel Der Wilhemshof, is also on the green side of the spectrum having scored mostly positive on the environmental performance scale. Regarding the establishing of an EMS, the exact same explanation given in the case of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle can be given here for how the hotel scored. The hotel has also picked authoritative figures that need to make sure that all goals will be achieved while in the case of the Der Wilhelmshof Ms.

Burritscher answered enthusiastically when it came to the managers and employees' commitment to the green model of operating. Furthermore, the hotel has established continuous and recurrent checks of its green strategies' progress but has not defined specific indicators upon which the assessments are made. It is, however, the frequency of these checks that can prevent a problem from arising. It is the opinion of the author that the hotel has an adequate plan for the future in the direction of green practices involving the expansion of the photovoltaic systems and the inclusion of more organic products. The hotel does not provide a document reporting on its performance or doings, which at least the author could not find, that is easily accessible to the public and, therefore, ranks low in the corresponding field.

Despite the early stages of the endeavor and the limited amount of actions taken, the InterContinental managed to score relatively well. In contrast to the other 2 hotels, the InterContinental has an established EMS, environmental program and policy. However, this is also a weak point for the specific hotel which needs to comply with internationally defined guidelines that do not examine the potential and capabilities of each and every one of the company's hotels. As Mrs. Trattner confirmed it is not possible for the particular hotel to keep up with numerous requirements the IHG group has set. Also, in this case, the line of responsibilities is clear and department heads are shouldered most of it in regard to accomplishing the hotel's environmental objectives. However, staff members are not as included as the ones of the previous case studies. Despite the open call for ideas that would make the hotel greener and more sustainable which attracted almost every second employee, it is the author's opinion that more can be done in that direction and with a special focus on the staff's proper education on the matter. The InterContinental has a few indicators which are used to keep track of their progress and numbers in order to avoid unpleasant surprises. It was Mrs. Trattner who mentioned a few times the hotel's limited potential in terms of shifting to a greener operational model. However, she also mentioned that they are just in the beginning and there are more aspects of the process they would like to invest in like eco-friendly cleaning supplies and equipment. Since the hotel is part of a big chain group, its individual performance is not documented or published anywhere.

7. Conclusions

After the completion of the research part and the conducting of all interviews the author came to the realization that except for leadership, employees' inclusion, the will to make it happen and the establishment of efficient environmental systems, one aspect is also of high importance and that is time.

The director of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle mentioned how the acquisition of the hotel from Mrs. Reitterer signalled a different era for the company and the way it operated. The greenest hotel of Vienna has incorporated the green values to its core and works daily on improving its environmental performance keeping an eye on the future as evidenced in the end of the interview with Ms. Fedl where she talked about the upcoming plans. At the same time, the Der Wilhelmshof has been implementing green practices for more than 4 decades now and management continues to seek alternative and more sustainable ways of operating since the green mindset of doing business is a distinct characteristic of the hotel. As for the InterContinental, the hotel is also proving the above statement but from a different point of view. The hotel has lately decided on shifting to a greener model and, therefore, the effects observed and recorded in this report are not as many as in the other two cases.

Despite, what Mrs. Reitterer mentioned about the reluctance of hotel owners to invest on what their guests' naked eye cannot easily see, a few businesses have embarked, each on a different level, on shifting parts of their operations in order to work in greener ways. The president of the association brought up the example of Hotel Capri in order to support the above statement but at the same time, she made clear that such a small number of businesses cannot do much. Therefore, it is essential that more hotels change the way they operate adding to the number of green lodgings in Vienna resulting in a group of businesses that has a specific agenda to push that is not only aiming at maximizing cost but also reducing the environmental impact.

The empirical part and the analysis of the case studies proved that the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is responsible for more observed effects due to its sustainable practices. From the ability to paying its employees a better salary to providing a green space in the middle of the city, its actions have affected the local economy, society and environment in many ways. However, as Michaela Reitterer mentioned during the interview, there is a lot that

still needs to be done in the direction of green strategies in the hotel industry and the cultivation of a greener philosophy that incorporated in the owners' mindsets. The AHA might already be working on that but it is the opinion of the author, having asked for the interviewee's view on the topic, that the local government can contribute much more than what it currently does, offer more incentives and foster an environment within which enterprises are encouraged to invest in green policies.

7.1 Future research suggestions

Future studies could ameliorate certain limitations the present research faced. To begin with, this thesis chooses to examine the hotel industry and disregards any other types of accommodation. Consequently, private or other types of provided accommodation like Airbnb, hostels or any form of sharing economy establishments, that might, however, be embarking on green practices have not been part of the research. Nowadays, accommodation of such type and the concept of sharing economy as environmental friendlier notions are broadly recognized and are deemed important. Therefore, research with the same objective that would include the aforementioned types of accommodation could be of value to researchers.

Furthermore, Vienna might be the biggest and most marketable city of Austria, but it does not entirely reflect the work done, in terms of green policies implemented in the core of hotels' operations, in other cities and regions of the country. It would be interesting to conduct a research which would include a larger number of accommodations but this time from all the Austrian states with perhaps a special focus on the Alpine Pearls' project. At the same time, such study could additionally provide the opportunity for a comparison between the examinees, the assessment of whom could be done according to a score system with weighted criteria which would result in the allocation of certain of points according to the hotels' performance and would also allow for a comparative analysis.

Lastly, another proposition would be to conduct a study that would look into how the Austrian government and respective authorities support green initiatives in the hospitality industry providing ideas on how such backing could be improved.

8. Bibliography

AccorHotels (2018) *Planet 21 research*.

<https://www.accorhotels.group/commitment/sharing-our-knowledge/planet-21-research>
retrieved on: 23 Feb. 2019

AHGZ (2019) *Michaela Reitterer bleibt ÖHV-Präsidentin*.

<https://www.ahgz.de/news/personalie-michaela-reitterer-bleibt-oehv-praesidentin,200012253147.html> retrieved on: 28 May 2019

Arcadis (2018) *Citizen centric cities: The Sustainable Cities Index 2018*.

https://www.arcadis.com/media/1/D/5/%7B1D5AE7E2-A348-4B6E-B1D7-6D94FA7D7567%7DSustainable_Cities_Index_2018_Arcadis.pdf retrieved on: 10 Jan. 2019

Austrian Hotelier Association (AHA) (2019) *The Austrian Hotelier Association*.

<https://www.oehv.at/Header/Englisch.aspx> retrieved on: 10 Jun. 2019

Alexander, S. (2002) *Green Hotels: Opportunities and Resources for Success*. Zero Waste Alliance, p. 2

Al-Aomar, R. and Hussain, M. (2017) *An assessment of green practices in a hotel supply chain: A study of UAE hotels*. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, Vol. 32, pp. 71-81

Austrian Ecolabel (2019) *Hotels*.

<https://www.umweltzeichen.at/en/tourism/hotels> retrieved on: 7 Jun 2019

Babbie, E. (1998) *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont, USA: Wadsworth Publishing Company

Booking.com (2017) *Booking.com reveals 2017 sustainable travel intentions, goals and considerations*.

<https://news.booking.com/bookingcom-reveals-2017-sustainable-travel-intentions-goals-and-considerations> retrieved on: 15 Mar. 2019

Boutiquehotel Stadthalle (2018) *CSR Report*.

<https://www.hotelstadthalle.at/en/sustainability/corporate-social-responsibility/> retrieved on: 27 May 2019

Boutiquehotel Stadthalle (2019) *Sustainability Report*. Unpublished manuscript.

Bowersox, D. J., Closs, D. J. and Cooper, M. B. (2002) *Supply chain logistics management*. New York: McGraw-Hill

British Assessment Bureaux (2013) *ISO Revisions Explained: ISO 9001 – 2015*
<https://www.british-assessment.co.uk/insights/iso-90012015-why-and-how-are-standards-revised/> retrieved on: 3 Jun. 2019

Bruns-Smith, A., Choy, V., Chong, H. and Verma, R. (2015) *Environmental sustainability in the hospitality industry: Best practices, guest participation, and customer satisfaction*. Cornell Hospitality Report, Vol. 15(3), pp. 6-16

BSI (2016) *ISO 14001:2015 Your implementation guide*.
<https://www.bsigroup.com/Documents/iso-14001/resources/ISO-14001-implementation-guide-2016.pdf> retrieved on: 4 Jun. 2019

Bundesministerium Nachhaltigkeit und Tourismus (2016) *Energiemanagement in der Hotellerie und Gastronomie*.
<https://www.klimaaktiv.at/unternehmen/energiemanagement/Tourismus.html> retrieved on: 15 Jun. 2019

Chan, S. (2013) *Gap analysis of green hotel marketing*. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 25(7), pp. 1017-1048

Choi, H. M., Kim, W.G., Kim Y.J. and Agmapisarn, C. (2018) *Hotel environmental management initiative (HEMI) scale development*. International Journal of Hospitality Management, pp. 1340-1349

Cramer, J. M. (1998) *Environmental Management: from 'fit' to 'stretch'*. Business Strategy and the Environment, 7(3), p. 162

Creswell, J.W. (2013) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publication Inc., 4th edition, pp. 40 - 50

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, 3rd Ed. CA: Sage, pp. 578-591

Der Wilhelmshof (2019a) *History of a Viennese Hotel*.
<https://www.derwilhelmshof.com/en/hotel/history/> retrieved on: 10 Jun. 2019

Der Wilhelmshof (2019b) *Sustainability – we love green*.
<https://www.derwilhelmshof.com/en/hotel/nachhaltigkeit/> retrieved on: 10 Jun. 2019

EMAS (2011) *EMAS Factsheet*.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/pdf/factsheets/EMASiso14001_high.pdf retrieved on: 5 Jun. 2019

EMAS (2014) *EMAS Info*.

https://www.emas.de/fileadmin/user_upload/06_service/PDF-Dateien/UGA_Info-sheet_From-ISO-14001-to-EMAS.pdf retrieved on: 3 Jun. 2019

EMAS (2019) *How does it work?*

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/join_emas/how_does_it_work_step0_en.htm retrieved on: 29 Mar. 2019

European Commission (2009) *The EU Ecolabel for Tourist accommodations*.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/hotels.pdf> retrieved on: 7 Jun. 2019

European Commission (2011) *General information on EMAS*.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emas_publications/publications_studies_en.htm#EMAS%20leaflet retrieved on: 5 Jun. 2019

Gabarage (2019) *Über uns*.

<https://www.gabarage.at/%C3%BCber-uns/> retrieved on: 8 Jun. 2019

Geerts, W. (2014) *Environmental certification schemes: Hotel managers' views and perceptions*. International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 39, pp. 87-96

Goeldner, C. and Ritchie, B. (2009) *Tourism: principles, practices, philosophies*. John Wiley and Sons Inc., 11th ed, p. 7

Goldstein, K. and Primlani, R.V. (2012) *Current Trends and Opportunities in Hotel Sustainability*. HVS Sustainable Services, pp. 3-8

Hair, J., Bush, R. and Ortinau, D. (2000) *Marketing research: a practical approach for the new Millenium*. Boston: Irwin McGraw-Hill higher Education.

Han, H., Lee, J.S., Trang, H.L.T. and Kim, W. (2018) *Water conservation and waste reduction management for increasing guest loyalty and green hotel practices*. International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 75, pp.58-66

Han, H. and Yoon, H.J. (2015) *Hotel customers' environmentally responsible behavioral intention: Impact of key constructs on decision in green consumerism*. International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 45, pp. 22-33

Hart, S. L. (2008) *Beyond greening. Strategies for a sustainable world*. Russo, MV.(ed). Environmental management. Reading and cases. 2nd edition, Sage, pp. 3-14

Hilton (2018) *Travel with purpose: Hilton commits to cutting environmental footprint in half and doubling social impact investment*.

<http://newsroom.hilton.com/corporate/news/hilton-commits-to-cutting-environmental-footprint-in-half-and-doubling-social-impact-investment> retrieved on: 17 Jan. 2019

Hotel News Resource (2014) *Guidance on International Standard Certification and Its Impact on the Hotel Industry*

<https://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article76511.html> retrieved on: 5 Jun. 2019

Hsiao, T. Y., Chuang, C. M. and Huang, L. (2018) *The contents, determinants, and strategic procedure for implementing suitable green activities in star hotels*. International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 69, pp. 1-13

IHG (2018) *Responsible business report*.

<https://www.ihgplc.com/responsible-business> retrieved on: 8 Jun. 2019

IHG (2019a) *Explore the InterContinental*.

<https://www.vienna.intercontinental.com/entdecken> retrieved on: 29 May 2019

IHG (2019b) *IHG Green Engage System*.

<https://www.ihg.com/content/us/en/about/green-engage> retrieved on: 8 Jun. 2019

InterContinental Vienna (2019) *Entdecken*

<https://www.vienna.intercontinental.com/entdecken> retrieved on: 10 Jun. 2019

ISO (2019a) *Our story*

<https://www.iso.org/about-us.html> retrieved on: 4 Jun. 2019

ISO (2019b) *ISO 14000 family - Environmental management*

<https://www.iso.org/iso-14001-environmental-management.html> retrieved on: 4. Jun 2019

Jackson, R., Drummond, D. and Camara, S. (2007) *What Is Qualitative Research?* Qualitative Research Reports in Communication. 8, pp. 21-28

Judge, W. Q. and Douglas, T. J. (1998) *Performance implications of incorporating natural environmental issues into the strategic planning process. An empirical assessment*. J Manag Stud 35, pp. 241–262

Lee, J., Hsu, L. T., Han, H. and Kim, Y. (2010) *Understanding how consumers view green hotels: How a hotel's green image can influence behavioral intentions*. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, p. 902

Maccoby, E. and Maccoby, N. (1954). *The interview: A tool of social science*. In G. Lindzey (Ed.), Handbook of social psychology: Vol. 1. Theory and method, pp. 449-487

Marriott (2017) *Serve 360 initiative*.

http://serve360.marriott.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Serve_360_goals_page_tabloid_Mar2018.pdf retrieved on: 10 Mar. 2019

Kapferer, J. and Michaut-Denizeay, A. (2014) *Is luxury compatible with sustainability? Luxury consumers' viewpoint*. Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 21(1), pp. 1-22

Kim, J.Y., Hlee, S. and Joun, Y. (2016) *Green practices of the hotel industry: Analysis through the windows of smart tourism system*. International Journal of Information Management, Vol. 36, Issue 6, Part B, pp. 1340-1349

McWilliams A., Siegel, D. S. and Wright, P. M. (2006) *Corporate social responsibility. Strategic implications*. J Manag Stud 43, p.

Mercer (2019) *Vienna tops Mercer's 21st Quality of Living ranking*.

<https://www.mercer.com/newsroom/2019-quality-of-living-survey.html> retrieved on: 17 Mar. 2019

Molina-Azorín, J.F., Tarí, J.J., Pereira-Moliner, J., López-Gamero, M.D. and Pertusa-Ortega, E.M. (2015) *The effects of quality and environmental management on competitive advantage: A mixed methods study in the hotel industry*. Tourism Management, Vol. 50, pp. 41-54

New Media Services: *The 3 Types of Transcription: Edited, Verbatim, and Intelligent*.

<https://newmediaservices.com.au/types-of-transcription/> retrieved on: 13 Jun. 2019

O'Neil, S. (2014, October 29) *IHG commitment brings Green Engage to entire portfolio*.

<http://www.greenhotelier.org/our-news/industry-news/ihg-commitment-brings-green-engage-to-entire-portfolio/> retrieved on: 8 Jun. 2019

Olson, E.G. (2006) *Better green business*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. p. 23

Park, J. and Kim, H. (2014) *Environmental proactivity of hotel operations: Antecedents and the moderating effect of ownership type*. International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 37, pp. 1-10

Parpairi, K. (2017) *Sustainability and energy use in small scale greek hotels: Energy saving strategies and environmental policies*. Procedia Environmental Sciences, Vol. 38, pp. 169-177

Porter, M. E. (1991) *America's Green Strategy*. Scientific American, Vol. 264, Issue 4,

Qiu, L. D., Zhou, M. and Wei, X. (2018) *Regulation, innovation, and firm selection: The porter hypothesis under monopolistic competition*. Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, Volume 92, pp. 638-658

Ramanathan, R., Ramanathan, U. and Zhang, Y. (2016) *Linking operations, marketing and environmental capabilities and diversification to hotel performance: A data envelopment analysis approach*. International Journal of Production Economics, Vol. 176, pp. 111-122

Robson, C. (2011) *Real world research*. John Wiley and Sons Ltd Publications, 3rd Ed., pp. 278-301

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (1995) *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sari, K. and Suslu, M. (2018) *A modeling approach for evaluating green performance of a hotel supply chain*. Technological Forecasting & Social Change, Vol. 137, pp. 53-60

Schultze, W. and Trommer, R. (2011) *The Concept of Environmental Performance and Its Measurement in Empirical Studies*. Journal of management control. 22, pp. 375-412.

Sleep Green Hotels (2019) *About us*.

<https://www.sleepgreenhotels.com/about-us-2/?lang=en> retrieved on: 8 Jun. 2019

Statista (2016) *Market size of the global hotel industry from 2014 to 2016 (in billion U.S. dollars)*.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/247264/total-revenue-of-the-global-hotel-industry/> retrieved on: 12 Feb. 2019

STR Global (2018) *Hotel Census Database*.

<https://www.strglobal.com/products/census-database/en-gb> retrieved on: 12 Feb. 2019

Swarbrooke, J. (1999) *Sustainable tourism management*. CABI publishing,

Tsai, K.T., Lin, T.P., Hwang, R.L., Huang, Y.J. (2014) *Carbon dioxide emissions generated by energy consumption of hotels and homestay facilities in Taiwan*. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 42, pp. 13-21

UNEP and UNWTO (2005) *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*

<http://www2.unwto.org/content/about-us-5> retrieved on: 14 Jun. 2019

United Nations (2019) *Sustainable Development Goals*.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/> retrieved on: 8 Jun. 2019

Vienna Tourism Board (2018) *Vienna: Hotel capacity & occupancy 2019*.

<https://b2b.wien.info/media/files-b2b/auslastung-2019.pdf/download> retrieved on: 5 Apr. 2019

Wearing, S., Cynn, S., Ponting, J. and McDonald, M. (2002) *Converting environmental concern into ecotourism purchases: a qualitative evaluation of international backpackers in Australia*. *Journal of Ecotourism*, Vol.1(2-3), pp. 133-148

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*

<http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm> retrieved on: 14 Jun. 2019

WTTC (2018) *Travel and tourism economic impact 2018*.

<https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf> retrieved on: 18 Mar. 2019

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for hotel managers

1. How long have you been employed by the hotel and what is your position and duties?
2. What is the overall situation for a (green) hotel in Vienna; difficulties and advantages?
3. Would you consider Vienna a green destination?
4. Has the greener image affected the way people choose their lodging? Is green a competitive advantage in the hospitality sector?
5. Is your hotel promoting itself as a green business and, if so, what actions are followed in the attempt to do so?
6. Has the hotel been implementing green practices? Has it been like this from the beginning or a shift to a greener *modus operandi* has been noted?
7. Does this shift come with higher costs for the hotel?
8. Have you established an environmental management system (EMS)¹? Is there an environmental policy document² or program³ you have issued and are there any criteria you are using to evaluate your process?
9. What kind of green business strategies are currently being followed and in which levels within the hotel? Is there a formal structure followed (e.g. top to bottom approach)?

¹ An environmental management system (EMS) is “built upon a set of environmental actions and management tools. Those actions depend on each other to achieve a clearly defined goal: improving environmental performance. An EMS establishes a continual cycle of planning, implementing, reviewing and improving the environmental performance of an organisation” (EMAS, 2019).

² The environmental policy is “a public document prepared by your organisation, which describes your commitments to the environment and specifies your organisation's overall intentions and direction in terms of environmental performance” (EMAS, 2019).

³ The environmental programme is “an action plan that translates your organisation’s environmental policy into specific objectives” (EMAS, 2019).

10. How have your green practices affected the local society, economy and environment?
11. Who is responsible for the supervision of the implementation of such practices?
12. Upon what indicators is any evaluation of the green strategies' progress occurring and how often? Are there any coping mechanisms in case of mishaps?
13. Any auditing schemes (certification) at place? ISO 14001, EMAS or other?
14. What or who has been the driving force to have led the hotel seek greener ways of operating? What's the effect of ownership/ leadership in that matter and how devoted are management and employees?
15. What is the stance of the local government towards a green business? Any incentives or opposition? Any other kind of support? (NGOs, Austrian Hotelier Association, green parties, public movements)
16. How does competition look like in the city of Vienna?
17. What, if any, are the future plans of the hotel in terms of green business strategies?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the president of the Austrian Hotelier Association

1. What is your current position and what are your duties?
2. Could you provide an overview of the Austrian Hotelier Association? Background, present and its current work.
3. How does competition look like in the city of Vienna where 426 hotels with 34.107 rooms with a total of 67.816 beds co-exist?⁴ How would you evaluate the industry's performance the past years?
4. How important is tourism for the city?
5. According to Arcadis, a Dutch planning and consulting office, Vienna was number 5 on the list of the most sustainable cities in the world for the year 2018. From a scale 1 to 10, 10 meaning strongly agree, how just would you characterize this ranking?⁵
6. Would you consider Vienna a green destination?
7. How many hotels would you be able to name when thinking of green hotels in Vienna. Are you aware of any lodgings, big or small, working towards that direction?
8. What is the overall situation for a green hotel in Vienna; difficulties and advantages? What is the ÖHV's role in terms of enabling and encouraging such initiatives?
9. Molina-Azorín, Tarí, Pereira-Moliner, Lopez-Gamero and Pertusa-Ortega in 2015 stated that by being green, a hotel can gain a competitive advantage and more specifically that "improved environmental performance contributes towards a

⁴ Data retrieved from the Vienna Tourism Board (2018). "Vienna: Hotel capacity & occupancy 2019" including only Hotels and Pensions.

⁵ Arcadis (2018) Citizen centric cities: The Sustainable Cities Index 2018.

greater development of cost and differentiation advantage”.⁶ On a scale from 1 to 10, 10 meaning strongly agree, judge the correctness of that statement.

10. How have green practices adopted by hotels affected the local society, economy and environment?
11. Considering the ÖHV a lobbying organization that is in direct communication with the relevant stakeholders (government and hotel owners), how would you characterize their stance towards the establishment of green practices in the industry? Any incentives or opposition?
12. “Guests’ awareness of hotels’ sustainability practices has been increasing. Thus, hotel marketers are realizing that hotels’ active participation in eco-friendly practices can help attract an increasing number of guests with high green consciousness”. On a scale from 1 to 10, 10 meaning strongly agree, how do you perceive this statement from Choi, Kim, Kim and Agmapisarn?⁷
13. Booking.com stated in 2017 that 65% of its users expressed a preference for environmental-friendly hotels. On a scale from 1 to 10, 10 meaning strongly agree, would you confirm that hotels’ greener image has affected the way people choose their lodging?⁸
14. Is there any future strategic planning for the promotion of greener practices in the industry the ÖHV is working on?

⁶ Molina-Azorín, J.F., Tarí, J.J., Pereira-Moliner, J., López-Gamero, M.D. and Pertusa-Ortega, E.M. (2015) The effects of quality and environmental management on competitive advantage: a mixed methods study in the hotel industry.

⁷ Choi, H. M., Kim, W.G., Kim Y.J. and Agmapisarn, C. (2018) Hotel environmental management initiative (HEMI) scale development.

⁸ Booking.com (2017) Booking.com reveals 2017 sustainable travel intentions, goals and considerations.

Appendix 3: Interview with Anna Fedl

Interviewee: Anna Fedl

Interviewer: Apostolos Tsiantis

Date and time: 03.05.2019, 13:00 CEST

Duration: 42:13

INT: I would like, just for the record, that you to tell us your name and position in the hotel.

ANNA F: My name is Anna Fedl and I am the hotel manager of Boutiquehotel Stadthalle.

INT: And how long have you been in the hotel?

ANNA F: I am here for more than 7 years. When I started working here, I worked at housekeeping and service and after one month I changed to the reception team. And now, since 2017, I am back in the Boutiquehotel and I am the hotel manager.

INT: What does the manager do in the hotel?

ANNA F: I am responsible for every department, so that every process is going on, and that the guests are satisfied and the employees of course. So, I am like a mother for the hotel, so everybody can talk to me. As well for all the partners. And if there is a renovation or something, I also have to take care and support.

INT: Now I would like to ask you something more specific. How is the situation here in Vienna for a hotel? How difficult is it? What are the advantages of operating a hotel?

ANNA F: I think it's not difficult to have a hotel in Vienna. I think it's difficult because of the numbers of hotels in Vienna. But if you can tell a story or you have a good philosophy like us, with the green philosophy, that we are supporting the environment, I think that's a unique selling proposition. So, that's why we are the best 3-star hotel in Vienna. But I think the big challenge for us is the climate change because you feel it yourself, it is getting hotter and hotter in the cities and I think that is the big challenge for us because

we are not having air-conditioning in our rooms, so I think this will be an advantage of the competitors because most of them have air-conditioning. This could be for the guest an advantage that we don't offer.

INT: That's basically also the answer to my next question, how competition looks like in Vienna. So, would you say that it is tough because of the huge number of hotels? There are approximately 426 hotels, according to Wien Tourismus. But do you think your competitor is another green hotel or any other 3-star hotel?

ANNA F: I think it's any other 3-star hotel. Like our green philosophy – I don't know any other hotel in Vienna. I know that some of the hotels are offering biological food as well or they also have solar panels or maybe also a photovoltaic system. But we are doing many things for the environment and I don't know any other hotel.

INT: I know that the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle was a pioneer. They did it first and the do it best.

ANNA F: Yes. But it's a process. We are not finished yet.

INT: Glad to hear that you don't stop, and you are going for it.

ANNA F: Yes.

INT: And talking more generally about Vienna. Do you think it's a green city, a green destination? Somewhere where eco-tourism happens, so to say?

ANNA F: Yes and no. There is a study, where Vienna is mentioned as a green city. But you know, the woods are outside and I think in the city there could be more trees, more green areas. But you are really fast in the woods or you are really fast on Kahlenberg where you can spend time in the nature. And you can see that Vienna Tourism is also making, like green conferences. So, I think yes, we have to do more things. We are in the right direction but...

INT: I think this is the answer of the most people so far. Yes and no. I know the next question actually answers itself. Is the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle promoting itself as a green hotel?

ANNA F: Yes!

INT: I think it's more than obvious. And how do you communicate this? Do you use social media or the moment someone goes in the hotel, or a guest walks in, do they realize that this is a green, sustainable hotel?

ANNA F: Yes, we are using social media, like Facebook and Instagram. And we also have a nice website. We are getting a new one in June. I am looking forward to that. And if you enter the hotel you can also see it already outside, with our green garden on the hotel wall. And I think if you enter the hotel, after a few steps, you can see our garden. That's also a sign for a green hotel. And if you are not seeing it if when you are entering the hotel, you can see when you enter your room because in the room we have some information; 9 things why you sleep better in our hotel. There we explain what we are doing for the environment. We have just LED lamps in the hotel, we have solar panels, we have photovoltaic and on our lavender roof we have also 6 beehives and these things we can communicate to our guest.

INT: I think we will discuss a lot about what the hotel exactly does. I am really looking forward to this part of the conversation. Would you be able to say, maybe the position does not allow it, but at the same time you communicate with guests, as far as I can understand, would you be able to say that, being green has affected how people choose their hotel to stay in Vienna, or in any city? Would you say that there are these eco-conscious guests that prefer a green hotel?

ANNA F: Yes, I think so. Because I think the people are more aware about what they consume, so they want to know where it comes from, what they buy and where they are getting it from. So, I think many people think before going on a journey. In 2009, when we opened the Passive House, many people came to us because they wanted to sleep in it because maybe they would also build their home like the Passive House. And I think in 2009 - 2010 most of the people came because we were working eco-friendly. Nowadays, it's difficult to say but I think most of them or around 40% are coming because we are working eco-friendly. Many people are also coming because of the price and maybe the combination as well.

INT: I know the moment the guests come, they can say, why did they choose the hotel.

ANNA F: Yes. Many guests are also surprised because of our products because they just booked the hotel. When they enter the hotel, they are like: wow, what a beautiful garden,

friendly employees, good quality at the biological breakfast buffet! At first, they do not know anything about us but when they are leaving, they are coming back.

INT: That's great actually! And do you think that the fact that a hotel, not a specific one but in general, is green, is more sustainable and because of all these practices you already mentioned, do you think it could make someone prefer a green hotel to another same-priced or even lower-priced hotel?

ANNA F: Yes. I think so. Maybe I am not the perfect person to say. But I can just compare with my parents. If they have the possibility, if they have the chance to choose a hotel, they would choose the hotel with the environmentally friendly philosophy.

INT: Another question that is also really easy to answer without asking you is if the hotel is implementing green practices. And you already mentioned yes and a few of them. But was it like this from the beginning? What's the story here? When did it start? When did it become green or greener?

ANNA F: So, Mrs. Reitterer bought the hotel from her parents in 2001 and I think they had already implemented a recycling system. Also, her mother managed to get the Austrian Ecolabel. But I think the big beginning was 2009 when Mrs. Reitterer decided to build the Passive House. She decided to have an eco-friendly operation and then after that we decided to have a biological breakfast. Then we decided to reduce waste and so on. Step by step.

INT: So, let's say, until 2009 it was not as green as we know it today?

ANNA F: Yes, right!

INT: So basically, you would say the reason why this happened, is Mrs. Michaela Reitterer herself?

ANNA F: Yes, because in her private life she didn't want to exploit the environment. She wanted to support it and decided to build the Passive House because she is a visionary and she knows that we have to do this for the future, for our planet.

INT: And she was already the owner. So, I guess this was easier. Because I can only assume, if you already have the house you can do more or less whatever you want. You are not paying rent.

ANNA F: Yes, you don't need to ask.

INT: And how devoted are management and employees? Meaning, how much time would the people, that are working in the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, spend to make sure that everything they do is green and to make sure that the goals are achieved. How much do they want it? How much do they love this idea?

ANNA F: They are really motivated. Sometimes more, sometimes less; that's normal. But as you already said, we have goals for every department every year. This year the focus is on green goals. The goals are not the decision of my own. I make up the goals together with the department managers. So that's why they are motivated to achieve the goal.

INT: How many employees do you have?

ANNA F: 31

INT: Do they all have an idea what the hotel is doing?

ANNA F: I think the front desk yes, also the technician – he knows everything about the technological system. Some people at the service team because they have to know the products. But I think the most difficult team, I mean difficult to understand the green mind, is the housekeeping team because of their background. Sometimes they do not really understand what the meaning of that is because they never had it at home. So, we try to also give them the information, sometimes also in their language so that they can understand, why we recycle, why we reduce, why we do not throw everything in one bin, why we separate.

INT: Yes, housekeeping is important.

ANNA F: We just have one bin in our room, and we have to separate.

INT: Yes, it totally makes sense. But I guess management is really focused.

ANNA F: Yes, and if you are focused... And for us it is also important that our employees are happy. It is not important that they only do their work but that they also feel good. So, we talk to them, we are doing a summer party, we are doing a Christmas party. That's important for them and that's why they are motivated to do this extra work.

INT: Maybe you are working here long enough to kind of have an idea if it is very expensive or it indeed means higher costs to become green.

ANNA F: I think in some parts yes, but in some parts no. When we started the biological breakfast buffet, we thought that we will spend much money. But in the end, it was not much money. If the guests are getting a higher quality, they are also paying the price.

INT: You believe that people would want to pay more to be in a green hotel?

ANNA F: Yes, because they know the eggs are good... The quality is an important thing. Also, if the room is clean, if the furniture is looking good and not too old... I think if the quality is good, they are willing to pay.

INT: You already mentioned that the Passive House was built in 2009...

ANNA F: Yes, I think after 10 years you can say it's rentable.

INT: Because it's a zero-energy balance. So, I guess it makes what it...

ANNA F: Yes, Mrs. Reitterer said once to me: the question is if you are willing to do it. It's not how much it costs. If you want it, do it.

INT: Sounds great. As a vision. Now it's the question that interests me the most. What kind of green business strategies are currently followed in the hotel? What you do more or less when it comes to recycling, saving water, energy...

ANNA F: So, every year I have a goal with every department, for example with Christian, our technician, we want to build a recycling station for the lobby. So that people can separate their waste on their own, just to show them what you can do in Vienna. For the paper you have the red one, for plastic the yellow one. So, we want to show them in a public part of the hotel how they can recycle their waste. For example, at the housekeeping we have bags for the bins, and they are really used often and I wanted to reduce them or to not have them at all. Housekeeping was not happy with that, so I decided to look for

an eco-friendly bag, for example made of corn stalk or recycled plastic. Yeah, we will see. We did not find it yet. It's also a question of the price. And the front office team, they want to work more paperless because we are printing the invoices and the confirmations. Yes, we are printing many things on recycled paper, but I think we are able to print less. We hope in the end of the year we will have a system to reduce the paper. And we also have a really nice project this year called Corporate Happiness. For us not just the environment is important, also our employees. And we want to have happy employees. We have many long-term employees and I think it's also a reason because they can work flexibly; they can make their own decisions. And one goal of mine is that I want to have a new cosmetic line for the rooms because at the moment it's not refillable and I want to reduce the waste, so I want to find a new cosmetic line for our rooms.

INT: Sounds great actually. How many departments do you have?

ANNA F: Housekeeping, front desk, technician, service for breakfast and then we have marketing and sales.

INT: More or less with management, you would say five departments. When you have a plan, an idea, for example, it being any kind of water saving idea or practice, how does the idea go? Would it go through the manager of the department first and then to employees or...?

ANNA F: Yes, first I discuss it with the department manager and then I get an idea how we can do that or what is important to do. I don't want to stress my staff. We have goals, we have to work together, we have to support each other, and I want that it is not a stressing project. We discuss it together and then after the department manager presents it to the staff.

INT: Could you tell us a few things that the hotel is doing at the moment in order to be green?

ANNA F: For the electricity we have the 93m² photovoltaic. We have over 100m² solar panels for hot water, we have no minibars, so we are saving 21.000 kilograms of CO₂. In the shower we have a system to reduce the water a little bit, I think by 35%. Then we have the 6 beehives and the honey you can get at the biological breakfast buffet or take it home. Zero (energy) balance in the Passive House. We have a building from the 19th

century, there we don't have a zero (energy) balance and there we buy electricity, but just environmentally friendly electricity.

INT: How many rooms do you have?

ANNA F: Around 40 are in the Passiv- and more than 30 in the Stamm- haus. We have 79 rooms.

INT: Basically, half the hotel is energy independent. If this is not great, I don't know what is. I guess you can find more of what you do online?

ANNA F: Yes, of course!

INT: I would like to ask a specific question, if you have established an environmental management system. As in, you have specific actions you want to follow, you have specific goals. If you have set the goals. You have mentioned this year is based on specific goals. If you write it down in a document and you pass it on to the employees, or the department leaders.

ANNA F: So, we don't have established an own environmental management system. Every three or four years we do the European and Austrian Ecolabel and with these two certificates, we evaluate our processes for the goals. In the end of the year we have a huge meeting and there, the department manager presents the goal and how it worked and if they finished it. What was good, what was not so good. What was the challenge. If they reach their goals, they are getting a reward. For example, a voucher for another hotel, so they can spend a weekend there or a voucher for a restaurant or another special treatment.

INT: You are basically using the criteria of the European and Austrian Ecolabel. Who is responsible for making sure that the goals are achieved, that these practices are happening?

ANNA F: First of all, the department managers, but also me. In the end of the year I have to draft a report for Mrs. Reitterer to explain what went well and what failed. Everybody is responsible.

INT: As you said in the beginning, you do a lot of things as a director. Would you be able to tell us what indicators you use to see that the progress - what you are doing, is going well? So, how do you judge that something went well?

ANNA F: If the goal is achieved and what is the result. Some things you can measure it and sometimes you feel it. It depends on the goal and we are always doing individual assessment. It is not every time the same evaluation.

INT: Do you have a Plan B if something is not working?

ANNA F: Sometimes the plan B is coming in the way, if Plan A is not working. We always have the intention to find a solution in the way and not after a year when you say: ok it has failed. We always try to have a plan B in the same way with the plan A.

INT: Now this brings us to the most important question, for me at least and my thesis. Do you think, or have you noticed that being green, being a green business, has affected the local society, the local economy, the environment. I know it is really specific, because it is just one business, a medium business actually.

ANNA F: I am not sure if we have affected the local society or the economy or the environment. The environment, yes, maybe in some small part because we support the environment. I think we have the chance to inform the people, to give them information what they can do also at home. They are spending the holiday here and when they go home, they are thinking about reducing plastic or maybe they are taking the old furniture and renovate them. Or they are doing something with upcycling. So, I think in that way we can affect the people and the society.

INT: In this case, would you also be able to say that your employees are affected in a way, that they change in a way or how they are at home?

ANNA F: I know from one employee that she saw that we are buying biological food and also started in some parts to buy biological food. We talk to the people and we tell them that it is healthier.

INT: According to your latest, from 2018, CSR report you mentioned that being a green hotel has enabled you to pay your employees more than the Kollektivvertrag (collective agreement).

ANNA F: Yes, that's right. In general, service jobs are not well paid. If you compare our branch to, for example, the IT one, we are doing both the same. We are both working for people, but we are getting paid less than the IT support for example. And we are paying more than, as you said, the Kollektivvertrag.

INT: As I said in the beginning, it is a small hotel, a small company, so in a way it kind of has a small effect on the destination.

ANNA F: Last year was a good year. And we had a really good compensation, so that's also the reason. If we make more money, we can pay more money to our employees.

INT: Or even start at some point having more employees.

ANNA F: Right.

INT: You already mentioned the European and Austrian Ecolabel. Is there any other certification that you are working on or want to run for in the future, ISO or EMAS?

ANNA F: Maybe in the future. But we think it is not really necessary, because we think in the future the people are not choosing the hotel after a certificate. The certificate is just for ourselves, to evaluate the processes. I think it is not an advantage to have a certificate for our guests.

INT: This is a rather sensitive topic. Let's say the relationships that you might have with the local government and how do they react to a green hotel, a green business? Are they helpful, are they trying to be against it? Maybe neutral, maybe nothing...

ANNA F: They are not against it. You have the feeling that they want to support you. But it is always difficult and not easy-going if you want some support. Because for the Passive House we got monetary support from the government, but it is always a huge process. And if something is difficult, the people are not interested in it. Maybe this is also the reason why not so many people are doing the solar panels or the photovoltaic panel in the city or privately. For example, at the new Hauptbahnhof there is a huge roof and there they could have built a photovoltaic system, but they didn't make it.

INT: And when you say monetary support, did they give you an amount and you had to pay it back?

ANNA F: The government supported the companies who implemented photovoltaic panels and they give you some amount that you can afford it. But it is just an amount and you pay the rest by yourself. But you don't have to give it back.

INT: That's great!

ANNA F: Because you are doing something for the environment. But we just have a co-operation with NGOs and green companies that they can sleep in our hotel for a cheaper price. We just have a co-operation that they stay with us. But they are not supporting us to get green or something.

INT: It is basically the effort of some people in the hotel. Would you say that the fact that Mrs. Reitterer is also the president of the Austrian Hotelier Association has helped? Has the organization helped?

ANNA F: Of course. So, everybody knows her, everybody knows the hotel. Not everybody is staying with us when they are in Vienna. But I think many people are also coming because you can see her on the TV or on the newspaper. She is our testimonial!

INT: And lastly, as you already mentioned you already started, but you don't stop. So, what are the future plans of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle in terms of being green?

ANNA F: We are going to renovate 17 rooms in the hotel and according to the sustainable development goals from the United Nations. The theme is once again upcycling and we will do this with Gabarage. That's a company who is working with people who have been addicted to drugs and they want to give them a better life.

INT: This is definitely how you affect the local society.

ANNA F: Yes, with this project sure.

INT: Since they are working on upcycling it is already a more sustainable and greener project. It is a chain reaction that you might end up helping someone. And you already mention that you already have this upcycling theme in some rooms.

ANNA F: Yes, we have 6 rooms upcycled. And we get 16 rooms and one goal will be at the breakfast room. No hunger at the breakfast room. This is a big goal for the next two

years. And then we also have a new and amazing sustainability report which is also focused on the sustainability goals of the United Nations. So that we can show what we are doing for a better future. If you want to live on this planet longer.

INT: Anything you would like to ask me?

ANNA F: No thank you.

INT: Is it okay if I quote what you said?

ANNA F: Yes, everything.

Appendix 4: Interview with Eva Burritscher

Interviewee: Eva Burritscher

Interviewer: Apostolos Tsiantis

Date and time: 04.04.2019, 13:00 CEST

Duration: 1:08:05

INT: So, hello there once again and thank you for meeting me.

EVA B: No problem!

INT: If you don't mind stating for the record your name and your position here in the hotel.

EVA B: My name is Eva Burritscher and I am the general manager of the hotel

INT: And how long have you been in this hotel?

EVA B: For 13 years and in this position 5 years.

INT: If you don't mind me asking, what did you do before being the director?

EVA B: I did all kinds of things. Front office manager, assistant of the manager and receptionist.

INT: Excellent, so you have seen already how the whole hotel operates.

EVA B: Yes, and it helped me a lot getting in this position and it was a lot easier to start in this position knowing already everything about the house.

INT: Makes total sense. To start with a general question, actually, since you are working for so many years in the hotel business. Are there any difficulties when operating a hotel here in Vienna or some advantages? Some good things, some bad things? Just a general idea.

EVA B: There are many difficulties and there are many good and bad things. But in a city the difficulty is the competition with other hotels and that the hotel market is growing and growing but the guests are not growing as fast or as much and there is always a battle about price and a lot of chain hotels offer very low prices which we cannot do. It's very hard to compete in that. Many people are only organizing their holidays with the price, so it gets very hard to have high quality and also attract a lot of guests. Also finding staff and employees is getting harder and harder because the tourism is not very attractive anymore because young people or people in general do not want to work on weekends, in shifts, in the evening or working in food and service. It's not very attractive anymore. You need to look very hard and it gets very hard to find enough people, to find good people who are willing to do this job and the tourism is changing so people are not staying very long and young people do not want to stay in one workplace that long. They want to gain a lot of different experience and in a family-ran hotel you do not have so many opportunities to get them in higher positions so that they can gain further experience. So, that's very hard.

INT: And the people you still have working here, are they here for many years already?

EVA B: It depends. We are lucky to have in every department at least one or two people who are here for at least 2, 3,4 years, so that's very good. But it depends on the department. We have a lot of part-time students working at the reception and if they end their studies they probably leave, or they are from Germany and go back to Germany or from different countries or they find positions which identify more with their studies. So, that's a little bit hard.

INT: How many employees do you have at the moment, if I may ask?

EVA B: 40. But a lot of part-time employees.

INT: Would you say most of them?

EVA B: Yes. Most of them.

INT: I can only understand it's difficult operating a hotel here in Vienna. You already mentioned competition. Who do you think is your biggest competitor? Is it, as you mentioned, the big chain hotels who can indeed play a little bit with the prices maybe lower them down or since you are a 4-star hotel it's the hotels in this category in specific?

EVA B: Some of both. It always depends. There are a lot of guests who only search for the price and these are not so important for us. Every guest is important but it's not so much our target group. We want to attract people who are looking for quality, for art, for sustainable tourism. That's our target group but that's not enough. We also need the target, the guests in general and then it's hard because these days there are so many low prices everywhere and you cannot control them and the prices in Vienna are changing at least once a day. Then the chain hotels are a big competitor because in Vienna the people don't stay that long. They usually stay 2 to 3 nights and they spend the day in the city, so the standard or quality of the room is not so important for them. So, they think I am only there for sleeping. I can also stay at Motel One and they are a big competitor in that case. There are some 4-star hotels around here but we are also friends with all of them but there is always competition. People also prefer a very good 3-star hotel instead of us because it's cheaper or it's directly at the metro station or it's closer to the city center. There are many different things which influence this competition.

INT: But it's really interesting to hear that there is indeed a competition, but you might also have to work together.

EVA B: Yes, because we have to unite against the chain hotels because these are all private hotels or also family-ran or private and there is also a group which is called private city hotels. The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle also was a member of them and it's in Switzerland, Germany and Austria. Private hotels in a city. We have an intranet, Hotelkit, and we also meet once a year and we use it a lot to work together or share problems because in general we all have the same problems.

INT: And you are also part of this association.

EVA B: Yes. From the first day.

INT: Sounds great! You already mentioned and this is actually the biggest part of this Thesis and this interview as a matter of fact, you mentioned sustainable tourism which interests lots of people, me included, and I would like to ask you about your opinion if Vienna is a green destination.

EVA B: I read the question and it's a tough one. It's getting there, I think. It changed a lot. In the past years there is a lot of change and still the city or the government is trying

to get there. And you can find green things or sustainable things in the city everywhere. So, it's getting very popular. I think it's one of the clean cities, but we can still increase it. I was in cities that were very clean and I thought Vienna is really dirty and also the other side. I think if we compare it to the world, we are doing a good job. But still, I don't think we are one of the greenest cities. What's your opinion? You are not from Vienna.

INT: I was born and raised in Athens and I live here for 2 and a half years and actually, according to studies, in 2018 Vienna was the 5th most sustainable city in the world. This was a surprise.

EVA B: Yes, for me too.

INT: As you can understand I am not here for that many years that I can also express a more elaborate opinion but I think it's getting there, exactly as you said. In the same direction, would you say that your hotel is a green business?

EVA B: Yes!

INT: And do you promote it as such?

EVA B: Yes, but only since a few years. It always was but for a lot of time we did not tell anybody or nobody knew it.

INT: Nobody cared actually.

EVA B: And we thought because nobody cares. And since 4 or 5 years the trend is growing and growing and then we realized, ok now we can tell everybody or we should tell everybody about it and that was a very good decision because we are getting a lot of good feedback and more and more people recognize it or get to know it and they feel very good if they stay here, we realized. If they know we are green and they search for and control you, they are more satisfied.

INT: Are there any specific platforms where someone can find the hotel?

EVA B: Everywhere! On our website we have a lot of details and also on all travel sites where you can book us like Booking.com, it's written everywhere and since a few years there also new things like TripAdvisor. I think we have silver there for environmental...

INT: There is a list actually with the greenest hotels in Vienna.

EVA B: Exactly. We try that everywhere where you can read something about us it is mentioned that we are green.

INT: Do you also use social media because nowadays...

EVA B: Yes, we use it a lot and actually most about our posts are about sustainability.

INT: So, Instagram, Facebook I suppose?

EVA B: Only Facebook.

INT: Excellent! And you already mentioned, you touched upon the idea of the guests and how they leave more satisfied. Do you think. and more or less you probably answered. but do you think that it's indeed a greener image that affects the way that the guests perceive a hotel?

EVA B: That's a bit sensitive point because it's still not like it brings you money.

INT: That's very interesting actually.

EVA B: People do not say, or only very few, let's go to Vienna and let's stay in a green hotel. They say let's go to Vienna, let's stay near the city center, let's say we can spend maximum 150 euros per night and then they get 20 or 50 hotels and then they say let's choose this one because it's near the city center, we can afford it and it's green. So, at the end, it helps us that we are green but it's not the main point for people to choose their holiday. Not yet.

INT: Not yet at least. Have you had guests that came just because you are green? I mean you cannot say for sure...

EVA B: I don't think so. But it's growing and there are many of the who have a few hotels and said let's book in one of the three and then they said let's choose this one because it's also green. That happens very often nowadays.

INT: So, you would not say at least for now that a hotel being green is a competitive advantage.

EVA B: Yes.

INT: It's also getting there, it's growing. Really interesting. Now we are kind of moving forward to the most important part. So, has the hotel been implementing green practices? You said already yes and you said from the beginning, is that correct?

EVA B: Yes.

INT: How long has the hotel been operating?

EVA B: With the family Mayrhofer, which are the owners, about 40 years.

INT: Do you know, do you have an idea what they did?

EVA B: For example, they installed a tool in which you can switch off the heating in every room and bathroom on its own. So, you can say: now I switch off the heating only in 101 because there is no guest for 2 weeks or for 3 days and that saves a lot of electricity.

INT: So, this is still operating or a version of it?

EVA B: Yes. Now it's a very big version.

INT: I did not expect that answer, I am not going to lie to you, especially if you say it was 40 years ago. People were not really aware of the environmental problems in general and businesses did not really care that much about being green or greener.

EVA B: And also how the windows were isolated. I don't know since when we have it but they are since I am here. So, we have the biggest solar panel on the roof from the old hotels of Vienna and in summer we make 50% of our warm water with it.

INT: Sounds great. How big is it approximately? How many square meters of solar panels?

EVA B: Roughly it starts from there to there (pointing at the hotel's façade). There are balconies in between so it's not all covered.

INT: Almost the whole façade of the hotel.

EVA B: If you want, we can go and have a look afterwards.

INT: Sounds great! I would love that, really. It's 40 years since then but do you know what was the reason they wanted to make a greener hotel, or more eco-friendly?

EVA B: It's two brothers, the owners, and the mother who got the hotel in the first place. It was their goal. They believe in it very much and they always thought it is very important to do it that way and also because it saves money.

INT: So, it's the same family, you said Mayrhofer, that still owns the hotel.

EVA B: Yes.

INT: So, you would say that the owners themselves played a very important role? It was their idea basically.

EVA B: Yes, and they started with it.

INT: And how devoted are management and employees? When you hire someone, you as a director or someone who is responsible for a certain department, how important is it that your employees and you as management are really devoted to the goal, the green goal?

EVA B: Actually, it's a very funny question because nowadays it's the different way around. It's for the people who want to come and work here so important. They come here and tell me before I even can: I read that you are so environmentally friendly, I like that so much because it's so important to me and that's why I want to work here.

INT: This I have never heard before, I am not going to lie to you.

EVA B: I mean it's 2 or 3 years like that but it's very impressive, I am still very impressed about that. But it's every time we hire someone.

INT: I only know one more person who did this and it was me. I wanted to go to the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle because it's right next to my place but when I learned about it, I was indeed... I understand what you mean. Do you have any trainings?

EVA B: Yes, we have handouts which people get when they started working here and you always say to them: please read our website very carefully because most of it is writ-

ten there. We go with them through the house and tell them especially what's the environmentally green things we do and we also, in their first week, talk a lot with them about it. We explain a lot. Every department has a meeting with their team once a month and with every meeting there has to be at least one point about sustainability.

INT: That's really interesting. How many departments do you have?

EVA B: We have breakfast, reception, housekeeping, management. Yes, 4.

INT: You are serving breakfast, I can see a bar already. Do you also have a restaurant?

EVA B: No.

INT: That's very good. Less food that goes to waste.

EVA B: And it's a lot more of organization.

INT: Definitely, I understand. This is also a sensitive topic when it comes to costs. Was it costly back then or even now when you are doing something greener, when you are changing to something different?

EVA B: Yes, most of the time it is.

INT: Like greener technologies for example...

EVA B: Or green products. So, food is very expensive if you buy organic, Fairtrade and regional products. The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle has only organic food. We would also like to have that but it's too expensive. We have products and we try to increase them every year but still it's very expensive.

INT: I can totally imagine. This brings us to probably the most important question here, I have a whole page where I can write about it. The question would be: what kind of green business strategies are you currently following? So, what are your goals, what are your ways of achieving them and in which departments, which operational levels and I would also like to ask about the structure, how it goes. Does it go from the top to the bottom, from management to the rest of the employees?

EVA B: For example, every time we have to purchase something new, when we have to replace something, we want to plan something new, we want to change something old we

always think first what's the greener way to do it. That doesn't mean that we can always afford it but first of all we always think when we look at something how can we make it greener or more sustainable. So, we always try in our decision to implement the green point. And we do that always. Also, for example there is a tool in Hotelkit where the staff can propose ideas. We once said to all of our staff, because they started having a lot of green ideas, if there is something, we do it together and our employees think a lot about that and they also help us a lot to do things greener. The manager of every department is responsible for every team. I am very lucky with all of them because all of them also think very green and we didn't even have to train them so much and they always do a very good job to motivate the team or to make sure all the green standards are working and they help a lot to motivate people that they work with.

INT: So, when you want to do something I can already understand that you plan it. When you want to change or invest in something you really plan it and you all have a conversation about it, I guess...

EVA B: Yes

INT: ... and then you would go on with implementing it, with actually doing it. Then, do you review it, do you check out if it's working...

EVA B: Yes, sure!

INT: And would you say that you constantly try to improve it somehow?

EVA B: Yes.

INT: Could you give me a few examples of what kind of green practices, what kind of policies are happening in the hotel?

EVA B: For example in Vienna, because I grew up in the countryside, it's not common to have organic waste. So, you don't have it automatically. You have paper and restmüll (residual waste). So, we ordered organic waste bins so that we can separate organic waste at the breakfast and at the breakfast we have very strict rules about waste. We look very carefully and everybody is controlling all the time that waste is separated correctly. For example, until a few months ago there was a waste of Tetrapak and we had a company who came once a week or 3 times per month and collected it and that is not existing

anymore, I don't know why. And at the Praterstern there are bins for Tetrapaks and plastic, so every day one of our employees goes there with a very big bag to separate the waste correctly. It's common for them. It never happens that they do not do that. And also with plastic bottles. We take that very seriously and we also try to control very strictly that nothing goes to waste so that there is nothing rotten or that you have to throw away. Our employees also control that strictly. The breakfast is until 11 and then everything from the breakfast comes in the kitchen and from 11 until 1 every department every half an hour has their break and they can eat anything they want. It helps a lot not to throw away so much.

INT: I think that's one of the few things that are really different to a big chain hotel where from my experience at least, they would just throw the food away and maybe provide different kind of food for the employees and this is a big waste.

EVA B: I actually experienced that myself when I was working in a chain hotel. It was so hard for me, I could not imagine why they were cooking extra food which was not good and throw away full plate or baskets of perfect food, in front of me. I could not understand it. I still can't. But I think it's very common, still.

INT: Unfortunately. It's a good thing from one side that you are trying to provide food for your employees, trying to keep them happy, healthy but at the same time, why waste so much food?

EVA B: And it also happens when the date on products, how long you can use them, they are never right. But you cannot sell things if they have expired and we always, if it's only a few days or a week, give it away to our employees. We put it somewhere where they can all go and say, please take it, it's still alright.

INT: You mean at home, right?

EVA B: Yes. They can take it with them.

INT: That sound great! Anything in specific that makes the rooms of the hotel a bit greener?

EVA B: Yes. We have air-condition in the whole hotel but we switch it completely off in winter so you cannot use it, you cannot switch in on in your room from October until

May, depending on the weather and we do it very strictly and a lot of American guests are not that happy and we always tell them they just have to open the window. But there, we are very strict and we have in our minibars organic Cola and juices and, maybe you have heard about it, it's called the Good Chocolate, it's from the company Plant for the Planet and for every chocolate bar you buy they plant a tree.

INT: I had never heard about it. That's great actually.

EVA B: And we have it in the minibar for our guests. For birthdays or something, we sell it at the bar. We also have stickers in the bathroom with a few points to tell the guests what they can do to make their stay a bit more environmentally friendly. If they want to reuse the towels, they just hang it and if they throw it on the floor we take it away and get them fresh ones. They should take care that they switch off everything when they go outside and we also now have in every room that you need the key card inside to have electricity so that when you go outside the room there is no chance that anything is switched on.

INT: So, the moment a guest stays with you, even if they didn't know it before they came, they realize that this is a green hotel.

EVA B: Yes, they are reminded every time, everywhere.

INT: Would you happen to know if housekeeping is also using more eco-friendly products, detergents?

EVA B: Yes, only eco-friendly products and we also have shampoo, shower gel and body lotion. We don't have these little things that are packed individually. We have big bottles in every room which we designed by ourselves and it's with organic products only. People can also buy them and a lot of people do.

INT: That's great. It saves so much water.

EVA B: It saves water and everything.

INT: Now that you mention water, actually, do you have any specific plans or strategies on preserving water?

EVA B: Yes, we have in every room, every shower and every sink special water-savers so that not everything flows down, only a little bit. It stops the flow. We try, when cleaning, to save a lot of water. So, our housekeeping staff are instructed how they can clean without using so much water.

INT: And would every manager from every department try to, because you mentioned many times the word strict, control these things?

EVA B: Yes, everybody.

INT: That's actually really important. Moving on, this is the more complicated question, if you have established what is called, what is known as environmental management system. Basically, just to describe it because I have provided a definition underneath but is a little complicated, you say that: we as a hotel have this mission, this is what we do, this is our policy and this is how we do it, that's what we want to achieve, these are our goals. So, do you have an environmental management system?

EVA B: Yes. Did you ever hear about the Austrian environmental sign?

INT: I saw it in the front actually.

EVA B: Every 5 years, because the instruction or the rules are changing, you have to renew it and you need a program, you need to show them with that program in which you make clear what you are going to change in the next year or in the next five years or in the next month. For every department you have to make points what you can improve, what are your plans improving sustainable work and we use that chance, because we have to do it anyway, and that helps us a lot to not forget about our goals.

INT: Did you create a document that you sent them or a report, I guess?

EVA B: Yes.

INT: I guess this would not be anywhere online?

EVA B: No. It's just for us.

INT: The last time you applied for it, and as I saw you achieved getting the certification, what were your goals?

EVA B: Our goals were to, for example, we have butter and some kind of spreads as products in the breakfast we still have in plastic wrapping and our next goals are not to have any plastic or anything wrapped at the buffet. So that we only offer products that have no wrapping. We want to increase our organic products at the breakfast and more Fairtrade products. We are going to build in another building of ours photovoltaic.

INT: For energy, I guess...

EVA B: Yes, for energy.

INT: Not for the heating, because you already have the solar panels.

EVA B: For electricity, yes.

INT: Because you already know that the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is a zero-energy balance hotel for 10 years now. It's hotels like this that should lead the way. Like your hotel, the Boutiquehotel and other examples all over Europe. Because it's easy to become greener. It's easy to help the environment.

EVA B: If you are searching for environmentally friendly hotels, we are on the second place, I think in Vienna, right after the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle. But they are not the competition because we are friends actually.

INT: I realized already. The first person I asked if they know anyone was Ms. Fedl.

EVA B: And she said go here.

INT: Yes!

EVA B: It's also for us very good because they are the masters, our heroes and we can ask them a lot of things.

INT: It is amazing, the way you see them. Because it's a dog-eat-dog world. Everyone looks out for themselves in every kind of business; hotel industry and whatever kind of business. So, it's great to see that people are working together because there is one common goal. To be greener, to do good for the people.

EVA B: Yes! And it makes your work so much easier if you can talk with other people who do the same. It's such a delightful experience.

INT: I am very happy to hear that. Coming back to any official documents, do you have anything, either online or...?

EVA B: CSR report. That's online.

INT: ...and you describe your goals?

EVA B: Yes. Exactly.

INT: And this is communicated to your employees?

EVA B: Yes, it's in every public room for employees, it's on the wall.

INT: Either they want it or not they will see it.

EVA B: Yes, they have to read it.

INT: Trainings are not the most efficient. Also, from my own experience, just to sit in a chair for 8 hours and learn about something, you will fall asleep in the middle of it at some point. That's more efficient.

EVA B: Yes, constant repeating is the only thing that works.

INT: Exactly! I definitely understand. Probably also for me, as a student, reading about environmental practices and policies and strategies, the most important thing is to evaluate them. You already mention that you are trying to check and that you want to check if everything works. Whose responsibility would that be?

EVA B: Mine.

INT: Is there any example that you could provide; any policy, any green practice that you are really taking care that it's working like it should be? For example, the water conservation or the energy? Do you have an example of what you do to control it?

EVA B: I try to have a look in winter at our system where the heating is switched on and switched off individually. I control it. I look at it and I control if that could be right. In our cellar we have a room which is only for waste separation. We have bins with pictures for electricity, plastic, batteries, all kinds of things to separate it. There are pictures, what comes where and I go there every day to control if it's right.

INT: I guess, because you already mentioned about the certification you have had, you had some goals. Do you also make sure that you achieve these goals?

EVA B: Yes.

INT: That's also great because it's not a huge hotel with 400 rooms and a million employees and it's also important, and this comes once again from my personal experience, that everybody works for the same goal.

EVA B: And it helps a lot. If only one person controls it, you never know where to start and where to end. In the cellar, where these separations bins are, a lot of employees come to me and tell me: have you seen? It's not right! So, they also control it, even if they don't have to because it's very important for them.

INT: We can also imagine, as you mentioned, that there is some problem. Something doesn't work as it should. For example, you having used too much water, electricity. Is there any mechanism that would make sure that the next time you check upon this goal, it will be ok. Is there something that you would say works as a parachute when you are falling?

EVA B: Yes, of course. We are going through our invoices; we are checking how much electricity. We actually go with a bucket and a clock and control how much water is going and down and then we experience that we thought these water stoppers are everywhere, but they are not. We read that guests refuse to change the towel daily even if they want to. So, it's everywhere, you have to control it all the time. Nothing works from the beginning and I just have reminders on my list that I have to look everywhere. You can't say: I did everything now to be greener, told everybody, I gave everybody the right things and now I sit back and relax because I am a green hotel. That never works. You have to work every time and you have to control everything and you have to tell everybody every day.

INT: It only makes sense. What I get from you and got from other people as well, having talked with other managers, is that constant and continuous controlling is actually the most important.

EVA B: Yes.

INT: Acting proactively. This question derives from my thesis itself. It's the essence of my thesis. How have your green practices affected the local society, economy and environment? I know it's very hard to measure stuff like this. It's hard to say we saved so much water, so we won the battle. Would you be able to say that what you do has affected the community, the economy, the environment in specific way?

EVA B: Yes, for example when we applied for the very first time for this Austrian environmental label, somebody came and helped us because you have to measure everything, you have to give them a lot of figures; how much electricity you use, how much water, how much waste you produce. We didn't know that our system with this heat switching off was such a great idea or that important or that it works so well. We just thought we want to save more electricity, let's do it that way. He was from an office which are measuring electricity and the use of it and he was totally out of his mind and he said he never saw a hotel or anything like us because we reduced so much our electricity and we such good figures and he looked at our system and he said it's perfect!

INT: That's great!

EVA B: We were so happy about it because we were doing it for so many years and never thought about it.

INT: When I heard that this happened approximately 40 ago... I am still shocked! I cannot believe because as I said it's something that many people hadn't thought of 40 years ago. You already mentioned external people checking out your figures. Do you have any consultants as a company? You said you were green from the beginning, but do you ever hire a consultancy company?

EVA B: No.

INT: Would you say that the society or the neighborhood at least here are aware of what you are doing and you affected them in any way?

EVA B: The neighborhood not, but our employees, our guests and our kollegs (trainees).

INT: The employees in what way would you say? They became greener in the way they also behave at home?

EVA B: I think so, yes.

INT: What I also got from Ms. Fedl, it doesn't have to be the case here, is that being green would also mean that you might have the possibility to pay your employees better than the collective agreement for example.

EVA B: Yes. You are totally right! We also think that sustainability is not only being green. It's also treating people right. For example, our reception team has adopted a child in Africa from world vision and we support a child and our owner said when you do that, we do the same, we also adopt one, a kid in Africa and we are supporting them. It was a very good experience for our team. So, it's very good to share that and once a month shiatsu masseurs come to us and every employee can go there for half an hour and they don't have to pay for it and it's not free time, it's their working time.

INT: Do you have any open positions? I could just come for the massages!

EVA B: No, that's not working! Also, I never thought about it in that case but we do it like Anna (Fedl) every year or every half a year we have meetings with every employee and if we are satisfied with them we increase their pay.

INT: Basically, the idea that being green, being greener actually saves up some money. Would you say that it's true? Would you agree with that?

EVA B: Yes. But it also costs a lot of money but you can also save money.

INT: I can only imagine that when you start being green, if a normal hotel wants to change, wants to shift to greener practices, then it's a huge amount of money that you need to invest firstly.

EVA B: It depends. We thought that too. At that time it was a different time, we were not aware of that and we thought the Austrian eco label would be a lot of work, a lot of effort and it would cost a lot of money and it wasn't the case because we realized we are doing already so much we didn't even know, which they require, so it didn't cost us that much. People are so afraid because they think they have to change so much, they have to work so much more, it's so much effort and it will cost so much money and that's the problem. They just have to read it, or they have to talk to somebody like us or to other environmental hotels and then you realize you can find so many things that you are already doing. I

mean there are hotels that are not doing such good work in parts of being green but they wouldn't even think about it. People who consider it, they would be surprised when they are brave enough to do it because you won't find anything that aren't already doing.

INT: Correct me if I am wrong here. It's not only being cost efficient and managing to save up money. It's also the feeling that you get because you already mentioned that people come to you...

EVA B: Because they want to feel better. I also feel very good knowing that I work or that I lead in an environment that's so important for sustainability. It makes me feel better.

INT: I mean, it's a job and every job is a job. But people also from my circle and friends of people I know say: I am working, I am making that much money but I don't feel good in the end of the day. They might be working for a normal corporation or it doesn't have to be a big-scale or small-scale business and lately people, at least that's how I see it, want to do something for their soul.

EVA B: I also hear that a lot. But how is it in Greece?

INT: We need at least 2 more hours... Coming back to the hotel, you already mentioned the Austrian eco label. Are there any other certification schemes like ISO 14001, the well know or...

EVA B: No, we don't have that but we have the eco label which is the same as the Austrian environmental label but for Europe.

INT: You don't mean the EMAS, you mean the eco label?

EVA B: Yes.

INT: And you mentioned also the Austrian certification.

EVA B: Yes. They are very similar. And we are member of the sleep green hotels, as you know.

INT: There are only 2 names on this list for Austria and it's of course this one and the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle. This is also a sensitive topic, among others, but I would like to ask you, if this is of course ok with you, how is the local government's behavior, stance

towards a green hotel. Most green hotels are small-scale hotels. Did you ever come across some difficulties or they opposed to any plans of yours, for example the solar or the photovoltaic panels?

EVA B: It's a process and they don't make it easier for the hotel. There are so many standards which you have to fulfill which do not fit with green thinking. For example, when you make the Austrian eco label then you get difficulties because they require things you cannot do because the 4-star standards require something different. For example, you have to have in every room little soaps, shampoos, shower gels if you are a 4-star hotel and they say you cannot do that if you want the label. That's very hard. There are many rules from the government and many standards you have to fulfill and if you buy new things or you make something like the solar panels there is so much paperwork you have to do.

INT: Bureaucracy in general. I am Greek, so I know how bureaucracy can be. A discouraging factor. Would also the minibars be a problem? Because I know that a 4-star hotel has to have minibars in every room.

EVA B: We had this problem. And then we switched them and replaced them with ones that do not use so much electricity. Then you do it that way. I would prefer not to have a minibar. 9 years ago, we were 3-stars and we had empty minibars and when we got the 4th star we had to have full minibars, you can't only say I offer my guests a fridge. So, we were searching for organic coca cola, juice and chocolate to make a compromise. That's how we do it. We tried to make a compromise but it makes it very hard and sometimes it's very frustrating because you would have the will to do it and you cannot.

INT: It's not easy fighting alone but someone has to fight the good fight.

EVA B: But it's also with the guests. You cannot only do everything because you want to be green. There is a funny story. We had a Nutella at the buffet and I said it's not a very sustainable product and not a very healthy product and there is an organic chocolate spread with which we replaced the Nutella. We couldn't do it for long because our guests started a revolution and every second review was that this cannot be. People were going to the supermarkets and they were bringing it here. So, we said: let the guests choose. We have Nutella and organic chocolate spread and nobody was eating the organic chocolate.

We had to get rid of it and now we just have Nutella. So, you cannot always do everything to be green and just the way you want to. There are many factors.

INT: You have to find a balance.

EVA B: Yes, you have to find a balance and make everybody happy.

INT: Exactly. Because, of course, fighting the good fight is what everybody should be going after, but at the same time it's a business and it has to make money in order to go on. Because hotels will exist no matter what this hotel does. And it's better if you still exist and you go on setting an example.

EVA B: And you need to compromise.

INT: Would you say that you ever had to go against someone in the government or an association or something just to take the side of the green hotel philosophy?

EVA B: I understand what you mean. Not really or not so hard. I mean we had a lot of discussions.

INT: Did you have any support? You already mentioned that you and other hotels are working together, or you might be exchanging ideas but did you ever have any other of support? You already mentioned the association within, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Any NGO?

EVA B: It helps a lot that we are good friends with Michaela Reitterer and they help you a lot. If you have any problems, they will at least try. If you really take it seriously and you discuss a lot with people or with the government or institutions at the end, they will help you as well. What should they do when you say it's for the environment or for sustainability? They will lose at the end. You have to be very hard on them. You cannot back down. As you said, sometimes you fight alone and sometimes you lose.

INT: This also touches upon the whole idea of Vienna being a green city. You mentioned, for example, that the neighborhood or the society doesn't really know that much of the hotel. You don't get that much support, so to say. You know that one of the 17 sustainability goals is to be a sustainable city which for example means having green spaces and being able to provide a garden is a green space.

EVA B: The government, in the first place, didn't want to allow it to us.

INT: To have a garden you mean?

EVA B: To let people out because they are too loud for the people you live around. They were coming and measuring it, how loud it is, and it was too high. We said we have it for a year and we applied for it but it takes so long until someone comes to control it. We said: what should we do? Then they thought about it and said: let's make an exception. Really! And it's so important because almost every guest mentions it in the review that it is so good that we have that garden for our guests.

INT: I think people, even if they come for 3 or 4 days, no matter what their age is they want to go around...

EVA B: And then come back to...

INT: Exactly. Because the big hotels do not really provide it. If you go to the Ring, for example, the hotels that have access to the garden are not that many.

EVA B: I think so too. Even though. The government is against it.

INT: But at least they made an exception in the end.

EVA B: That's the most important thing.

INT: Do you have any future plans when it comes to green business strategies? Something you want to achieve in the next years, something that would give you the label again?

EVA B: The photovoltaic. Decrease using plastic like straws at the bar. Decrease waste and use more organic products. Offer more organic products, more Fairtrade products. Things like that.

INT: Anything else you would like to say? Any last remark?

EVA B: I think it was already a lot.

INT: Excellent. Is there anything you would like to ask me regarding this interview, this topic?

EVA B: Maybe if you could send a copy when it's finished?

INT: Gladly! Hopefully it's going to be good enough that it's on the website of the library of the university. A last question – permission. Would I be able to quote what you said today in my thesis?

EVA B: Yes.

INT: Excellent!

Appendix 5: Interview with Brigitte Trattner

Appendix 5 Interview

Interviewee: Brigitte Trattner

Interviewer: Apostolos Tsiantis

Date and time: 06.05.2019, 16:00 CEST

Duration: 59:01

INT: Mrs. Trattner thank you for having me here. To start with an easy question, how long have you been here in this hotel and what are your position and duties?

BRIGITTE T: I took it over as general manager in January 2014.

INT: You were the general manager from the beginning, or did you start in any other position first?

BRIGITTE T: Here in this hotel? As a GM yes.

INT: And what are the duties in an overall perspective of a general manager?

BRIGITTE T: AT the end, the full responsibility in regard to finance, employees, guests. So, the overall responsibility of the hotel management. Whatever...

INT: ...whatever comes up.

BRIGITTE T: Yes.

INT: How do you perceive the general situation here in Vienna? How difficult is it to run a hotel? What are the difficulties in general? What are the advantages, if any?

BRIGITTE T: Well, I would say the difficulties are the same like everywhere. Running a hotel is a people's business that brings its challenges with it. Besides that, it's a 24/7 business. It has different needs and different challenges than a bank that closes at 6pm. The advantage in Vienna is obviously the destination itself. So, Vienna is a city, it is a destination itself. It is a huge advantage.

INT: How does the competition look like? You are a 5-star hotel, I guess you compare yourself to other 5-star hotels of course.

BRIGITTE T: Yes. Competitor-wise you have all the major brands you have here. There is more coming. So, at the end it is pretty much the same as in many cities where eventually the growth takes over the tourism flow. And then, after some years, it equalizes itself. I think Vienna is the same as many other major cities, there are waves, up and down which bring back the rate up and down, always in line with supply and demand.

INT: Since we are already talking about this great city of Vienna, would you consider it a green destination? Would a tourist think of it when thinking of sustainable tourism, or alternative ways of travelling?

BRIGITTE T: I guess. If you make a decision in regard to green, the first cities that would always come to your mind would probably be the northern cities; Stockholm, Helsinki, and these cities. I would think Vienna is as green or not as green as most other German speaking cities. So, if you look at Munich or Vienna it might probably be the same. Vienna has, I think, for sure one advantage, compared for example to Berlin, that the public transportation is better. It is cheaper, pretty advanced, you really can go outside the city. We do not have the need of a car. And with that, Vienna is quite a unique European City. I could not think of a city that has such a good public transportation of a big city, as Vienna has. Besides the money factor. No city in Europe offers it that cheap.

INT: It is very important for the people and the tourists.

BRIGITTE T: Absolutely. And of course, looking from that side, Vienna is probably a very green city. Specifically, when you look at transportation, the offer versus the price. This is pretty unique.

INT: Talking about greener ways of acting. Would you say that this particular hotel, the InterContinental of Vienna, is a green business? At least at the moment?

BRIGITTE T: I would say no, because it is in many ways not green at all. It is a 60's building, it is full of concrete and badly isolated, sitting on old equipment. In regard to energy consumption I would say this is not an energy efficient property. If you would build that nowadays, it would probably be more energy efficient than it is currently. So, I would not flag this hotel as being very green.

INT: In general, when we are talking about tourism. Would you consider - the way you see it, as a person, as a traveler, as a general manager - that the way that other hotels promote themselves, saying that they are green - it being true, it partially being greenwashing- do you think this has affected the way that people choose their accommodation when they visit any cities in the world?

BRIGITTE T: I guess the longer the more. I think at the moment there is still a lot of greenwashing, as you say. But the longer the more it does become important. I do believe there is still a long way to go. However, only looking at companies, they start asking for green certificates, or energy management systems et cetera be it because it is a standard they need to ask or because slowly people do get concerned about it. I still believe there is still a huge way to becoming more efficient and becoming better. I do not think that specific company chain hotels... I do not think that there is a lot being done. I still believe everybody has it on their agenda because it looks good but not because we really take it seriously.

INT: That's really important what you say right here.

BRIGITTE T: I mean if you are really critical about it. Of course, we also have it on our agenda. IHG has it on its agenda but is it good enough what we do at the moment? No, definitely not.

INT: I think that any actions towards that direction have been relatively smaller. If one would take the example of Vienna, you more or less have two really green hotels. I would say from a total of 4000 properties.

BRIGITTE T: Absolutely. I think we are nowhere near calling ourselves being green. Not at all.

INT: it is a very big title to begin with, and it is a really important one. But yes, there...

BRIGITTE T: Which two hotels are you talking about?

INT: These are also the two hotels that I am interviewing. The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle and the Der Wilhelmshof, the one that is close to Prater.

BRIGITTE T: I only know the one at Stadthalle, what Michaela Reitterer does.

INT: And I also had the opportunity to work for them. And I could see it from the inside. And there is a lot that they are doing. Also working at the Imperial Riding School made me understand that it is difficult to implement stuff like this in a big or luxurious hotel perhaps.

BRIGITTE T: I do not think it is difficult. It is of course a matter of... Well, some things are difficult, looking at some buildings, how they are. Specifically, in this hotel, if they really would like to become serious about it, we would have to start with the façade, the window glazing, with things like that. So, if we really would like to become more energy efficient it definitely would start pretty much from scratch, because not so much has been done here in this property. So yes, in many ways of course it is difficult, but you would do it probably if there is one big refurbishment coming up. Then, of course we would nowadays look into these things.

INT: And since we talked about this whole idea and competition so far, do you think if a hotel nowadays is promoting itself as a green hotel, would gain what most of the hotels want, a competitive advantage over someone else? If we put it on the same stars level.

BRIGITTE T: I don't think it is a question about stars. It is much more a question of how much you are really willing to do. Because if you look at the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, they have really taken all the consequences and fully implemented it all over. But I think it could be done in a 5-star hotel as much as in a 2-star hotel. I do not think it is star related because I do believe a customer who stays in a 2-star hotel does not mean that he is not environmentally aware. And he still might choose between 2-star properties, the one being environmentally friendly and the other one not. So, I think it can be done, or it should be done in any star rated hotel, irrelevant if it is upmarket or lower market.

INT: It only makes sense, for the environment also perhaps for this niche of guests if a hotel would choose to. And I am actually aware that, at least that's what Mr. Ferrari told me, you are working at the moment towards this direction on a certain level at least.

BRIGITTE T: We are doing what we can do. Obviously, we all know we are highly energy inefficient; we are not a good example for low energy usage. However, this is not an excuse, for basically doing nothing. You know, we are all using a lot of materials, we are all using tons of plastic. We are using chemicals endlessly. We are basically looking into it from an operational point of view. Looking at the chemical and how are we using it, if

there is an alternative. What machines are we using? Where are we using plastic? Is it necessary, is there an alternative? So basically, we are looking into it from a daily operational point of view and I just try to clean it up. This is what we have started this year, looking into it and questioning basically every purchase, all the ways of working and see if there are ways of doing things better.

INT: And if I may ask, what was the reason behind the idea of starting it this year in 2019? Of starting of thinking about either reducing, or becoming more efficient?

BRIGITTE T: The reason behind is that the company, the global company, has put corporate social responsibility on its agenda by giving hotels targets. So, a target is one thing and how can a global company put a target to 5000 hotels? Of course, you have to standardize it somehow. So, what they are doing is basically using the consumed energy divided by occupied room. And when we received the target, we knew that this is for us a target that is not much useful, because this hotel is energy inefficient and even if the occupancy is high or low, it does not have an impact on energy. For thousands of reasons. But we said: okay, we might not be able to fulfill that target, however we take it from another side. We take it from another point of view. We still take energy, or wastage on our agenda and see what we can do from an operational point of view. So, it's not exactly what the company wanted to do, but on the other hand we said: ok, we still want to do something. That's how we came up with it. We started questioning our internal processes, procedures, wastage et cetera and for that reason we started to work on that. Today a bit more serious than we have been before.

INT: And what are the goals, or actually what is the time frame?

BRIGITTE T: It is not so much the goals. It is more whenever we come up with a new purchase, we start to question how much plastic is part of it. Is it reusable? Just to start questioning not only from a price point but also from an environmental point of view. And really started and we came up with little things you know. Uniforms for example, being individually wrapped in plastic, where we said: well we get 100 uniforms a day, so is it really necessary to individually wrap it in plastic? You know, things like that. And there are thousands of these things.

INT: Did you already change this?

BRIGITTE T: Of course. So, when we purchase or repurchase a machine, we just purchased the cleaning machine. Now we found out that there are cleaning machines that do not need chemicals. They seem to work with water or there are machines that do not use chemicals at all. And so, you know, we got this machine. We really started to look into these things. Or the chemicals we are using for the washing machines. Is there something? There is of course environmentally friendly chemicals. So, you know, whatever we purchase, or we reorder, we started to question in that regard. So, there is no timeline behind, there is not a real target behind. It's simply by setting up an action list and by the end of the year we want to review and say okay what have changed and what is the impact.

INT: So basically, you would say it is the brand leadership that drove to this step? Because it was a centrally given mandate, let's say.

BRIGITTE T: That was possibly the kickoff.

INT: So, the issuing of the CSR and the issuing of specific targets is what also gives you the motivation.

BRIGITTE T: Right.

INT: Would you say that, already for as long as you are working on this direction, management and employees are already into it? They are already taking the environment into consideration?

BRIGITTE T: I do believe they are happy to jump on that. Because we also made an internal competition where we asked the employees to hand in ideas. And we got almost 100 ideas back. So, there is a willingness of looking into it, of thinking about it. So almost every second employee handed in an idea, which to me is not bad, 100 ideas is a lot. And a lot of these are little things. And we say of course we can do that. And we of course will discuss it on our employee meeting, which I have every second month where we give a regular update what has been implemented, where are we, where do we stand. Just to keep it on the agenda and to keep it going.

INT: Do you maintain a certain team, like a green team within the hotel?

BRIGITTE T: It is not actually a green team, it is part of the meeting. And the drivers are of course the department heads. So, there is a department head in each division and they of course basically also drive it, question things and come back with ideas.

INT: How many departments do you have?

BRIGITTE T: The key departments are, kitchen, service, housekeeping, front office, finance, HR, sales. These are pretty much the big departments.

INT: And you mentioned around 200 employees?

B. 217.

INT: It is a big hotel; it seems like it. It is necessary I believe. And so far, from what you witnessed - and it was actually really interesting, and that's why I wanted to have an interview with you, that it is in the beginning what you are trying to do and I find it really interesting for this thesis as well - would you consider, or does it seem like, this changing or these specific decisions you might make, that have a greener touch, they also come with a higher cost?

BRIGITTE T: Yes and no. Some are and some are not. We were actually surprised that some products are pretty much the same prices, as the disposable ones. So, I do believe that also in the industry there is a lot going on. For example, to get rid of plastic is nowadays almost the same price. I think also the industry is changing a lot, the products are changing a lot because obviously there is an increasing awareness and we cannot move on like we were doing the past 30 years.

INT: I can only imagine chemicals might indeed be a little bit more expensive or turning to organic food.

BRIGITTE T: Chemicals yes and no. But there is quite a lot out in the market. It's definitely worth to invest and the interesting thing is that sometimes even smaller companies, that have... or for example when it comes to chemicals, we now found an Austrian company that is pretty much offering the same price as one of these international big players. And the international big player does not offer disposable chemicals. So, I think some small companies are faster with developing new things than often the big ones are. Which

is good. I mean, so there is quite a lot out on the market. It is worth to question them and to invest. It is not necessarily much more expensive.

INT: Because this has actually become, I wouldn't like to say, like a justification for not turning green but it is a go to, it's an escape goat as in: we are not turning green, because it's expensive because we have heard it's expensive.

BRIGITTE T: But it's worth to question that. It's not necessarily true, or not anymore.

INT: Not anymore at least. There are more options indeed as you already mentioned.

BRIGITTE T: Yes.

INT: Do you have a target for every single department. Or a few sub targets for every single department of yours?

BRIGITTE T: At the moment, we do not have a target. At the moment, we just say that whatever we purchase, whatever we move we want to question whether it makes sense. I think by the end of the year we can make a first review and then it might be a possibility or opportunity that we say: let's go and take a step further and look into what else we can do, or what else can we do and save more. But this year we don't really have a target on it.

INT: Have you established an environmental management system? So, I guess the answer here is no, because you don't have a specific set of goals, or...

BRIGITTE T: Well, we do have an environmental management system which is the official IHG system which is called Green Engage. So, all 6000 hotels are basically on that system. But again, this system, I mean it is a good system, however, would there a target behind this, it was not really usable. Because the building itself is highly energy inefficient. So that's why we decided for us, that we can't make it. We use Green Engage, there is even a target behind there, however we also know that this target cannot be fulfilled by the hotel, because it is at it is. We do measure energy, we do measure waste, we do measure water consumption but there are not really any big changes we would, or we can do in the next one or two years.

INT: And in that case I can only imagine that there is nothing legally binding, obviously it's like guidelines, the Green Engage is like guidelines.

BRIGITTE T: Well legally binding, of course whatever is legally binding you have to adhere anyhow. Like waste separation, you know, whatever the city, whatever we have to do, we are doing anyhow. But besides that, we also do have the Austrian Ecolabel.

INT: Have you already been certified?

BRIGITTE T: Yes, certified for about 5 years.

INT: And is there any environmental policy document or programmed you have issued? So basically, would you say that you would use a CSR report of the whole company, as your bible, to navigate throughout the whole procedure of turning green or turning greener at least?

BRIGITTE T: Well the CSR, a global CSR report is of course always very generic, and I do believe a hotel needs to find its way, what is best to do. So, no I am not using the CSR report as my bible, because we are talking about hotels that are from China between South America up to Russia. It's highly generic. Of course, some countries are much more advanced when it comes to the use of different ways of waste separation, which are, you know, given in other countries. I think these reports are always guidelines. A company, or an enterprise has then to look into what you can do on top of what is legally required. Because it's always about that, what more can you do and what is legally required.

INT: You already mentioned, the whole measurement of energy of waste and water consumption. Are there any specific criteria or, let's say, limits you need to surpass, specific numbers you need to reach?

BRIGITTE T: You cannot. You know, if you do have a building that is basically 55 years old, and you do not install a new boiler, or a new system, how would you become more energy efficient from one year to the next one. If the things you can do have been implemented, then typically it comes back to investments in order to really change the overall consumption. Same with water. If you have the water reducer in the room, if that is all done, there is not much more in addition to that what you can do.

INT: If you don't change it already.

BRIGITTE T: If you don't change. Of course, you can try to educate the guests and say well, but you know...

INT: Especially in a luxury hotel...

BRIGITTE T: This all works to a certain limit, but eventually you have reached what you can do, specifically also to water consumption. It's a lot about efficient equipment. I believe. Specifically, when it comes to water. Or to electricity. It's about equipment, isolation. To switch off the light, you would do it with the room key anyhow. These are already standard things nowadays. If you go into a room, you need your key to switch on the air conditioner and all that stuff. As soon as all that is done there is not so much more you really can do to become even more efficient. I do believe, there is still a lot we all can do when it comes to waste, when it comes to usage of plastic, when it comes to food waste and these things. I think there is still big potential.

INT: So basically what we need is a combination of the endeavors of both the guests, who need to either educate themselves so to say or to at least try to be a little bit more environmentally aware, and of course, looking at the big picture, the hotel should reduce what it can introduce already on its own.

BRIGITTE T: Absolutely.

INT: It is definitely a combination of these two powers. And going back once again to the measurements you mentioned before. Everything the hotel is doing or wants to do, who would you say is the responsible one to overlook all those processes. Would it be the head of every department? Would it be you after all?

BRIGITTE T: After all me. But after all it is everybody and specifically the department heads.

INT: And if we talk about indicators evaluating the green progress of the hotel, you would not be able to talk about any indicators at the moment, because...

BRIGITTE T: Well indicator, what would be an indicator? An indicator is for example, cost of linen per occupied room. Cost of chemical per occupied room. These are all indicators because obviously, the cost of linen, for example, shows you how much linen you have used per occupied room. Because if the cost goes up typically the linen usage goes

up. So, of course it's also electricity, but it's much more than that. It's food cover per guest. A lot of the costs are also related to the usage of things in the hotel. The entire cleaning. Not payroll, of course. But cleaning supplies is related to usage of cleaning.

INT: Have you been controlling all these things? As you mentioned cost of linen...

BRIGITTE T: Yes of course. We have all these costs in our monthly financial statements and there of course you see how much was spent per occupied room for example.

INT: What would happen in case you would realize there is a problem. Like a red alert would somehow go off and you see there is a problem.

BRIGITTE T: You would start investigating. You would start looking into it. Probably there is an explanation for it. Could be that you have a business exchange. A guest from India typically uses more linen than a European guest. So, you firmly start investigating where the additional costs come from.

INT: So, you think already forward. You have to more or less forecast something like this. You need to be. It's good that you have an idea that you already answer that you need to investigate it first, that there should be a reason. Cause it might just be, not just in a hotel but any kind of company, that they have no coping mechanism, if something happens, they don't know what to do actually. They are just being caught unprepared. I find it at least, that's why it's also part of this questionnaire, I wanted to see how people would react in case of something going really bad. And this is basically moving to one of the last questions. This is the essence of my whole research here. I know that you already said, that an effect is, to begin with it's really hard to measure, it's really hard to see, but what kind of effect do you at least expect with your greener practices on the local society, economy or the environment or have you already seen anything? I know it's a really tough question and...

BRIGITTE T: Well, the question, first of all, is very hard to measure, because you never know why, or you often don't know why a guest chose a specific hotel. Often you only can guess unless you ask to start each guest, that will check in, why they chose this hotel and not the neighbor hotel next door. I personally believe that the industry changes because there is a changing demand of the market. There are people more and more asking

for sustainability. So, I believe often the industry simply reacts to the changing the market conditions.

INT: So, you would not say, it's because of their love for the environment and or...

BRIGITTE T: Well, I am pretty realistic when it comes to that. I do believe that a lot of it is simply done because the business requests it or requires it. I honestly do not believe that there is a lot of self-fulfillment or any other agenda behind. It all sound good, the company is also saying: yes, it is important but they only say it's important because the demand is slowly changing. I believe that probably younger generations are becoming, hopefully, a bit more conscious about it. But I don't think...

INT: Will it be the case in Vienna though, that a change of specific hotels and the existence of a view really green hotels changes a mindset, either of people, of younger generations...

BRIGITTE T: I do believe that, that a destination itself could market probably into that direction but if you really want to stick out you have to than everybody does. I cannot think of a single city, I would have to say I have to go there because they are completely taking the topic environment seriously. I couldn't think of a city, maybe you know one.

INT: A specific city would be actually more than hard, and there are many cities that consider themselves green, for example Ljubljana was Europe's greenest city...

BRIGITTE T: But why?

INT: I am not aware of that.

BRIGITTE T: Okay.

INT: Because I can also not see it. I have been there a couple of times in the past two years and I think it was the green city of 2018 and I have absolutely no idea why. Because it was rather dirty, there were not that many recycling bins, for example which is the first thing one would expect in a city that's...

BRIGITTE T: Yes, recycling, waste separation, buses that are purely on electricity, you know... Also, in Vienna, why doesn't Vienna not ban the old busses that go into the inner

city, they have to be on electricity for example. I could not think of a single city that really sticks out for being a pioneer.

INT: A major city, a big city at least, it's not...

BRIGITTE T: Vienna does a lot. I think they still could do even more. If you really want to be recognized as a pioneer.

INT: Definitely. And having talked to Mrs. Reitterer about it, in general talks and as part of my thesis report, she is not sure. She would not say that Vienna is such a green destination. Even though it is so much time...

BRIGITTE T: Wait. Vienna is not more or less green than many other cities. That's what I am saying. I think it is. Vienna is great. Vienna is doing a lot. Public transportation is probably one of the best in Europe. And Vienna probably could even go as that further up. We are having the best public transportation, we are having probably only E-cars in the inner city, you know, with having a few more things that we really say: okay, if you want to see a green city – go to Vienna. I think Vienna is good, but...

INT: The best place to live for the past 10 years.

BRIGITTE T: That's what Vienna managed to be for the best 10 years. And I think Vienna would have the potential of being one of the greenest cities in Europe. I am absolutely convinced.

INT: I am very happy to hear that, because of the position you are at, you are also able to save it on a certain level, of course, by trying to promote, either on your own as an Inter-Continental, or generally as hotel owners, managers and so on. I think you do have the power to save it.

BRIGITTE T: I do believe so. And specifically, when it comes to tourism you do have a voice, specifically in a city as Vienna. Millions of tourists that come every year and I think, Vienna would definitely have the potential of becoming not only the best and most livable city but also the greenest city.

INT: When we are talking about the local society of this hotel, because it's like a small city here with more than 200 people. Do you think it has affected their lives, the way, you

already mentioned, that they pitched 100 ideas. Do you think it can also affect the way how they think of the environment and the way they behave in their houses? Or have you even noticed a change.

BRIGITTE T: I don't know. You only can hope that some of it is taken back home. But I think it really has an impact on the private life of my employees, I only can hope.

INT: Are there any auditing schemes that you are running for? You already mentioned the Austrian environmental certificate. Is there something you would be interested in, or you are looking into?

BRIGITTE T: I don't, I am not a big fan of, I don't know, having 10 labels. We used to have the Green Globe, which we then gave up, because we said Green Globe is doing pretty much the same as Green Engage. I don't think it's a matter of having five labels, it's much more a matter of how seriously you take it internally. In the end, they all have pretty similar measurements, there is some that are stricter than the others. To me it does not make sense to have 4 or 5 of them. Because you basically have then 5 different tracking systems, because everybody is using its own and this does not change the...

INT: To more of a sensitive topic here. What is the stand of the local government towards green businesses, or towards businesses that want to shift to greener practices? Is there any support, any opposition, any obstacles or you might state that you want to turn greener and you receive some kind of support? It does not have to be monetary, could be guidelines, trainings...

BRIGITTE T: Well, the Austrian Ecolabel is an Austrian initiative, not Viennese but Austrian. Support... I would not know what support. I think in many ways the government could even be stricter. I do believe that many things happen if you make them to a law. So, I wouldn't expect more subsidies. It would make sense to push the agenda harder. But of course, if you push an agenda, there is always a pro and a con. So, the government needs to find some way in the middle. In the end, I am not sure. At least Vienna has a green party as part of the coalition I personally believe it's good to have.

INT: Is the hotel, or the firm, part of the Austrian hotel Association? Are there any representatives at the association?

BRIGITTE T: I couldn't tell you. Probably Mrs. Reitterer can give you more information on that.

INT: Excellent. One closing statement. Any future plans that you, any future big plans at least, for the hotel in a greener perspective?

BRIGITTE T: Well, the hotel is heading towards a big refurbishment and for that, the entire subject of energy will be a big topic. That's for sure.

INT: Would you be able, because you mentioned it a few times, and it is actually really important, the energy efficiency, to foresee such a big change within the next 5 or 10 years, that would make this building energy efficient? But we would probably be talking about substantial changes. Would you be able to see something completely different in this hotel? Something way greener, something more efficient?

BRIGITTE T: Triple glazing of the windows.

INT: Would you be okay with?

BRIGITTE T: This is not a decision I can make. This is a decision an owner has to make. To be honest I cannot answer you that question. This is a matter of long-term view, this is a matter of cashflow, a matter of many things, which I really cannot answer. These are questions you have to ask somebody that is a hotel owner. They of course would have a certain view on their own building. This I couldn't answer.

INT: Maybe I pass by in 5 or 10 years again to see how it went. Is there anything you would like to ask me regarding this questionnaire or the thesis?

BRIGITTE T: No.

INT: I hope I can quote all the material you gave me today, I hope this is fine with you.

BRIGITTE T: Yes, sure!

INT: Thank you so much for your time!

Appendix 6: Interview with Michaela Reitterer

Interviewee: Michaela Reitterer

Interviewer: Apostolos Tsiantis

Date and time: 25.04.2019, 17:00 CEST

Duration: 1:14:24

INT: Hello Mrs. Reitterer, thank you so much for having me here. I would like to start with a really simple question. I know I am interviewing the president of the AHA but I would like you to let me know what are your duties, what is it that you are doing.

MICHAELA R: The AHA is doing political negotiations and we always try to focus on the frame conditions that we have for the Austrian tourism. This is my first work that I have to do as a president. Of course, the AHA does some more things. Another chapter is our campus where we have trainings for owners, for employees but only focused on hotel business. So, this is the only education that is only focused on hotel business. For instance, the Unternehmer Akademie (Entrepreneur Academy), UNA as we call it, is a training for 2 years. It leads you to your next step. Normally for the hotel owners, especially in the countryside, their only concern is what the neighbor is doing, so they always try to be ahead of the neighbor, but they have to think: what do we need here? Who will be my guests? Who do I want to attract with what I have? What do I have to change to be number one in the market and not to be better than my neighbor. In this case you are training for your presentation, how to deal with the banks, how to make your business plan. This is a huge thing. It lasts for 2 years and then we have a department heads' meeting, Abteilungsleiter Akademie (AKA – Head of department academy) and this is for managers' level, like F&B managers, front office managers. There they are connected with others, like with 20 others from all over Austria and they learn how to motivate their teams, to have better planning for their duty plans, how they can improve management in their department. This is a training that lasts for more than a half year. It's 3 weeks in these 6 months and you have an exam at the end and the UNA does it. There are some other daily trainings that we do for everything, like the data protection rules or whatever appears. How to have

a better performance on social media. All these daily trainings that we do for the hotel owners and for the general managers.

INT: Is this funded by the government?

MICHAELA R: Everything is funded by the AHA. We have a membership that people have to pay for. We are a free association. It's not a duty to be a member like with the Chamber of Commerce. We have to convince all the hoteliers to be a member, to pay for that. Especially my duty is also to tell them about what we are doing, how we can improve and what are the frames that we need for the hotel business, for the tourism businesses, for the hospitality business in Austria and to deal with the government or other institutions to guarantee these frame conditions for the hotel business.

INT: You are the president for the 5th year...

MICHAELA R: Now it's my 7th year. One period is for 3 years and I was elected this January for the third time and it will end in 2022. And then it's over.

INT: How many hotels or how many hotel owners are part?

MICHAELA R: We have 1430 members. When I finish I want to have 1600 members. When I started in 2013 we had 1100 members. We had a good growth and a good increase but you always have to have big goals.

INT: Definitely. Aim for the sky and you will at least get to the clouds, right? This number brings me to the next question. According to Wien Tourismus, in Vienna, the capital of Austria we are talking about 416 hotels and we don't talk about any hostels or Airbnb, 34.107 rooms and a total of almost 68.000 bednights. How does competition look like? How is the competition in the industry between the hotels?

MICHAELA R: We have a very huge growth within the last years and now we are here with about 68.000 (rooms) but what we have to consider is that we have 22.000 beds on Airbnb, so every 4th bed is an Airbnb bed and they have no rules, they are not included in the rules, most of the time they are not included in the law and don't pay taxes whatsoever. If every 4th bed in our portfolio of Vienna is an Airbnb or any other kind of sharing economy bed, then we have to consider this. This was one of my big goals last year and we managed this year to have registration duty all over Austria for all the hosts. They have

to be officially registered. Otherwise they are not allowed to be on any platform. Not on booking.com, not on AirBnB, not on Ferienwohnungen.de because the city of Vienna will never get the names of the hosts and any kind of data from AirBnB. So, the hosts have to register themselves and this will be a law by the end of the year.

INT: Was this your idea initially?

MICHAELA R: It was our idea and it was our effort. I was really running for it. It is something that its origin is in the cities but it is already expanding to the countryside, to the small villages and it will be a topic for all hotels in Austria, not only for the hotels in Vienna.

INT: This is also for you as a hotel owner. I know it's not in the questionnaire but how do you feel about Airbnb if I may ask?

MICHAELA R: I do not care about Airbnb. I mean there is enough for everybody. We have a very good occupancy rate, we have a very good room rate so we cannot complain. But I think if there is a business that people are doing, we all have to follow the same rules. And it cannot be that there is another competitor in the market that has no rules. If we play all together in a battlefield or in a playground, then everybody has to follow the same rules, that's the only thing that I want. I am not concerned about Airbnb. I am fine with it or the sharing economy. But there are two things we should always consider. First of all, in the sharing economy if they do not pay any tax, if they don't have to follow any rules and they do not pay for insurance, they will not support the entire Austrian system. And this is the topic. Because they have people that can clean the rooms but they are not following the same rules as we do. We have to register our employees. We have to pay them fair according to the law. They do not register them, they do nothing for them. If you do not register your employees, you do not pay the social system and this is something that we have to consider because the social system is not a thing that is given from heaven. You have to earn the money that we can spend.

INT: Of course, it totally makes sense. How is the industry performing the past years? How is tourism in Vienna?

MICHAELA R: It is very important for Vienna. Although, and that's what we always have to say, for Vienna and also in the countryside all over Austria, please let us always

consider that politicians are just watching things that are under construction and that are a problem. They will never strengthen an economy that already works. They will always help those who are too weak, which is a little bit of a problem because during the economy crisis that started in 2008, tourism was the strongest part of the economy that we had in Austria. We still had more employees than we ever had, we still invested money. Politicians always think: tourism is doing fine, we are important and well-known all over the world, people know us and they come for music and for skiing, et cetera and it works anyhow and we don't need to consider it. But they have to consider. Normally you feed the cow that pulls the carriage and not the one in the back.

INT: It is still important, you would say, for the government but it's not that you especially as an organization need to draw the attention upon the...

E: We always have to bring the attention to our topics. There is a really strong contribution from the hospitality and tourism business to the complete Austrian economic system.

INT: In that case, would you also say that it's also important for the locals, for the people who live in Vienna in terms of finding a job?

E: In terms of getting taxes and fees for the city that can be spent and invested for other institutions that the people who live in Vienna need. For instance, the medical system or the streets. Vienna is living quite good and one of the reasons is the tourism business and the hospitality business.

INT: I can only imagine. Honestly, I believe, and I would actually like to ask you about that, that the way tourism is structured, also gives the city a competitive advantage to any other close destinations. It being Budapest which is another beautiful and really close city or Prague or Bratislava. I think the way that it's structured, the way it's been designed, it gives a competitive advantage against the other cities. Would you also agree?

MICHAELA R: Yes. I mean it's always a triangle between Budapest, Prague and Vienna and there are a lot of trips. Of course, we are also in competition with Prague and Budapest because sometimes for the international tours the question is: do we go to Prague or to Vienna or to Budapest because they are really similar and sometimes they only decide for one of these. That's why we are in direct competition with Prague and Budapest. But I think there is enough for everyone.

INT: Talking about competition and this goes back to the previous conversation; I can only imagine all these hotel owners meeting together... How is the co-operation at the AHA? When people are meeting, people who own hotels and are more or less in a state of competition, I would say...

MICHAELA R: They are never. I think we always have to see that everybody had his hotel and they have to take care of their teams, employees and business. So, they are never in competition. For me, I also say that they are a part of the hospitality business like I am and if you see it like this I think there is always enough for everybody. Of course, our competition is not the hotels next to us. For me, for instance, it's green hotels in other cities. I have to convince my future guests to come to Vienna to my green hotel and not to go to Hamburg to another green hotel. The competition is never, in the days of the digital customer journey, your neighbor. It's the other one who is close to your brand and who is doing the same.

INT: It's really interesting that you mention this because I was not expecting this answer to begin with and I had a similar question that I posed to Ms. Burritscher, the director of the Der Wilhelmshof, and I asked her how she sees the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle because you are the two of the few green hotels here in Vienna, if she sees it as the competition and she answered more than fast that: no, we are sister-hotels, more or less, we are working together, we are exchanging ideas. In a competitive world, in a competitive industry, I did not expect that.

MICHAELA R: I always say that if you have to pull the carriage on your own it's much more difficult than to be 2 of us. To make Vienna a smart city, a green city, to have green hotels it's better to have 2 or 3 or 4 hotels because they can offer something. One hotel on its own can never offer whatsoever. Der Wilhelmshof is closer to the city or closer to the Messe and we are never in a competition because as Eva (Burritscher) already said, we are exchanging our ideas. Their owner and I are friends.

INT: Even though, I must say that I know for a fact, having worked with you and having read about the history of the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, that you have done a lot on your own so far. You, as Michaela Reitterer, you as Boutiquehotel Stadthalle. I know you have done a lot and I can only imagine how important it is to have someone right there with you. Talking about green hotels, now we get to the actual point of this meeting, starting

from something general like a statement. In 2018 according to Arcadis, which is a Dutch planning and consulting office, Vienna got the 5th place in the most sustainable cities in the world list. How do you feel about that? From 1 to 10 how strongly would you agree with that?

MICHAELA R: It depends on your focus. If you go public transport it's perhaps number one. We have public transport everywhere, also the buses are on gas or electric. The trams are electric or the underground. So, this works perfectly. We have more kilometers on bicycle path than Copenhagen does. I think if Vienna is number five worldwide it's ok for me. I don't know if you know but 60% of the size of Vienna is agricultural fields and woods.

INT: I was definitely not aware of that.

MICHAELA R: The Vienna woods are in large parts of Vienna in the 21st, 22nd and 23rd district. There is a lot of agriculture that still belongs to Vienna.

INT: I am very surprised right now. I did not expect this. If I were to make the same question when it comes to tourism, just tourism, how sustainable is it?

MICHAELA R: The thing is that we also have to take care that it doesn't get too much. If you see the development in other cities either if it's Berlin or the inhabitants that live in Berlin they want to throw the tourists out, or if you have cities like Barcelona, Venice or Dubrovnik this is really bad. This is because of the cruise ship tourism. They are always having these huge cruise ships arriving having with 3,4,5 thousand guests on board who within seconds or an hour disembark. We do not have it that heavily but the cruise ships on the river Danube have a development people have to consider and the second thing is what we always have to consider as well is that hotel companies do not open the hotels. The investors are investing the money and the question is: if I have my building there, what do I want? Do I want to own offices, apartments or a hotel? And the question is mostly answered by: Ok, I will have a hotel. In the meantime, it's kind of a mixed development and they have offices in the hotel, apartments like Andaz. They have other developments; they are hosting offices. The trend is to have this mixed development but mostly it's not the hotel owners who determine it will be a hotel, this is a topic of the investors.

INT: I was not aware of Andaz or this system in general. A really tough question here is: Would you, as Michaela Reitterer, the president of the AHA, consider Vienna as a green destination? If yes, why? If not, why not? I know it's a rather tough question.

MICHAELA R: It is a tough question. I am a person of not black and white answers because Vienna is a green destination for me due to what I said; the woods, the public transport and stuff like that. It's not a green destination, or not a sustainable destination due to what we could have had better like the biking pass and what can be improved in delivery and bureaucracy for small businesses to open. It's only possible for the huge worldwide companies like H&M or whatsoever that they can open because they have an army of lawyers who does that for them. But what do we do to convince and motivate young people to open a business? This is not sustainable in Vienna and we could improve it. Also, for me the question of sustainability also belongs to green business because it also has to be sustainable, every decision has to be sustainable.

INT: Would you also say that when it comes to tourism, how green of an industry could we be talking about?

MICHAELA R: I do not know. If I answer this question, I always consider the solution as well. If I say it's a very bad green destination due to tourism then I also think about the solution, how we could improve. I think one of the major challenges of the next years will be a new system due to visitor economy due to what we show to the people about Vienna. Is it only the first district or is there something more? First of all, we had the fremdenverkehr (foreign travelling), then we had the tourism and now we have the tourism economy. What is the best between the people who live in Vienna and those who visit Vienna? This should be a very fair and sustainable way of being together and that's why the visitor economy will challenge on how we see, with the help of big data, where the tourists go. What are the hotspots, where could we as well bring them, at what time of the day? It's not necessary that all the people go to the inner city at 10 in the morning. So, can there be a system of... (referring to dynamic pricing) I forget the world. I will find it!

INT: So, in this case you would say that the truth lies somewhere in the middle? It is working for Vienna but...

MICHAELA R: It is working for Vienna, but we should not close our eyes for what is coming. What is there and we see on the horizon. There is bad development appearing,

you see the clouds already. And we have to act today. Not to react when it's here but act today and avoid any troubles or bad development.

INT: I think Vienna has all the power to do so.

MICHAELA R: Yes and with the Vienna Tourism Board and even with the politicians at the moment in Vienna responsible for the hospitality business, we can do it together. They are very focused on a sustainable development in Vienna. I am always talking to them and we are on speaking terms and I really trust on this development.

INT: It makes me eager to see where Vienna will be, from a tourism perspective, in a 5 years' time. Once again and more specific now, how many hotels would you be able to list as green hotels in Vienna?

MICHAELA R: At the moment?

INT: More or less yes.

MICHAELA R: Two.

INT: I was, unfortunately, expecting this answer. Because this is also what you can find online and that's also what I've gotten so far.

MICHAELA R: And that's the point. I would be happy to have more of those. The thing is that the developer does not care about the cost of energy and stuff like that at his operation. And those who rent the building from him have to afford it. If there is a building on the other side and it is certified green building from LEEDS, for example, it does not mean that the operating chain like Austria Trend Hotel or Motel One are interested in implementing a green brand. For instance, Motel One is known as Motel One. There is no need to have one green hotel in the Motel One chain, 1 out of 60. Nobody cares about that. They say: who cares? I do not care if this building is green or not. Because they rent it and if an investor sells it in 10 year it's his advantage that this is a green building. But they will not have green brands for any kind of chain because it costs a lot of money. For the marketing, for the green products. Der Wilhemshof and I (Boutiquehotel Stadthalle) are both owners and operating it and that is why we are doing it. Because we are convinced that this is the future but it is our building, we own it we do not rent it and that is why there is no owner to convince because we are the owners. Both family-ran.

INT: I have a question I am asking hotel directors and that is: how important is ownership for a hotel being or turning green? When I actually formulated this question I thought that you are a hotel owner, you choose to go green and it is easy as that. It never crossed my mind that you might be a hotel owner but the hotel, the building, the walls basically are not yours. So, this is also really important in this case.

MICHAELA R: In the end, let's say I have 10 owners of hotels in Vienna who operate and own the building. There are perhaps 10. All the other are renting from any kind of investors, developers, whatever.

INT: How possible would it be for these 10 hotels, for which in this case it might be easier, to turn green as in Boutiquehotel Stadthalle level of green?

MICHAELA R: It is difficult because most of them are old buildings and if you turn an old building into a green building the guest will not pay you for that. We got the chance to have a construction of a new building, the Passive House, and then we improved the standard of the old building. If you only have the old building the guests will not pay you for heating that is based on gas or on a heat water pump. The guest does not care and you will never get the money back. I mean someone will, but hoteliers happily invest in what the guests see, what they feel. Like the furniture, the carpets, the beds. That's why energy topics or heating or any other kind of investment like these will always be the last decision before they do anything the guest experiences and feels.

INT: Someone needs to want this to happen, like in your case. Do you know of any other lodgings, any other hotels that are working into becoming greener at least? Either because they belong to a brand...

MICHAELA R: Yes, hotel Capri. They want to improve and they are doing a lot on that.

INT: It is still a bit frightening that not more people are doing this. Because big hotels like Marriott or Hilton are supposed to do so.

MICHAELA R: But they have their international guidelines and if there is a general manager who wants to make these Viennese hotels a bit green, he could put some bees some bees on the roof but there will be no investment in alternative energy. There will be no investment in small bottles of shampoo, conditioner and whatsoever. They have their guidelines how the buffet is equipped.

INT: I get it. As an owner, as an entrepreneur, as someone who started something completely from scratch, how difficult is it for a green hotel in Vienna? What are the difficulties?

MICHAELA R: It is not difficult. Not at all. Nothing is difficult.

INT: I cannot express how happy I am to hear that.

MICHAELA R: It is easy because if you have a story to tell about your hotel you do not have to settle with the price. If there is no story to tell, then there is a competition on price and room rates. And we do not have that, we have a story to tell. Every day we have another story to tell. You just have to do it. Doing good things and talking about it.

INT: What are the advantages then in this case, if you are a green hotel?

MICHAELA R: That I have a story to tell. And that I am pretty much alone in the market. There are enough of companies and guests who really appreciate what we are doing and they perhaps want to have the same standards they have at home. They are saying: we are eating only organic or vegan at home and we are happy we can still do it here, we appreciate the garden and sitting in the sun. There are a lot of reasons why you come to our hotel. You just have to create as many reasons as you can offer for the people to find you.

INT: That is a good idea. Is the association doing anything to enable or encourage, especially since you have taken over the past 7 years, other people to do so? Offerings incentives or saying: people, do it because of these reasons.

MICHAELA R: We want to give them ideas and we have had our annual conference in January which had the topic “rethink tourism” and there were a lot of topics, also about tourism, and we had a lot of important people talking about these topics and the hoteliers were really inspired. They were enthusiastic and I have to say also the members of my board were quite nervous because we could not imagine this a success. But this conference was probably one of the most successful conferences that we ever had. On the first day there was topic like: what does climate change mean and so many cradle-to-cradle topics and on the second day we had: what can you do in your business, in your hotel, what can you improve, what are the ideas, how and when can you do it. This was really successful. We do not do it every year but this year is the year of sustainability because the conference topic is also the topic for the entire year and we have profit days for our

members like a roadshow to all our federal states and there we have a topic on how you can avoid waste, how you can avoid too high costs on energy and there are a lot of ideas and there will be other hoteliers who talk about what makes them successful and also from controllers to show the people how much money they can save by avoiding waste, avoiding energy consumption and what does it mean for their accounting and their controlling.

INT: So, the association has a rather informative role. Also, Ms. Burritscher during our conversation mentioned that there is lots of help from the association when they are trying to change something or turn something greener. I think that this informative role is the most important. If you educate the masses first, then you create a demand. I hope at least or we will see it in the next years. I have another statement from a few scholars back in 2015 and it's about two topics you already mentioned the past 5 minutes basically. They were talking about competitive advantage by being green, talking about hotels of course. They mentioned that improved environmental performance contributes towards a greater development of cost and differentiation advantage. So basically, it's less costly to have a green hotel and it also gives a competitive advantage. Would you agree with this?

MICHAELA R: It depends of course. We save money with our energy costs but we have the double costs on organic food, for instance, because it is more expensive than regular food. What we save on this side we spend on the other sides. For me there is no other way you can run a business, from my personal opinion, and the second thing is, if you have any kind of investment either in green or sustainable development there are two questions that have to be answered. The first is can I afford and do I want to afford it. Because you could do something else with your money. Like spending it on sustainable, green ideas and that was the top question when turned to complete organic. The question was can we afford it and do we want to afford it.

INT: You already mentioned that it did create, on a certain level, a competitive advantage as in people would maybe prefer the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle because it's greener to any other 3-star hotel around the area because of an event at the Stadthalle. Would you also agree that it kind of gives you an extra advantage in terms of competition?

MICHAELA R: Especially the Stadthalle is probably sometimes another thing because people come here because we are the closest hotel to the Stadthalle. And then they are

surprised there is a garden, that it's all organic. This is more than a surprise. The get in and they never have that this is a 3-star hotel. So, this is something with what I always want to surprise people. That is why we will never go for 4 stars but we stay a 3-star hotel. Der Wilhemshof is a 4-star, we are a 3-star. In every category there is a mixture of your competition. Very often we get guests from the Stadthalle because they come for a concert and then they always come back or they tell about us. So, they are also ambassadors. Every guest is another ambassador and they got pretty much surprised from what they found. If they do not see our garden in the photos then I cannot help them anyhow. They should get the idea who we are but we always have people that show up and they do not know what we are doing.

INT: You have the element of surprise in that case. Moving to the 10th question, which is probably the toughest one and I know it is going to be really hard to answer, if possible, and this is actually the topic of my thesis. Do you perceive any effect on the local society, economy and environment from hotels being green, also businesses in general being green, following green practices? Would you say that there is an effect or to a certain level?

MICHAELA R: It depends. Not in Austria, not in Vienna.

INT: That's the answer to my Thesis in this case.

MICHAELA R: Two hotels cannot change something in a society. That's why I always say if we do things, let's talk about it. Because you have to tell the people and depends on whom you meet sometimes people say: I heard about you, you are the one because we heard about your hotel. We have a responsibility and I always want to give people an idea what they can improve. Today one of our employees said: my father wants to complain to you because he bought some chemicals for firing the grill and I took it and took the receipt and went to this market and changed it into an organic one for the grill and he wants to complain because it costed him more but since I am working for you there is no other way to live. This is something I really like. I always have employees that say we learned with you that we don't eat strawberries in January because they do not grow here and I learned that not to pour the detergents to the trash bin and we learned that we can use other help to get things clean and hygienic and we learn things for our daily life when

we work here. This is an effect on the society but is not that huge. But, I mean, they are talking about it and this is the impact.

INT: And I can only imagine that the guests, people who are coming and try the organic food because they are already on this diet...

MICHAELA R: And we have these points in the rooms saying where do we save energy or there is the light switch and there is a green point that says that the electricity for this is coming from our photovoltaic panels and you are entering the shower and it says here we save 30% of the water due to special adjustments. Where you assume the minibar would be there is a green point that says there is no minibar and we save 1.000 kilos of CO₂ per year. So, this is perhaps the impact that we do. I am proud that we do something but I wouldn't talk about a huge impact, it's a very small impact on our society.

INT: Anything regarding the economy? Would you say that green hotels bring more tourists to the city?

MICHAELA R: No. I mean, yes. Other tourists. Perhaps other tourists on top of it. Green and smart cities or this smart city communication system of Vienna, there are so many more topics that count and not green hotels. This is not the topic.

INT: Going back to the work of the association, you are in direct communication with a few stakeholders but more specifically hotel owners and the government who are probably the most important ones. How does each of them feel regarding green practices in the industry? You already mentioned that you had this annual and people were excited, were inspired by these green ideas you presented but how does the government generally feel about green hotels and how do the hotel owners feel about it?

MICHAELA R: All the other hotel owners think it's cool, but they do not do it. It's cool what she is doing and it's fine that she is doing it and she is doing and I am convinced she is doing it right but I do not do it because in a city, as I already mentioned, there is an investor or a developer who pays for that so most of the times they do not want this. The government is always happy about any entrepreneur who is following their ideas, laws and their initiatives because all the politicians are talking about is always top-down themes and if they say that there are entrepreneurs doing something according to their

ideas, they are proud, they tell everybody, they say look at those. We are an example for what they are talking about! So, that is why they are happy with us.

INT: Is the government especially in this case offering anything either it being financial help because...

MICHAELA R: No financial help, no support, nothing at all.

INT: But the eco label could be perhaps...

MICHAELA R: The eco label is an idea by the government. For me, they are not a marketing association. They are coaching and developing you. I mean, they were my supporters when I had to recertify after the first one because the first eco label my mother already did in 1998 or 1999 and I bought the hotel in 2001 and I think 2002 I had the first recertification. And they gave me a lot of ideas and I followed them. But they are not my distribution or my marketing. They sometimes support me and yes they did it with me because they said she knows what she is doing and we promote her but there is no kind of financial support from the government.

INT: But how do you judge that...

MICHAELA R: You know, you can never be green and sustainable because you get a support for that. You are or you are not. And you have to feel it in your heart and not in your bank account.

INT: The way I perceive it at least and after my talk with Ms. Burritscher, because she also mentioned that it is rather expensive turning green even though they were accidentally green from the beginning more or less, changing to something can be costly. I mean I can only imagine that it makes sense that someone is being supported for doing so, especially by the government who, as you also said, wants to promote sustainable practices and so on.

MICHAELA R: They support you, you know, by sending you delegations, they put you on the stage. They make you be a brand, they support you by being a brand. They have kind of awards that you get. This is the kind of support and I think it is right. The support cannot always be like spending money for things. Because where does it start and where does it end?

INT: You are 100% correct. Moving back to our beloved guests, we have had a brief talk about it already. The awareness of guests has been changing according to some studies at least, so people who travel are interested in finding green hotels or green experiences and so on and a few researchers said that: guests' awareness of hotels' sustainability practices has been increasing. Thus, hotel marketers are realizing that hotels' active participation in eco-friendly practices can help attract an increasing number of guests with high green consciousness. Basically, the idea is that if you are green you are going to attract people that are eco-conscious. How strongly do you agree in this case?

MICHAELA R: I agree, but! It is marketing people saying that, it's a wrong point. You have to be authentic which is the most important thing. If you want to be green, then you have to be authentic. Guests are very severe on that. Even if they put the towel back on the rail and you change it, they ask the reception: why did they change it? I did not put it on the floor. So, if you tell stories about your hotel, if you kind of promise your future guests something, then you have to bring it. And you can only bring it if you have it here (pointing at the heart) and not here (pointing at the pocket). Marketing people are always having it here (pointing at the pocket). So, if they recommend you to follow green conscious guests and be attractive for them the owner or the operator also has to ask: can we really afford this or not? If they cannot afford it, if they do not feel it, if they do not live it on their own then leave it, never do it. It's not a point of marketing. It's a point of being convinced of something, of loving something, of living something but it's not a point of marketing.

INT: For a successful businesswoman in the hotel industry, you are not thinking as one. You are thinking as a warrior of green practices. At least that is how I see it. I am very glad to see that because it is a competitive industry, it is an industry to begin with where money is involved.

MICHAELA R: There is a lot of money involved.

INT: Definitely. In the same direction, there is a research from Booking.com where 65% of its users would express preference for environmentally friendly hotels, that is at least what they claim. Do you think it does affect the way that it is marketed?

MICHAELA R: Of course it does. But, there are two things that we have to focus on. First of all, Booking.com never made the decision to have any kind of green booking

indicators. You can ask for the location, for the stars, for close to music, in the beach, in the mountains and whatsoever but there is not one point saying green hotel. Because I always said someone has to evaluate it and find out how green they are. If you only say I am green, it's not enough. So, they never decided to provide any help for decisions for the guests if this is a green hotel or not, first of all. Secondly, this is kind of a question: do you want to stay in a green or green conscious hotel? Yes, everybody says he is. This is like: do you want to work on Sunday? No! Nobody wants to, but 30% of the population works on a Sunday and if they ask if you want to work on a Sunday you say no. Also, my people say no but they come to work on Sunday. I mean what kind of questions is this. And it's also: do you want to stay in a green and sustainable hotel? Yes of course. Would you pay more for that? Perhaps... No... Yes, I would pay more. And then there are 3 hotels to decide from and the first thing is, are they really conscious? Then they take the greenest hotel or the best hotel or the hotel they think has the best match with their desire and their needs or if they are looking for the price then the green hotel will not be decided. So, of course people always say yes. Do you want to stay in a green hotel? Yes. Do you want to pay more? No.

INT: It's also the price that changes but it's also the luxury level. Because you know that if you go to a green hotel your sheets are probably not going to be changed every day or your towel will not be automatically changed.

MICHAELA R: We let the guests decide.

INT: Most certainly, in your case at least.

MICHAELA R: If you want to have your linen changed then put this on the bed, a little piece of wood, which when they put on the bed we change the linen. We make the guests decide. It was a great idea!

INT: A professor of mine as agreed with you yesterday actually. To sum up here because I've used maybe too much of your time already, is there any plans of the AHA that they are working on regarding promoting greener practices in the industry. Are there any upcoming ideas?

MICHAELA R: It is now for the entire year that we put the focus on sustainability, green ideas, green solutions to help you either save money or to have a better impact on your

brand. Next year we are going to have a focus on another point but we can never leave climate change out of our mind or sustainable decisions because sustainability is not always green, it has some other impacts. I think, nowadays, every good decision has to be a sustainable decision. If we do not focus on any sustainable background on your decision then you better leave it because if it is not sustainable it will not help you. The world is changing already. We have to focus on sustainable development and sustainable decisions, on sustainability that sums up everything. How you manage your staff and your team, how you improve your business, how you spend your money, who are they people you are working with, where do you spend your money, who is delivering for you, who are you partners. These are all ways and decision that are kind of sustainable. We will not have any “made in China” things. It is tough but Anna (Fedl) said that she wants to have our delivery in many ways changed, like no parcel from Amazon. I said go for it. It is really hard because you have an idea, you check on the internet, you find it you buy it and you get it delivered within 2 days. You can make your idea a real project. It is nice but not sustainable.

INT: At some points, you have to sacrifice a few things but in this case it is something that the hotel and the organization can live without because I also find it a good idea, for specific reasons.

MICHAELA R: But it will be hard for them!

INT: There are always alternatives and you can always go back to the roots. Finding a book at a bookstore.

MICHAELA R: Yes, you can find it somewhere else.

INT: Is there anything you would like to ask me?

MICHAELA R: No. I would like to go back to the point about pricing. Is a pricing system that gives you an advantage, like yield pricing...

INT: Dynamic pricing?

MICHAELA R: Dynamic pricing! Thank you very much! But with dynamic pricing you can avoid over-tourism and you can stir the people because if you say if you come on a Tuesday at 10 in the morning you get a better price than coming on Saturday at 3 in the

afternoon. If it is half the price the people will decide to come at another time. So, dynamic price is, in my opinion, a very good tool to direct tourists. For instance, with the cruise ships. Always after breakfast they leave their boats. If you say we take a fee from you but we only take half the fee if you come before breakfast, they do not go to a museum anyhow because they go to the streets, they take pictures and then they leave, they do not buy something. So, why don't you come at 8 or 9 and not after breakfast? Everybody will show up at 10:00 then they stroll around and then they leave for lunch. Or here is a voucher for the fee you paid and if you spend it in a Viennese shop they will reduce the price.

INT: It's a huge co-operation but still.

MICHAELA R: It is a point of the chamber of commerce but there a lot of ideas that we need to follow in order to have a better impact on the city and not to have thousands of tourists walking around. Perhaps they will come back but perhaps they will not come back with their families.

INT: It could also help the market actually.

MICHAELA R: I understand if you go from Germany to the black sea you stop by Vienna, of course you do. That is one of the best attractions, I mean it is the best attraction along this journey on the Danube, you have to visit Vienna. But even with the Wachau. They are all leaving in the Wachau. There are thousands of tourists getting out at the Wachau, they are all going to the Dürnstein, it's a very small village, thousands of tourists go there. What is this?

INT: I can't thank you enough. Honestly, it has been more than interesting and helpful. I would like to ask that I can quote what you said, use what you said.

MICHAELA R: Yes, of course. That's why I was sitting here!