Appraisal of Hotel’s Eco-Friendliness during Construction and Service as a Competitive Advantage

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Abstract. The hotel business is developing very actively now. Hence current trends dictate hotel business owners to focus their attention not only on enterprise’s business processes yet on sustainable development. Compliance with leading international assessments in the field of environmental legislation is one of the aspects towards this goal. Buildings and constructions such as hotels are often a source of a deterioration of the environment and of human health. According to research by the International Energy Agency, they consume more than 40% of world energy. According to scientists 24% of carbon dioxide emissions in the world could be a result of their performance. This paper presents an analysis of existing approaches to the certification of hotels that implement sustainable development principles. Work also focuses on the application of economic security techniques in the hotel business as a whole and on some particular aspects. Primary statistics presented in this article is based on the survey conducted in various regions of the Russian Federation which illustrates how much impact has the awareness about the environmental policy of a hotel on the decision to book a room in it or to purchase other services.

1. Introduction
For many European travelers environmental policy of a hotel and its compliance with modern environmental requirements (buildings, technologies, methods and methods of resource consumption) is one of the important aspects that influence their choice of an accommodation. Environmental approach should be carried out yet at the construction stage and implemented by finding a balance between effective use of natural, workforce, economic resources and the architectural environment of the destination [1; 15 ; 19]. The very concept of green building got its development from the end of the 20th century and began to develop actively both in the United States of America and in European countries. The methods and technologies used in the construction of hotels are constantly being upgraded, but there is a common approach developed for assessing the environmental friendliness of hotels. These include:

1) efficient use of climatic, economic and environmental facilities and resources;
2) reduction of waste and emissions to the environment, and also impact on it;
3) protecting the wellness and health of hotel’s guests and staff [18; 20].

The purposes of this work are to analyze some modern approaches and methods of certification of environmental friendliness of hotels, to mark out systems present in the territory of the Russian Federation and to describe the current state of the Russian hospitality market in terms of their environmental friendliness.
2. Methods
The contextual analysis of modern approaches to the certification system made by the author helps to identify main certification systems both in the hotel business and in the construction industry in general. The presented study is based on research, industry reports, legal norms regarding industry and technical standards.

3. Results and discussion
First attempts to create procedures for evaluating environmental safety were made in USA, France and Great Britain in 1990s. These countries developed different systems of certification. These include:

- LEED (LEED operations and maintenance) is the most common, worldwide used system for assessing the environmental performance of buildings, public and residential projects, which provides the basis for creating healthy, highly efficient and cost-effective green buildings [3; 13-14];

- Green Key Global - a program of sustainable certification for hotels and hotel businesses (15 member countries, 1500 hotels) [4];

- Green Seal - product certification system (building materials and equipment, household and industrial cleaning products, food and industrial paper) [5];

- Green Globe - a system for assessing sustainability for various sectors that make up the international travel and tourism industry [6]

- Travelife - a certification system based on web technologies that allows housing providers to monitor and independently assess their own sustainability indicators and also effectively improve their environmental, social and economic impact. [7];

- EarthCheck is the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and travel and tourism advisory group, which has been helping businesses, communities and governments to create clean, safe and healthy places for travelers since 1987 [8];

- Audubon International Green Lodging - provides independent verification of housing facilities for compliance with environmental practice standards in waste minimization, resource conservation and energy efficiency [9]

Each of the above mentioned certification systems uses its own scale to evaluate the compliance of a hotel with certain criteria (e.g. evaluation scales, description graphs). But their core principles are common: environmental friendliness, sustainability, efficiency, mindful use of resources and minimal impact on nature. Evaluation criteria are inextricably bound up with the main environmental protection measures that citizens are willing to take. For example, figure 1 illustrates such measures that are willing to take citizens of the USA.
Figure 1. Likelihood to take eco-friendly actions among U.S. adults as of March 2016, by generation.

A noteworthy detail is that senior citizens are more scrupulous about environmental protection and preservation than millennials. Since seniors present a significant segment of travelers in the USA, and also worldwide, ecological standards acquire hospitality industry quite successfully.

In the international hotel practice the situation is such that guests are often willing to pay more for an accommodation in an environmentally friendly hotel that stands out by using green, safe materials for structure’s construction as well as for service and also by following the principles of sustainable development.

However, according to research proportion of environmentally friendly hotel is only 6.2 % [11] out of 130000+ accommodations. Spreading of eco-hotels in a territorial context is primarily associated with the number and activity of certifying organizations, as well as public organizations activity that form public consciousness (Fig. 2).
In Russia the practice of assessing the hotel’s own environmental friendliness is only being formed, which is due to the insignificant number of eco-hotels compared to other countries. This is further due primarily to the lack of an environmental culture in activities of accommodation facilities. As a part of this study we have conducted a survey among residents of the Kaliningrad region about the impact of environmental policy of a hotel on their attitude towards hotel and on their decision whether to purchase or not its services [12].

74.5% of respondents deemed sustainability as a positive rather than neutral attribute. However, only 36% answered in the affirmative to the question: “Are you ready to pay extra for living in an environmentally friendly hotel?” On our opinion it is bound up with the lack of environmental policy direct influence on the guest. Hereat level of the environmental consciousness is yet to be developed. It can be seen from the range of answers to our second question: “Are you ready to pay extra for the breakfast if it is prepared from organic produce?” 54% of respondents answered in the affirmative, 24% said “yes, but if it is not significantly more expensive” (fig. 3).
Data submitted demonstrate that for participants of our survey sustainability and environmental policy of a hotel is not yet a competitive advantage when booking their stay. However if this policy directly affects the guest and his health, ecological standards are taken more favorably.

4. Conclusion
We can conclude that the ecological certification market in the hospitality industry in Russia is still at the beginning of its establishing and on initial stage of the development. For now those processes happen quite slowly. Although Russian market has a significant potential for joining international certification systems that are already represented on the market.

5. Reference
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