"GREEN HOTELS IN SWEDEN"

What factors pushed them, which steps did they follow and what barriers impede them to become green?
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Abstract

The environmental concern starts to be a key challenging issue for organizations nowadays. In fact, we find a growing trend towards “green” consumerism, which in turns affects companies’ strategy. The hospitality industry is not considered as one of the biggest pollution emitters, neither the one consuming the biggest quantity of non-renewable resources, but it is particularly interesting because of its increasing economic importance and the higher environmental concern it is showing. The whole process by which the hotels define policies, strategies as well as develop environmental practices in order to reduce their negative impact on the natural environment is named as Environmental Management. Those hotels that have followed this process and strive to be more environmentally friendly through the efficient use of energy, water and materials while providing quality services are defined as “green hotels”. Thus, in the present study we discover what motivated hotels in Sweden to become green, as well as the steps they followed in turning into green, including the definition of goals, the implementation of practices and the potential barriers that make this process difficult to execute.

In a first approach, we found in the literature review some theories related to the factors that influence companies to become green, as well as how to define a green strategy. In a second section, we focused on how the goals must be defined and which indicators can be used to evaluate the environmental performance. Finally, we presented possible barriers, relating this fact to the prioritization of objectives.

We led a qualitative approach by running semi-structured and structured interviews to the manager and one employee, respectively, of three different hotels in Abisko and Umeå. The results showed that the main reason why hotels become green is because of the pressure the stakeholders exert on them. The main steps hotels followed to achieve this objective were the establishment of plans and goals, involving the department’s level, its implementation (practices), review, evaluation and improvement of the environmental strategy. But this process is not easy: hotels have to manage with the big cost associated to become green.

At the end of the study, some suggestions will be given to hoteliers (e.g. define specific goals) as well as some suggestions for future researches (study of hotels from different cities of Sweden).
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 3  
1.1 Problem background...........................................................................................................3  
1.2 Research Questions .............................................................................................................3  
1.3 Purpose ..................................................................................................................................3  
1.4 Outline ..................................................................................................................................3  

Chapter 2: Methodology.................................................................................................................... .3  
2.1 Preconceptions......................................................................................................................3  
2.2 Green hotels .......................................................................................................................3  
2.3 Discussion of the problem .................................................................................................3  
2.4 Perspective ........................................................................................................................3  
2.5 Criticism of sources ...........................................................................................................3  
2.6 Choice of theories ..............................................................................................................3  
2.7 Research approach ............................................................................................................3  
2.8 Conduction of interviews .................................................................................................3  
2.9 Choice of hotels..................................................................................................................3  

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework ................................................................................................... 3  
3.1 Greening the business...........................................................................................................3  
3.1.1 Influence’s factors.........................................................................................................3  
3.1.2 Green strategy ............................................................................................................3  
3.2 Environmental Management ............................................................................................3  
3.2.1 Environmental Management System (EMS)..............................................................3  
3.2.2 Goal-setting theory .....................................................................................................3  
3.2.3 Management by Objectives.......................................................................................3  
3.2.4 SMART .......................................................................................................................3
3.2.5 Critics of policy implementation ......................................................... 3
3.2.6 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) ...................................................... 3
3.3 Barriers to implementation process .................................................... 3
  3.3.1 Barriers .......................................................................................... 3
  3.3.2 Prioritization.................................................................................... 3

Chapter 4: Empirical part .......................................................................... 3

4.1 Interview 1: STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION ........................................ 3
  4.1.1 Interview with the manager of the STF Abisko Turiststation hotel ....... 3
    • Goals .................................................................................................. 3
    • Environmental practices .................................................................... 3
    • Barriers to the implementation of practices ...................................... 3
  4.1.2 Interview with the employee of the STF Abisko Turiststation hotel .... 3

4.2 Interview 2: HOTEL AVENY ................................................................. 3
  4.2.1 Interview with the manager of the Hotel Aveny ............................... 3
    • Goals .................................................................................................. 3
    • Environmental practices .................................................................... 3
    • Barriers to the implementation of practices ...................................... 3
  4.2.2 Interview with an employee of the Hotel Aveny ............................... 3

4.3 Interview 3: HOTEL WINN ................................................................. 3
  4.3.1 Interview with the manager of the Hotel Winn ............................... 3
    • Goals .................................................................................................. 3
    • Environmental practices .................................................................... 3
    • Barriers to the implementation of practices ...................................... 3
  4.3.2 Interview with an employee of the Hotel Winn ............................... 3

4.4 Summary of the interviews .................................................................. 3
Chapter 5: Analysis part ..................................................................................................................... 3
  5.1 Why the hotels become green? ..............................................................................................3
  5.2 Steps to become green .........................................................................................................3
  5.3 Definitions of goals ..............................................................................................................3
  5.4 Practices ...............................................................................................................................3
  5.5 Barriers ...............................................................................................................................3

Chapter 6: Conclusion and suggestions .......................................................................................... 3
  6.1 Conclusion .............................................................................................................................3
  6.2 Suggestions to hoteliers .......................................................................................................3
  6.3 Suggestions for future researches ........................................................................................3

Chapter 7: Criteria for judging qualitative researches ..................................................................... 3
  7.1 Credibility .............................................................................................................................3
  7.2 Transferability .......................................................................................................................3
  7.3 Dependability .......................................................................................................................3
  7.4 Confirmability .......................................................................................................................3

References ........................................................................................................................................3
  Articles: .......................................................................................................................................3
  Books: ..........................................................................................................................................3
  Websites: .......................................................................................................................................3
  Magazines/Brochures: ................................................................................................................3

APPENDIXES ......................................................................................................................................3
  Appendix 1: environmental policy of Abisko ........................................................................3
  Appendix 2: Interview SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL .....................................................................3
    Interview with the assistant manager of the Scandic Plaza hotel ............................................3
  • Goals ........................................................................................................................................3
• Environmental practices ....................................................................................................3
• Barriers to the implementation of practices ..................................................................3
  Interview with the employee of the Scandic Plaza hotel .................................................3
Appendix 3: environmental policy of SCANDIC ..................................................................3
Appendix 4: Interview with the ROYAL HOTEL .................................................................3
  Interview with the manager of the Royal Hotel .................................................................3
• Goals .................................................................................................................................3
• Environmental practices .................................................................................................3
• Barriers to the implementation of practices ..................................................................3
  Interview with an employee of the Royal Hotel .................................................................3
Chapter 1: Introduction

As an opening chapter, we will provide the reader with some information related to the environmental concern, the hotel industry and the concept of Environmental Management, policies and practices, explaining the reasons why we decided to focus on this topic, as well as why we chose to make our investigation on Sweden. Moreover, we will present the research questions and the purpose of this study. Finally, we will provide an outline of the contents treated on this thesis.

1.1 Problem background

The environmental concern starts to be a key challenging issue for organizations nowadays. The degradation of the environment constitutes a main concern of modern society and this, in turn affects firms’ strategy. Industries affect the environment differently and each sector may have developed different strategies to tackle environmental issues. (Alvarez Gil et al, 2001). This environmental concern, which can be manifested through a wide range of practices, is considered to have many different consequences. It can contribute to improve the environmental performance of the company, i.e., to reduce resource consumption and waste generation, thus mitigating the negative impact exerted on the natural environment, and indirectly to improve company’s profitability.

However, there are many other benefits which are attributed to the environmental concern and which affect a company’s survival. The capability for stakeholders’ integration, the capability for higher order learning and the capability for continuous innovation are some of them. (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report from 2 February 2007 and Wharton Faculty analysts, companies can profit from well-designed strategies that embrace environmental goals, whether motivated by the desire to do what is right or to polish their public image and fend off government regulation. Some of the biggest corporations in the world, including Wal-Mart, Ford, General Electric and BP, have adopted highly visible “green” strategies, embracing environmentalism in their marketing and core business operations. (http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/, 2008-04-07)

Despite of the tendency in business to overlook environment costs in order to reduce production costs and keep on a competitive position on the market, there is a growing trend towards “green” consumerism reflecting the increasing number of consumers who choose to buy products that satisfy high standards of environmental protection (Roarty, 1997). Therefore, it is becoming profitable to work with “green” products in both domestic and international markets. Roarty’s study also confirms that environmental issues are of growing importance to companies and more than half go beyond the requirements of the law.

Moreover, this aim of “greening the business” is affecting all sorts of industries. Initially, only the big industries which clearly caused direct pollution to the environment through their
effluents and discharges were the objective of those concerning about the environment. But later on, during the 1980s and the 1990s, this environmental pressure was extended to a wider range of industries at the same time that it became much broader. (Kirk, 1995)

According to Kirk, the hotel industry is not considered as one of the biggest pollution emitters, neither the one consuming the biggest quantity of non-renewable resources, but it is composed of a "large number of small operations, each of which consumes relatively small amounts of energy, water, food, paper and other resources, adding a small amount of pollution to the environment in terms of smoke, smell, noise and chemical pollutants". Nevertheless, if we consider the addition of all these small operations, the result is that this industry has an important effect on global resources.

The tourist sector, as a service industry, is particularly interesting for two main reasons: it has an increasing economic importance and it shows a higher environmental concern. (Alvarez Gil et al, 2001) In addition, this sector involves two main areas of activity, namely accommodation and transportation. In the present paper we chose to focus on the accommodation sub-sector because of its important role in the offer of tourist services and for its impacts on the environment. What is more, the main reason why we decided to write about the hotel industry particularly was because we found this topic original and interesting and we did not find any thesis studying this subject. The issue of sustainability has been widely analyzed in the business literature (Tzschentke et al, 2004), but not in the context of hospitality firms. Likewise, we think that environmental concern is a common topic these days and that hotels could benefit from environmental practices.

Furthermore, the hotel industry is among the most energy-intensive sectors of the tourism industry (Bohdanowicz, 2005). According to this author, the hotel market is in Europe half of the global market. It represents around 205,000 facilities and almost 10 million beds. It also provides accommodations for 160 - 200 million international guests per year. Nevertheless, Bohdanowicz found that translating these data in terms of pollution, resource consumption and waste generation, showed that a typical hotel annually releases 160 - 200 kg of CO₂ per m² of room floor - depending on the fuel used to generate electricity, heating and cooling -. It consumes 39 Twh (terawatt hours) of energy annually, half of which is in the form of electricity; and it also produces in excess of 1 kg of waste per guest per day, which results in tons of waste each month. What is more, this author claimed that a large proportion (50 - 60%) of the materials that constitute this waste could be recycled or reused. For example, the average quantity of unsorted waste materials for Radison SAS hotels was reported of 0.515kg per guest per night.

Many hotels have recognized the negative impact their business activities have on the environment and have taken action to alleviate them (Alexander, 2002). Nowadays, we can find a lot of different environmental practices developed by hotels. Following are detailed some examples.

The Cornell University School of Hotel Administration in the United States has already rewarded best practices, for example. The Colony hotel, the Hotel Bel Air, the Hyatt Regency Chicago and Hyatt Regency Scottsdale - which were named as environmental best practices champions in the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration in the US - have all
developed excellent recycling programs (Enz & Siguaw, 1999). Three of the four have created special positions to manage their environmental programs and the four hotels have a special committee or task force of employees involved in waste reduction and recycling. For example, the Hyatt Regency Chicago recycles paper products including cardboard, computer paper and magazines, but also glass, and aluminium. In this hotel, all employees participate in the program by separating trash into special bins. Moreover, the Bel Air hotel, as another example, changed regular light bulbs to longer-lasting bulbs, installed timers for the electrical and irrigation systems and placed insulation on doors (Enz, Siguaw, 1999).

The main idea of all those practices above comes below the name of Environmental Management, which makes reference to the process by which the collection of policies, structures, resources, systems and processes are brought to mutual interplay for the achievement of clearly defined environmental policy directives (Mensah, 2006). In the particular case of hotel companies, Environmental Management refers to a large number of small operations that cover aspects such as consumption of energy, water and other resources. (Alvarez Gil et al, 2001) The Environmental Management in this sector may be measure through the grade such organizations develop practices in order to reduce their negative impact on the natural environment.

Moreover, the principles of Environmental Management described by the British Standard BS 7750: Environmental Management Systems draw a number of stages in establishing these procedures in any organization (Kirk, 1995):

- Formulating a written environmental policy
- Ensuring total commitment of all levels in the organization
- Carrying out an environmental review
- Determination of responsibilities within the organization
- Preparing a register of environmental effects
- Establishing objectives and targets (with effective monitoring, control and communication)
- Implementing management systems
- Commissioning periodic environmental audits (identify areas of improvement)
- Performing regular systems reviews based on performance

A number of empirical studies have proven certain advantages associated to the adoption of Environmental Management (Wee & Quazy, 2005). According to Kirk (1995), its most important perceived effects in the business are: to increase profitability, to increase customer satisfaction, to improve employee satisfaction, to improve relationships with the local community, to help with our public relations and to give a marketing advantage over our competitors, that is to say strengthen their market position and access new markets (Wee & Quazy, 2005).

One way to formalize a commitment to environmental best practices is through the adoption of voluntary implementation of self-regulatory initiatives such as an international Environmental Management System (EMS), which include the standard ISO 14001, for example (Chan, 2008). This EMS provides a framework for the evaluation and improvement of a company’s environmental behavior, including its environmental impact (Goosey, 2000). According to Chan, it also helps to develop systematic approaches to improve environmental
performance. In other words, the EMS represents an example of Environmental Management though.

Furthermore, doing initiatives on the environment certainly worth it but the heart of an EMS is the implementation of the environment policy in an organization by the use of environmental goals and management programs (Zobel, 2006). This author also points out that an EMS leads to legal compliance, reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts and move a company towards better environmental performance.

According to Zobel, the aim of an environmental policy and its implementation within the organization is the most central part in an EMS, because this process will determine the shape and focus on the entire EMS.

The author also claims that the goal of this kind of management is to culminate into a sustainable development. That is obviously an ideal objective that might not always be achieved. Environmental practices are not always seen as the “first priority job” (Chan, 2008). However, hotels that conserve and preserve by saving water, reducing energy use, and reducing solid waste are defined as “green hotels” (Alexander, 2002). Alexander describes this term as hotels that strive to be more environmentally friendly through the efficient use of energy, water and materials while providing quality services. We believe that this definition includes a big range of hotels that can be defined as “green”, so for this reason, we consider in this study the hotels that are trying in some sense to respect the environment. We only exclude from this research hotels that do not attempt to develop environmental practices.

Alexander (2002) found some benefits related to these practices, like reducing costs and liabilities, high return and low-risk investments, increased profits and positive cash flows.

One example that illustrates the kind of practices we can find in a green hotel is the Sheraton Auckland hotel and Towers, which realized that the daily washing of sheets, towels, flannels, table cloths and other linens accounted for 35% of the energy consumed in the laundry process, while drying consumed 65%. The hotel simply changed the temperature of the wash from 85 degrees Celsius to 65 degrees Celsius. This change saved $2,000 in energy costs in the three first months (Alexander, 2002).

Moreover, in this study we are going to analyze “green hotels” in Sweden, as this country, whose environmental issues have been at the forefront of the state’s agenda since the 1970’s and the 1980’s, is supportive of the concept of sustainable development. (www.oecd.org, 2008-06-12). We assume that this country is really taking care of the environment.

Different words are mentioned when talking about Environmental Management, like policies, plan, goals and practices, for example. However, environmental policies and practices are two different notions. According to the Encyclopedia of Management of Helms, an environmental policy can be defined as a course of action or a plan to address issues such as pollution, wildlife protection, land use, energy production and use, waste generation, and waste disposal (Victor et al, 1998). It must include strategies for complying with laws, codes and company standards, the identification of responsibility within the organization and the involvement of partners (suppliers, servicing companies, customer and the local community) (Kirk, 1995). In
addition, the adoption of environmental policies must come from the top and it would be good if it were included in its mission statements. In general, policy is any kind of written document, i.e., plans, goals and courses of action where the company expresses its concern with the environment and also the fields of work where it puts any effort or where it allocates some resources.

However, the implementation of the plan or policy results in environmental practices. A practice is the fact of translating intent into action and it is vital to make the policy effective (Victor et al., 1998). While policies are in most of the cases written words, practices makes references to the actual and real activities or operations that the company is in fact developing. Environmental Management practices can affect the organizational performance. In one way, they enhance the firm’s performance. But also successful companies invest resources in improving their environmental practices, and this in turn have a positive effect in their organizational performance. (Alvarez Gil et al., 2001)

In the present paper, we are relating practices to the implementation of a policy, but also to all the activities hotels are developing in order to deal with environmental issues, without the necessity to define them previously in any written document. In fact, a potential limitation to greening the business in the hotel industry is that not all hotels implement a complete Environmental Management. Hotels do not always apply practices in function of policies. Thus, simply because a strategy has not been written or formally articulated does not always mean that one is not being followed (Olson, 2008).

1.2 Research Questions

All of this leads us to wonder the following research questions: related to “green hotels” in Sweden:

- What pushed them to become green?
- Which steps did they follow to become green, from the definitions of goals to the implementation of practices, including the barriers that can make this process difficult to execute?

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is, in a first part, to know what motivated hotels in Sweden to become green. In addition, we will try to find out which steps they followed to turn into green, starting from definition of goals to the practices they are developing, discovering which barriers can make this process difficult to achieve.
1.4 Outline

Chapter 1: The introduction presents the topic from a global view with the background and the problem associated to it. This leads to the research questions we were wondering and ends by the purpose of the research.

Chapter 2: This chapter explains the methodology we used to lead this study from the preconceptions we had before starting, the choice of “green hotels” followed by the discussion of the problem. We will then help the reader with an explanation of the theories used in the theoretical framework. This chapter will present as well the research strategy or method we used for the data collection and the way we proceed to it. It will end by the reasons why we chose five hotels in the North of Sweden.

Chapter 3: The theoretical framework presents the theories and models we used to base our data collection into three parts: Greening the business, Environmental Management and barriers to the implementation process.

Chapter 4: This chapter lists the details we obtained from the interviews we ran in the different hotels we have been to, separating the interviews with the manager and the one with the employees.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides the reader with the findings we obtained from the interviews.

Chapter 6: It gives a conclusion associating the information from the theoretical framework with the empirical findings. This chapter ends by some suggestions made to hoteliers and for future researches.

Chapter 7: Finally, we will give the criteria for judging qualitative researches that is to say credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.
Chapter 2: Methodology

In this section we are going to explain the approach we have followed in order to fulfil our purpose. Thus, we will start introducing the preconceptions we already had before starting this paper, as well as the possible ones that we can find in the hotels that we are going to work with. We will continue clarifying the reasons why we decided to focus only on “green hotels” and not on other kind of accommodations, mentioning the possible limitations that we met in reaching this type of hotels. Then, we will present the theories we used in relation to the purpose as well as the method we used for the data collection, that is to say the interview. Therefore, we will introduce the hotels where we ran these interviews, giving an explanation why we chose these ones.

2.1 Preconceptions

Every time you work with a specific topic, it is necessary to take into account the different interpretations a person can do or can have about it. In this case, the main issue is related to “green hotels”. This represents an example of a quite new concept, and not everyone understands it in the same way when you ask about it. A possible illustration comes from us. At first, we understood this term as something related to hotels really developed in terms of the inclusion of rather innovative environmental techniques, normally associated with high investment and with the introduction of the newest technology in order to save water, generate energy, etc., but always in a way which saves the natural environment and preserve the society’s sustainability.

In relation to the former preconception, we decided at the beginning to focus on the mainstream hotels, as we wanted to know how the greening process was being developed by the majority of hotels. We thought that almost all of them were not putting emphasis on any specific environmental practices.

However, as soon as we started to go deep in the research, we realized that “green hotels” referred to a broader concept, including hotels which are developing easy and small practices in order to be more environmental-friendly. Consequently, we changed our mind and we focused on the “green hotels”.

In addition, we discovered that most of the hotels understand the term as the last explanation, as they defined themselves as “green hotels” without the necessity to develop difficult and big environmental practices.

2.2 Green hotels

Once we decided to work within the hospitality sector, the following step was to define the type of hotels we wanted to focus on. As we are dealing with the environmental issue, we
only found two possibilities: the hotels that are already working in terms of being environmental-friendly and those which have not included any modification in their behaviour, named as “green hotels” and mainstream hotels, respectively.

From our own point of view, we consider that it is much more interesting to analyze the first type of hotels, since it will allow us to discover how hotels are dealing with the environmental concern. At the same time we will know how the hotel industry in Sweden is progressing towards the development of a sustainable society. Moreover, we hope to find a big diversity of practices in the “green hotels”, while in the case of the mainstream hotels, we would have probably found the same kind of lack of interest and overlook through the environmental issue. For these reasons, we decided to focus on the “green hotels”.

The decision of how to distinguish the “green hotels” from others constitutes, however, a difficult point in this study. As it is a really subjective aspect, since none author has done a concrete definition establishing a limit between both types of hotels, we decided to set up our own definition. On a first approach, we asked directly each hotel we wanted to analyze their position on the environmental concern in order to know if they defined themselves as environmental-friendly, and also if they are nowadays working on environmental issues, for example, developing different practices in order to save water, reducing the energy consumption and also reducing the solid waste. In addition, all these hotels considered the environmental concern as an important area where they must act.

However, a limitation to the aim in reaching “green hotels” is related to the subjectivity of the hotels in defining themselves as “green”. They may consider themselves as environmental-friendly even if they are not developing environmental practices.

2.3 Discussion of the problem

After defining what we consider as “green hotels”, we now focus on the main objective of this paper, which is to discover what pressed hotels to become green, as well as to find out which steps they followed to turn into green, ending by listing the potential barriers that can make difficult this process.

This aim will introduce us into the “greening the business” process. In relation to the first task, we want to discover which groups of pressure made the hotels change their behavior in relation with the environmental concern. Furthermore, we seek to know how the hotel has become green, which requires us to ask the hotels if they defined goals, how they defined them and to present the practices they developed following these objectives. Then, we will see that “green hotels” may find some barriers that impede them to develop more practices.

2.4 Perspective

This thesis will be conducted from a managerial perspective. They way the environmental practices are developed depend directly on the level of concern of the hotel’s manager in relation with the environment. Thus, the more the manager is involved in this issue the more
likely he is to develop practices. That is why our study is aimed to help managers in
discovering the process they can follow in order to become “green”, as well as the kind of
practices they can introduce in their hotels.

2.5 Criticism of sources

To do so, we collected information from different sources, mainly from articles, but also from
books, websites and magazines. Most of the articles come from the database of the Umeå
University Library. To be precise, we use Emerald Fulltext, Business Source Premier
(EBSCO), Science Direct (Elsevier) and JSTOR. In addition, we used Google Scholar to
complete the information, as well as some scientific articles from previous courses from the
Master in Marketing, like Operations Management and Research Methodology in Business
Administration.

Moreover, in order to find articles we used key words like green hotels, environmental
management, greening the business, hotel industry, etc.

We mostly used articles throughout the paper because we did not find many books related to
the hotel industry. We also tried to limit the search of information to recent articles,
specifically from 2000 till now. Nevertheless, we used some articles from the 90’s, as we
consider that some concepts are not changing through time.

Finally, we tried to use information from reliable websites. The one from the hotel websites
helped us to complete our data when the interviews were not satisfying as explained in the
limitation further down in point 2.7.

2.6 Choice of theories

In the aim to fit to our purpose, we will review literature in relation to different sections.

The first section will be “greening the business”. This initial part will introduce the topic
related to the environmental concern. We will present what factors may influence a company
to become green as well as green models that companies will be able to follow in order to
become green or to develop their environmental activities. This section will enable us to
better understand why hotels become green or what influence them to be environmental-
friendly. Moreover, it will also allow us to understand how hotels are organizing their
strategic planning process within the organization.

In a second section, we will relate our theories to the notion of Environmental Management,
which is a process dealing with the environmental concern, starting from the definition of
goals to the development of environmental practices. In this section, we will firstly introduce
the notion of Environmental Management System (EMS) as an example of the Environmental
Management concept. Thereafter, we will use three theories related to the establishment of
goals: the goal-setting theory, the Management By Objectives (MBO) and the SMART theory.

The goal-setting theory links the specificity of the goals with their performance, defending the more specific and difficult goals, the higher performance. (Zobel, 2006) Additionally, we will complement it with the Theory of goal-setting and task performance and the MBO theory that add other criteria a company must take into consideration when defining goals in order to improve the performance of the company.

The third theory that will complement the goals establishment phase is the SMART theory that explains that a good goal is defined through different criteria. It has to be specific, measurable, attainable and aggressive, realistic and time-sensitive (Shalin & Mahbod, 2007).

These three theories will help us to know how hotels develop their goals, if they define their goals in function of any criteria with the aim to know if a good definition of goals helps the hotels to improve their environmental performance, that is to say if the definition of goals helps them to develop environmental practices and achieve their objectives.

Then, we will finish the step of goal establishment in the Environmental Management process by defining some critics when implementing a policy, with the aim to select what is really important in the definition of goals.

Finally, we will end this section of the Environmental Management process by defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that evaluate the progress of an environmental project. This theory will enable us to link it to the evaluation of the environmental performance and consequently to the environmental practices.

The last section we will review is related to the barriers to the environmental implementation process. In spite of the growing importance of “greening the business”, hotels still find difficulties to develop environmental practices. We will balance this research by presenting some of these barriers though.

Then, we will finish this section by dealing with prioritization, aspect directly linked to the lack of resources barrier. Prioritization consists in deciding priorities within the business, and consequently, to know which activities, goals or departments are going to receive the necessary support, in terms of resources, in order to be developed. This concept will help us to understand if environmental concern is considered as a priority for “green hotels” in Sweden. Moreover, it will enable us to discover if prioritizing urge them on to develop more environmental practices.

We will base our findings and analysis on these theories in order to apply those concepts and models to reality, that is to say, in the hotel industry in Sweden. This leads to a deductive approach.

2.7 Research approach
After reviewing the literature, we need to describe the strategy we are going to proceed in approaching the “green hotels”.

The methodology we used was similar in all the hotels. We decided to lead a qualitative approach by running interviews with the hotels we chose, as we really wanted to understand the environmental concern in the hotel industry on a practical level. We thought that this type of data collection would enable us to get familiar with practical environmental processes in this industry. Furthermore, the interview is probably the most widely used method in qualitative research; it emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

During all the interviews we explored the different hotels we chose, with the goal of understanding the reasons that push hotels to become green and what are the steps for it. This, in a way, corresponds to the major objectives of a representative or typical case study research as we will try to have a deep understanding of the hotel industry in Sweden and its behavior in relation to the environment. (Woodside & Wilson, 2003)

As written above, the method we used is the same for each hotel. We decided to interview two different persons. In a first step, we decided to run an interview with the general manager of the hotel, or in his/her absence, with the assistant manager. We assumed that the manager was the suitable person to interview as we thought he is the one who is the more likely to have a broader view of the hotel activities and the one who has more knowledge in relation to the steps the hotel is following in order to become environmental-friendly, including all the policies/goals established by the hotel. We considered that interviewing the manager was also interesting because he is normally the person taking the decisions in general.

In a second step, we carried out another interview with one of the employees, in most of the cases from the housekeeping department or from the restaurant, as they are usually the ones who are more involved in the execution of environmental practices, like for example in cleaning the rooms using ecological products. The idea was to know if the employees within their departments were as familiar and involved in this topic as the managers were and also to avoid restricting our findings only to the opinion of one person.

Furthermore, with the aim of obtaining the maximum information about environmental goals, practices and barriers from these persons, we followed different techniques. When interviewing the managers, we did a semi-structure interview; this allowed us to get all the information related to the environmental issues they face in the hotel. On the one hand, we let the manager talk about everything they do or they have in relation with this topic. On the other hand, we tried to guide the manager by asking questions related to the hotel goals, practices and the barriers that enable them to develop more environmental practices in order to complete the interview with the aspects we considered relevant, making sure not to miss any points we want to analyze in the present paper. This method seemed to be the most appropriate technique to get familiar with this topic, as the semi-structured interview enables the interviewer to move the conversation, but also leaves the manager the chance to express himself. (Kent, 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2007)
Then, we realized the second interview under the authorization of the general manager. We had the permission to run the interview with any person from the staff and the opportunity to choose the one we wanted to talk to. This avoided the possibility to bias our results by the fact that interviewing employees with close relationship to the manager may not have given us objective results.

In this case, we used a structured interview to facilitate the data collection with them, and also in order to be quicker than with the unstructured interview, as the personnel were also very busy. We directly asked the employee a certain number of questions in order to know exactly what his/her knowledge and point of view were in relation to the information related to the environmental issues in the hotel, with the purpose of contrasting his/her answer with the information we obtained from the manager.

By proceeding with these interviews to different persons, we could have a more complete idea of the environmental concern in the hotel. Furthermore, even if the types of interview were different, we managed to ask approximately the same questions to each interviewee, that is to say information about environmental goals, practices and barriers that impede the hotels to develop more environmental activities. This was also aimed to validate the information each of them could tell us.

Nevertheless, we quickly had a limitation to approaching both manager and employees. It was not an easy task to complete, as in most of the times the managers were really busy and it was quite difficult to have their attention. Moreover, the employees were not always available either, as in function of the time when we interviewed them we could not always reach the employee from the restaurant or the housekeeping department due to shift period. Another limitation we found, especially with the employees was that sometimes they felt reluctant to talk about their goals and practices for fear not to give a proper image. Furthermore, they were also sometimes afraid not to give the correct information. For this reason, they needed to consult their superior, in most of the cases their managers. These difficulties - busyness, fear and authorization- had an impact on our interviews, because we could not have all the information we were looking for.

This lack of information impeded us to include all the hotels interviews in our study. Thus, we reduced our sample, excluding one hotel from our research. This makes the results hard to generalize.

### 2.8 Conduction of interviews

After defining which type of interview we were going to do, the next step was to run the interview. The starting point consisted of arranging an appointment for a face-to-face interview with the manager of the hotel. In order to achieve it, we presented him our research purpose. In the meanwhile, we explained the goal of our study and the kind of information we were looking for.
In order to solve the possible difficulties we found in reaching the personnel, we used different techniques in approaching them; depending on the hotel we worked with. To be more precise, our first attempt was going directly to the hotel and trying to speak with the manager or if he/she was not available, trying to fix an appointment directly with him/her on the phone.

Once we set the appointment with the manager, we started to prepare the interview, listing the points and the type of information we were interested in, still keeping in mind the objective to obtain as much information as possible related to the environmental issues. For this reason, we decided to run a semi-structured interview.

During the interview, we started by presenting our topic, the purpose of our research and the information we were interesting in. Secondly, we explained the type of interview we wanted to do, in order let the manager know that we wanted an open interview and to let him free to talk about any environmental issue in his/her hotel. The aim of the interview was to obtain the information in order to link them with the theoretical part. However, in order to guide the conversation, we all the same, ask few questions mostly about hotels’ goals.

The questions we asked to the manager were:

- Is the hotel member of any kind of green association or organization?
- Does the hotel have any policy or written statement where the goals are presented?
- Which kind of practices are developed in the hotel in order to be environmental-friendly?
- Do the employees and the customers have any possibility to do suggestions or recommendations?
- Is the environmental issue a priority for you? And for the hotel?

In general, this interview lasted for about an hour on average.

Then, as we explained above, we ran a structured interview with an employee of the hotel preferably from the restaurant or the housekeeping department, making sure to match the questions with the purpose of the study, that is to say to ask mainly about environmental goals, practices and barriers.

The questions we asked were the following:

- What are the environmental practices you are doing within your department?
- Do you have any knowledge about the environmental policy of the hotel? Do the employees have access to this document?
- Do you have any special goal within your department, in relation to the environmental concern?
- Do you define goals every year? Do you make an evaluation of the goals performance?
- Do you have the feeling that the environmental issue is a priority for your hotel?
- Do you have any possibility to make suggestions to the manager in order to improve the environmental performance of the hotel?
How do you evaluate your involvement in the company regarding environmental issues?

Unlike the interview with the manager, the interview with the employee took around half an hour.

The last step of the data collection was to analyze all the written information and documents in Swedish that we had from the interviews and translated them in English, in order to select the one that were relevant for us.

Finally, we will collect all the data in relation to our purpose with the help of the literature we reviewed and the method we are going to use. Our intention is to answer our research questions and formulating our own criticism. This epistemological approach is defined as interpretivism (Bryman, & Bell, 2007), as we used the information to interpret the reality.

Concerning the ontological orientation of this study, we based our definition of “green hotels” on the concept described by Alexander (2002), specifying clearly the requirements the hotels must follow to be included in the present research. For this reason, we will follow a constructionist approach.

Regarding the transferability of our study, we consider that it cannot be transferable and adjusted to hotels in the world unless hotels are located in Sweden or other countries with similar advancement on the topic of environmental concern.

2.9 Choice of hotels

We ran the interviews in five different hotels in the north of Sweden: STF ABisko TURISTSTATION, SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL, HOTEL AVENY, HOTEL WINN and ROYAL HOTEL.

All of them are situated in two different cities: Abisko and Umeå. The first one is a small village in the northern part of the Swedish Lapland, situated 250 kilometres from the north of the Artic Circle and close to the Norwegian border. Abisko Mountain Station is located in the Abisko National Park worldly famous for its wildlife, rare flowers species and scenery. (http://www.abisko.nu, 2008-05-05) This well-known mountain area has been a popular destination for hundreds of years. It represents the starting point of the 440 kilometre long Kungsleden (King’s Trail), which is the Swedish’s best known skiing and hiking route. This place is also famous for the magic midnight sun during the summer as well as the spectacular Northern Lights during the winter months. (http://www.abisko.nu, 2008-05-05). These reasons make Abisko a really tourist attractive place. Thus, we considerer that this village can be representative of the rest of hotels of Sweden that are also famous for its tourist attraction or for the place where are they situated, like National parks or natural reserves. With the term representative we understand that they can develop similar types of environmental practices or present a similar environmental policy.
Secondly, we ran the other interviews in Umeå in order to have a broader view of the “green hotels” in Sweden. Unlike Abisko, Umeå is a big university town and also the biggest city in Norrland with 112,000 inhabitants. It is, moreover, candidate to the European Capital of Culture in 2014 and has many innovative companies in the fields of biomedicine, energy and IT. Growth really speeded up in 1965, the same year that Umeå University threw open its doors. Obviously, there is a connection. Education provides skills, which attract companies, which in turn, attract more people. (www.visitumea.se; www.umea.se, 2008-05-25) In this case, we chose Umeå because it can represent the other business cities in Sweden, where we can find similar kinds of customers interested in specific types of hotels. So, we think that hotels in Sweden can be similar in relation to their environmental behavior.

In the following paragraphs, we’ll include a brief presentation of each hotel we interviewed, bringing out some aspects in relation to their environmental concern. We’ll decide also to analyze five hotels, because each of them represent a different role in the development of an Environmental Management, starting by hotels that are really developed and ending by the one starting the “greening the business” process.

The first hotel we interviewed was the **STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION**. It is member of the **Swedish Tourist Association (STF)**, which is an association related to the protection of the environment (Svenska Turistföreningen, publ. nr. 3413). It also has been rewarded by some international certifications like **The Green Key** award, which attests that a lodge has an environmental policy and is actively working on environmental improvements (www.hsr.se, 2008-05-06). This hotel represents all the hotels that have already a really developed Environmental Management and have received some environmental awards and certifications from green organisations.

Moving to Umeå, the second hotel we interviewed was the **SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL**, which represents the biggest hotel in this city. It is member of the **Miljömärkt Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen)**, which guarantees that the hotel has met the highest standard regarding the environment, health, functionality and quality requirements (www.svanen.nu, 2008-05-21). This hotel also belongs to the **Scandic** chain, a powerful chain of 130 hotels operating in northern Europe and Russia. Scandic owns now 65 hotels in Sweden. (www.scandichotels.com, 2008-05-25) Umeå has two Scandic hotels: one in the city center called the Plaza and the other one in the Teg area called Umeå Syd, but in this study we only interviewed the first one. We consider this hotel as representative of the hotels that are associated to a hotel’s chain, as well as those which has a really well-known in the environmental area. However, due to the lack of information provided during the interviews, we decided to exclude this hotel from our sample. The main reason for this shortage of information was due to the busyness of the manager. As we expressed above, it was a real limitation for our study. Neither the assistant manager nor the employees could help us. We tried to contact the manager by phone and email though, but we received a message back explaining that the hotel could not help us more. Nevertheless, it is possible to consult these interviews in the appendix (see appendix 2).

The third hotel, **HOTEL AVENY**, is member of the **ProfilHotels** chain, which focuses their effort on design, management, economies of scale and efficiency (www.profilhotels.se, 2008-05-21). This hotel has not been certified by any green association, but they define themselves
as very involved with the environment. Consequently, they defined themselves as “green”. The ProfilHotels counts six hotels in Sweden and two hotels in Denmark-Copenhagen. The HOTEL AVENY in Umeå has been refurbishing in 1997 and looks now a well-design hotel. It counts 87 rooms. It plays the role of those hotels which are starting to be concern to the environment and are including more environmental practices into their current activities.

Other hotel we interviewed was the HOTEL WINN that is also member of the Miljöomärkt Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen). It counts 87 rooms with 155 beds. The staff has around 12-15 employees working there. It belongs to the Best Western chain, the world's largest hotel chain. (www.bestwestern.com, 2008-05-25) We chose this hotel as representative of those which are looking forward to having a green certification.

Finally, we ran the last interview in the ROYAL HOTEL, which is part of the Rica chain. However we find out that this hotel did not correspond perfectly to the definition of “green hotels” that we proposed in the introduction even if they considered themselves as “green”, when we approached them. That is why we include the information they gave us apart from the rest in order not to bias our results (see appendix 4).
Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

In the present chapter, we are going to introduce some theories in relation to our topic. The fact that we are treating a quite modern issue, and that it is now when the companies are paying more attention to the environmental concern, explain the lack of theories in relation to the Environmental Management process in the hotel industry. However, the theories we present are related to three big sections: greening the business, Environmental Management and barriers to the implementation process. The first group deal with the impact that the company’s activity produces on the environment, introducing the concept of green strategy as well as the factors that pressure the company to change their behavior in order to become more environmental-friendly. In a second section, we present the Environmental Management process, starting with the introduction of an EMS as an example of an Environmental Management; this EMS, as well as the rest of the process followed by a company, should include a definition of goals, and the principles they must present in order to be classified as good goals. This section also contains the critics of a policy implementation and some indicators to measure the performance of an environmental project. Finally, the last part is dedicated to introduce the possible barriers that the hotels can find in implementing environmental practices, aspect closely related to the prioritization of objectives.

3.1 Greening the business

3.1.1 Influence’s factors

The growing concern about the environment (Wee & Quazy, 2005) has its start point in the companies, specifically in the impact that the companies’ activities have on the environment. According to Quazy (2001), this impact can be direct and indirect.

Direct impact. The packaging waste or chemical discharges are some examples of this type of impact. In fact, demand for environmentally products has become a powerful force in the marketplace. Firms must reengineer the way the work in order to ensure sustainability of resources. New technologies are required to reduce destructive ecological impact and resource depletion. As a result, many green products have broken into the market. (Quazy, 2001)

Indirect impact. The wearing off of rubber tyres of moving transportation vehicles can be an example of this type of impact, as the worn rubber may contain toxic materials that affect negatively the environment. In relation with this impact, the main groups of stakeholder (consumers, employees, government, corporations and shareholders) have pressured many companies to look and to improve their environmental performance (Quazy, 2001; Wee & Quazy, 2005). Thus, it is important to understand the stakeholders’ influence on managerial decisions as a driving force behind corporate environment commitment (Tschtentke et al, 2004). A brief discussion of this impact is presenting as following:
Consumers: some authors rely on the fact that the society is “era of corporate image”, in which consumers make their purchase decisions in function of the firm’s role in the society: how it treats employees, shareholders and local neighborhoods (Quazy, 2001). Consumers support products and services from socially responsible and trustworthy firms (Dincer & Dincer, 2006). According to Quazy (2001), this pressure has made companies to incorporate environmental considerations into their strategic planning to assure its customers to prove they are acting in a socially responsible manner, taking care of the environment.

Employees: an environmentally friendly corporation will attract also more able and dedicated team of workers (Quazy, 2001), as they see the firm compatible with their values profile.

Government: statements made by governments in relation to have a cleaner environment create pressures on organizations to pay attention to the possible environmental consequences before making decisions (Quazy, 2001). Incentives and recognitions awards for model companies have also been offered in many countries, as the publicity that can derive from them will probably have impact on the customer (Tzschentke et al., 2004). For instance, Tzschentke et al claim that legal compliance is the first reason for undertaking environmental improvements.

Corporations: management feels threatened when they realize that the rest of competitors are incorporating environmental issues into their strategic planning before themselves. It can make them lost opportunities on the market (Quazy, 2001).

Shareholders: investors are more interested to invest in social responsibility companies (Dincer & Dincer, 2006).

Customers make pressure on hotels as they can decide in which hotel they want to spend the night, in function of their social responsibility aspect; they seek for products and services from companies that express that their objectives are social, environmental and economic (Dincer & Dincer, 2006). Companies are looking nowadays for a more motivated and enthusiastic staff, seeking for creating a new culture where the employee is more than a simple worker, it is part of the business. This fact will help in achieving the hotel’s objectives in a quickly and easy way. Moreover, statements created by the government, as well as the international certifications and environmental recognitions helps the hotel in publicity their responsible behavior. Finally, the environmental practices developed by the rest of the hotels will motivate a hotel in developing also these types of practices. (Quazy, 2001) Summing up, all these reasons will push the hotels in change their behavior in order to become green. According to Alvarez et al (2001), hotels perceiving strong pressures from stakeholders on environmental issues deploy more extensive Environmental Management practices than their counterparts which do not perceive such demands.

In reference to the stakeholder theory (Alvarez Gil et al., 2001), organizations work in order to satisfy their main stakeholders. Thus, they have the pressure to satisfy stakeholder’s environmental demands in order to receive their support to survive in the long term. One way stakeholders use to show the urgency and the importance of the environmental demands is through the offer of rewards or providing technical support on these issues.

In this study we also find that the hotel industry combines particular with across-the-board stakeholders (Alvarez Gil et al., 2001). The former refers to constituents such as travel
agencies, tour operators, and hotel chains, whereas the latter concerns stakeholders such as government, customers and ecologist groups. Finally, some tour-operators demand quite often information about hotels’ Environmental Management practices.

Alvarez Gil et al complete Quazy’s theory by adding others factors that have a considerable impact on deploying Environmental Management practices. Some of these factors are: age of facilities, size, chain affiliation, the use of operations management techniques, the hotel’s legal category and the type of dominant tourism among hotel’s clientele.

1. Facility age

Facilities have been prime targets for making green strategies operational for a long time (Olson, 2008). The age of facilities influences companies’ environmental performance. The use of new and more efficient technology allows the company savings in energy, water and materials, as well as reducing the levels of pollution. Nevertheless, the relationship between facility age and Environmental Management should be based on the social values that guided the renovation work or the introduction of new facilities. New facilities can be related to following certain environment protection activities (e.g. separating garbage out for recycling) or to make better use of the existing resources (e.g. saving energy and water). As a result of this study, hotels with modern facilities deploy broader environment management practices than the others with older facilities. (Alvarez Gil et al, 2001) Thus, the rebuilding of a certain part of a hotel, as well as the building of a new hotel will facilitate a company to introduce new environmental practices, turning the hotel to a more social responsible behavior.

2. Size

It is possible to find a relationship between size and Environmental Management, as large firms have a greater impact on the environment. In addition, the fact that this type of companies have a more visible environmental impact, plus that it is easier to control centralized sources of pollution and also that they represent models to imitate, justify the pressure that they receive from the stakeholders. (Alvarez Gil et al, 2001) In fact, exposure to stakeholders’ pressure increases with size (Tzschentke et al, 2004). This aspect also has influence in terms of the facility to develop more advanced Environmental Management, as they have more resources to invest, a more formal management and the possibility of economies of scale for the re-use, recycling or valuation of waste. Therefore, the study proves that large-size hotels deploy more extensive Environmental Management practices than their smaller size counterparts (Alvarez et al, 2001), what is to say, environmental performance decrease significantly with the size (Tzschentke et al, 2004).

In other words, large hotels will become green in an easier way than the smaller one, as in general they can afford bigger investments. This availability of resources can represent a reason to become green, as its represent a possibility where to invest on.
3. Chain affiliation

Normally, hotel chains use to standardize their activities. This enhances their reputation as the same time that gives them benefits from economies of scale, which help to increase efficiency. (Alvarez et al., 2001) They transfer knowledge about which environmental protection activities to develop and how to implement them efficiently, decisions that are difficult to make on individual hotels due to the novelty of this issue. Moreover, hotel chain can test some practices on individual units and, if they have success, distribute it among the rest of the members.

According to Alvarez et al., 2001, hotels’ chains may support individual units by:
- Providing them with training on environmental protection, techniques and/or activities.
- Facilitating their inclusion in programs or activities already functioning or those are known to be useful.
- Providing technical advice to hotels that start up such activities.
- Easing their access to more ecological markets.

Another important point in relation with the chain affiliation is that the chain can impose certain minimum or common norms for environmental protection in order to unify the environmental image. This can be a reason why hotels become green, because they do not have other options.

In conclusion, hotels affiliated to a hotel chain deploy more extensive Environmental Management practices than their non-affiliated counterparts. (Alvarez et al., 2001)

4. Operations management

The reduction of environmental impact by means of pollution reduction is linked to the productive activities of the firm. (Alvarez et al., 2001) Some techniques and methods related to operations management are quite similar to the Environmental Management’s one. Thus, activities related to efficiency or qualitative competitive priority includes both points of view.

Some examples of these activities that we find in the case of hotels are (Alvarez et al., 2001):
- Purchasing and supply of inputs such as energy, water, food and cleaning products.
- Technology in use (e.g. laundry or air-conditioning equipment).
- Design and control of activities and processes (e.g. separation of solid waste in each work site or water management).
- Product design (e.g. green rooms, green menus, elimination of sub-products, re-use and re-cycle of waste).

Moreover, some aspects of environmental protection take an important place into the operations management area, being perceived as a core component of the operations strategy. For instance, a widespread belief among hotels is that environmental measures are “good management issues” that should be taken into consideration in order to operate efficiently,
because they results in a reduction of costs by increasing levels of operational efficiency (Tzschentke et al, 2004).

As a conclusion, Alvarez et al (2001) agree that hotels with greater use of operations management techniques deploy more extensive Environmental Management practices than their counterparts with less use. Thus, it will be easier for them to become into the category of “green hotel”.

5. Control variables

The legal category of hotels as well as the predominant tourism among the hotels’ clientele may have effect also in the Environmental Management practices of the firms (Alvarez et al, 2001).

In general, hotels’ legal category is a strategic aspect of difficult modification (e.g. rooms’ dimensions). Normally, high hotels assign greater volume of assets and employees per room, which helps in satisfying costumer’s needs and tastes, including the protection of the environment (Alvarez et al, 2001). At the same time, costumers of this kind of hotels seek for luxury and comfort (Kirk, 1995), which imply a high level of resources consumption, coming in conflict with the environmental protection.

The second factor, the predominant type of tourism amongst a hotel’s clientele constitutes a strategic factor, and it is usually link with the hotel’s location. The time spent and type of the activities carried at the hotel’s; the length of customers’ stays – the longer the stay the higher the environmental concerns –; and also a natural tourist will deploy a wide range of environmental protection activities constitutes some ways in which this factor affect Environmental Management. (Alvarez et al, 2001) Indeed, the fact to be situated close to a protection natural reserve will push the hotel in developing more environmental practices, becoming in a “green hotel”.

Finally, in addition to these factors, ethics is considered as another prime reason in the adoption of environmental practices. In this case, the environmental commitment comes from a moral obligation or desire to contribute; it is its social responsibility dimension. Managers behave in this way as a result of the education inherited from their parents, their concern about preserving the environment for the sake of future generations and their level of awareness. (Tzschentke et al, 2004).

3.1.2 Green strategy

All these reasons (stakeholders’ pressure, age of facilities, size, chain affiliation, the use of operations management techniques, the hotel’s legal category and the type of dominant tourism among hotel’s clientele, as well as the ethics’ point of view) explain the fact that enterprises are changing in ways that they improve the environment, and that change is accelerating; yet very few companies have established an enterprise-level “green” strategy. (Olson, 2008)
In relation with Olson’s study, a green strategy for an enterprise, public or private, government or commercial, is one that complements the business, operations and assets strategies that are already well understood and often well articulated by the enterprise. A green strategy fundamentally helps an enterprise making decisions that have a positive impact on the environment. The principles that form the basis of a green strategy should lead a business to make decisions based on solid business logic and make good business sense.

According to Olson (2008), the three principles shown below could be the principles of any company enterprise-level green strategy.

Figure 1: Principles of a company’s green strategy

In a first step, a green strategy encourages a common culture of awareness and action. Organizations should work to establish a culture where environmental awareness and proactive behaviour is part of an employee’s routine activity. Employees and stakeholders should be given the appropriate tools and training so that living in this culture is easy, fun, and rewarding.

The former stage facilitates the next one, which deals with the ability to make decisions that are based on the effect they have on the environment. These decisions should be integrated with other criteria already in place that facilitates decision-making. Priorities set by a green strategy should be integrated with the business, operations and asset strategies so that priorities are aligned and conflicting interests are easily resolved.

The last stage of this process is related to the effects of such strategy. The business case for a green strategy and the actions it supports should seek to identify benefits to both top-line revenue and bottom-line costs. (Olson, 2008)

By establishing an environmental strategy in the hotel, it helps to modify the firm’s behavior as it implies to take into considerations the possible effects that a decision can have on the natural environment. Thus, the definition of this type of strategies also pushes the companies in become environmental-friendly that is to say, in become a “green hotel”.

Nevertheless, the definition of a green strategy is not the only way to become green. In fact, an enterprise-level green strategy can be considered as a one key ingredient in a broader corporate or social responsibility program (Olson, 2008). Another possible ingredient is introduced by Quazy (2001), when presenting his Business excellence model. It constitutes a different approach to analyze how companies integrate environmental issues into their strategic planning process. The author explains it through two different items, defining specific areas to address within each of the items.
Item I: strategic planning process

1. Describe the planning process for the organization’s short and strategic plans.
2. How the organization’s plan are cascaded down to departmental levels.
3. How management reviews these plans to reflect business changes.
4. How the organization evaluates and improves its strategic planning process.

Item II: quality and operational goals

1. To summarize the organization’s key product/service quality and operational goals for both short- and long-term plans.
2. How results are monitored and reviewed to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

The main difference between both strategies rest on the fact that the green strategy emphasizes the green behavior as a result of a culture of awareness in the company, including in their strategy the impact that each decision has on the environment, while the Business Excellence Model strives for the definition of a whole process, where the company should define plans and distribute them through the company in order to assure the commitment of the staff. The review and evaluation of these plans constitute also an important point in this model.

Although both models are quite similar, we consider that the Business Excellence Model can be more appropriate to explain the situation of hotels regarding the green issue. The culture of a company, in general, takes time in being developed and created inside the firms; it is not something that can change from one day to another. The former model, however, presents the steps a company can follow in a clear and simple way, so we consider that probably it will be easier to follow.

3.2 Environmental Management

3.2.1 Environmental Management System (EMS)

When talking about environmental practices and the main factors that have an impact on environmental activities, we are dealing with the last stage of the general concept of Environmental Management that makes reference to the process by which the collection of policies, structures, resources, systems and processes are brought to mutual interplay for the achievement of clearly defined environmental policy directives (Mensah, 2006). This last stage is the implementation of goals or policy that is to say environmental practices a company, and in this case, a hotel, is developing. As we explained above, some activities can affect the implementation of these practices. One factor that is often related to Environmental Management is the pressure exerted by the stakeholders. Because of this, some companies start thinking of adopting what is called by Environmental Management System (EMS). EMS is a self-regulatory environmental initiative, usually used by big companies because of the
pressure of the customers, the requirements of their suppliers to conform to a formal EMS standard, and the more systematic way for shareholders, government regulatory agencies, insurance companies and financial institutions to assess their commitment to improving environmental performance. (Chan, 2008) The EMS is a process used following the pressure put on companies to become green though.

Chan added as well that an EMS provides a structure that allows management the ability to better control the company’s environmental impact. It is usually built on the Denim model of quality management, which consists of a cycle of four phases: plan, do, check and act. (Chan, 2008) By proceeding with this model the EMS is defining in a way the process of implementing environmental goals. Consequently, it is considered as an example of the general concept of Environmental Management, which is the process a company follows when it wishes to be green and when it is developing its “green” aspect.

The EMS is mainly based on five core principles (Goosey, 2000): environmental policy, planning, implementation and operation, checking and corrective action and management review. These principles are include in the basic implementation cycle for an Environmental Management System, which was develop by Goosey as a response to pressures to show environmental performance and becoming green.

![Figure 2: The basic implementation cycle for an Environmental Management System](image)

This model considers interrelated steps, starting with the acceptation of a commitment, followed by an initial review, the definition of the purpose and the establishment of a plan. Then, the plan must be implemented, the results measures in order to know if it is necessary to review and improve the implementation, re-establish the plan or also to redefine the purpose. All these steps are guided by the principle of continual improvement, so they must be reformulated every time it consider necessary. (Goosey, 2000) This model presents a cycle of Environmental Management starting with the notion of commitment with the aim to develop environmental practices through the acts of planning, implementing, measuring, reviewing and redefining, almost like the Denim model presented above.
Thereby, the EMS can be consider as an example of an Environmental Management process which follows the general steps described by the Business Excellence Model in becoming “green”, that is to say, the planning stage, implementation, evaluation and improvement. It is a helpful tool for hotels in order to know how to develop green practices.

So far, we saw that the main aspect of an EMS was related to the implementation of the environment goals or policy within the organization (Zobel, 2006). Here we mean environmental practices developed by a “green hotel” though. There are a number of theories related to this process. Some of them are: the Goal-setting, the Management by Objectives and the SMART theory.

Moreover, we decided to focus on these specific theories because the definition of goals represents an important aspect in the implementation of a green strategy within the company. It is also one of the steps of the Business Excellence Model as well as one of the principles of an EMS. In addition, the Management by Objectives reinforces the former models, as it also focus on the specificity of the goals. Finally, the SMART theory adds some more criteria to determine the goodness of a goal.

### 3.2.2 Goal-setting theory

When it comes to the goal implementation’s process, it has its basis in Edwin Locke’s Goal-setting theory (Zobel, 2006). The two attributes that have been most extensively studied in this theory were the notion of specificity and difficulty. With regard to specificity, goals can be vague or specific. With regard to difficulty, goals can be easy, moderate or difficult (O’Neil & Drillings, 1994).

This theory discovered in the middle of the sixties proposes that specific goals increase performance and those difficult goals, when accepted, result in higher performance than do easy goals (Zobel, 2006). Here we mean by performance the environmental performance that is to say the achievement of a hotel’s environmental objectives. According to the theory, easily–attained goals tend to correlate with lower performance than more difficult goals though.

Goal-setting was based on the premise that much human action is purposeful, in that it is directed by conscious goals (O’Neil & Drillings, 1994). In any organization, goals guide the organization’s efforts, support the distribution of resources and focus the organization on success. It is one of the first steps an organization should complete though. (Shahin, & Mahbod, 2007)

There are many benefits to setting goals but primarily goal-setting ensures that the organization gets the job done that needs to be done, when it needs to be done, by the people who need to do it, within the resources available. (Shahin, & Mahbod, 2007)

Later on, Dr. Gary Latham completed this theory adding other goal characteristics to improve performance. Together with Locke, they created the goal-setting and task performance theory
to investigate on the effect of goal-setting in the workplace. (Locke and Latham, 1990) The additional characteristics were challenge, commitment and feedback (those characteristics are detailed further down).

The goal setting theory has become one of the most generative theories in the behavioral sciences. In their book, *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance*, Locke and Latham (1990) examined and synthesized the research findings of over 500 studies exploring the effects and effectiveness of goal setting. They conclude that the goal setting theory has become one of the best documented and more universally accepted theories in psychology and the social sciences (Leonard, 2008).

By knowing the relationship between goal difficulty or specificity and performance, we will find out if a hotel starts its Environmental Management process by the definition of good goals, as it is the first step in the Environmental Management process to become green. With preciseness, it is inside the planning phase of any of the models we have described above.

As we said before, *goal-setting* is one of the first steps an organization should complete as goals guide the organization’s effort, support the distribution of resources and focus the organization on success (Shahin & Mahbod, 2006). Here, success means the achievement of environmental performance. This achievement passes by the implementation of goals that is to say the environmental practices.

The first issue Locke was addressing was the relationship of goal difficulty to performance: the highest or more difficult goals produced the highest level of effort and performance (Locke & Latham, 2002). That is to say, the highest level of effort occurred when a task is moderately difficult, and the lowest levels occurred when the task is usually very easy or very hard. The author added that performance levelled off or decreased only when the limits of ability were reached or when commitment to a highly difficult goal lapsed.

Moreover, the author also compared the effect of specific, difficult goals to a commonly used exhortation in organizational settings namely, to do one’s best. He found that specific, difficult goals consistently led to higher performance than urging people to do their best. When people are asked to do their best, they do not do so. This is because do-your-best goals have no external referent and thus are defined peculiar. (Locke & Latham, 2002)

As mentioned above, the additional characteristics that complete the goal setting theory and that are the basis of the goal-setting and task performance are based on the notion of challenge, commitment and feedback. (Locke and Latham, 1990) According to Leonard (2008), the degree to which the purpose is clearly defined and challenging to achieve affects the focus and amount of energy dedicated to the task performance.

An article from Locke and Latham (1990), states that challenging goals, in addition to being associated with high self-efficacy, are typically associated with positive instrumentalities. Individuals with high goals, as compared to those with low goals, are more likely to believe that goal pursuit will be associated with a sense of achievement, improvement of one's skills, and the opportunity to prove what one can do. The authors add that in real life more challenging goals are generally associated with more beneficial outcomes than easy goals.
Another attribute of goal that has been studied is the notion of intensity. That is to say, subjects who thought more intensively about how to solve a problem are most likely to become committed to solve it and subsequently to solve it. The aspect of goal intensity that has been studied is most frequently commitment. Commitment refers to the degree to which an individual is attracted to the goal, considers it important, and is determined to attain it. High commitment is more likely to lead to goal attainment than low commitment. (O’Neil & Drillings, 1994). According to Locke and Latham (1990), in order for goals to affect performance, they must be commitment to the goals, that is, individuals or groups must be truly trying to attain them. Generally, goal commitment is highest when people think they can attain the goals and when there are values associated with goal attainment.

Finally, goals and feedback together are more effective in motivating high performance or performance improvement than either of them is alone (O’Neil & Drillings, 1994). The goal identifies what object or outcome one should aim for and is the standard by typically search for new task strategies in order to attain their goals. Locke and Latham (1990) stated that goal-setting is more effective, and usually only effective, when feedback allows performance to be tracked in relation to one’s goals. Goal setting without feedback appears to have little long term effect on performance. They added that it is important to note, as well, the other side of this coin. Feedback without goals also has little effect on performance. When goal-setting in response to feedback is prevented or does not occur, feedback does not motivate high performance.

Therefore, by analyzing these characteristics we want to know how hotels have defined their environmental goals in order to guess which effects they will have on the hotel’s environmental performance. The definition of goals deals with the planning step on the Business Excellence Model (Quazy, 2001) as well as the establishment of plans on the EMS model (Goosey, 2000).

3.2.3 Management by Objectives

In addition to the Theory of goal-setting and task performance, we found the Management by Objectives theory which also constitutes a basis for the implementation of the environmental policy (Zobel, 2006) in the sense that it refers to the establishment of specific targets or goals for work activities in a variety of work contexts (Blackwell Encyclopedic Dictionary of Organizational Behavior, 2005). This concept was originally proposed by Peter Drucker in his management classic “The Practice of Management” published in 1954. It is a system of management based on goal congruence as a means of improving performance (Dinesh & Palmer, 1998). Zobel explains that like the Theory of goal-setting and task performance, this theory is used in a work environment where a manager or an employee from a company for example, takes into consideration some characteristics when establishing goals. Dinesh and Palmer added as well that this focus on goal alignment as a way to improve organisational performance, at the time, thought to provide the best path to increase as well profitability.

Usually MBO programs are composed of four ingredients (Zobel, 2006):
- **Goal Specificity**: A goal has to be the more specific as possible.
- **Participative Decision-Making**: This characteristic infers the notion of commitment and involvement in the company.
- **An Explicit Time Period**: It is important to set deadlines in order to improve and go ahead in the achievement of the goal.
- **Performance Feedback**: This will enable the manager or employee to evaluate goals and adjust them in case of difficulty.

This MBO theory will lead us to know if hotels base their environmental policy statements according to specific goals or “objectives” in order to achieve better environmental practices.

The major ingredients in MBO correspond well with the principles of the goal-setting theory that is to say the clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and task complexity. The more specific and complicated the goals are, the better it is for the company’s performance. Moreover, the participative decision-making is linked with the commitment of employees. Finally, the performance feedback helps to gain recognition and increase performance.

### 3.2.4 SMART

Another model that is close to the **goal-setting** theory and MBO, in the sense that it determines a good goal in function of criteria, is the SMART theory (Shalin & Mahbod, 2006). According to the dictionary of Human Resource Management (2001, p.334), the SMART theory is an acronym standing for Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, and Timed, though the precise words derived from the initials vary from organization to organization and from theorist to theorist. For example, some replace 'Specific' with 'Stretching' and others replace 'Agreed' with 'Appropriate' or 'Attainable'. The dictionary states also that SMART refers to either business or employee objectives adopted within a formal system of performance management. The theoretical rationale for the adoption of SMART objectives is derived from the **goal-setting** theory.

However, while the goal setting theory and the MBO give characteristics a manager or an employee from a company, for example, should take into consideration when he is establishing goals, the SMART theory describes the criteria a goal has to be in order to be a good goal. Thus a goal has to be (Shalin & Mahbod, 2006):

- **Specific**: Goals should be detailed and as specific as possible. Loose, broad or vague goals are not desirable. When goals are specific, it is much easier to hold someone to account for their achievement. This criterion is really close to the specificity characteristic of the goal setting theory that a company has to take into consideration when establishing a goal to increase environmental performance.
- **Measurable**: In order to clearly determine if objectives have been achieved, goals should not be ambitious, rather they should be clear and concrete. Each goal should be measurable. The measure may be quantitative or qualitative, but measurement should be against a standard of performance and a standard of expectation.
- **Attainable and Aggressive**: Success or failure is only fairly attributed against practical goals. Goals should not be out of reach. They should be reasonable.
However, setting goals is a balance between the degree of “attainability” and challenge and aspiration.

- **Realistic**: Extending the concept of attainability, a goal should be realistic. It is possible that a goal could be set that is attainable, but not realistic in the particular working environment. Being realistic in the choice of goals is helpful in examining the availability of resources and selecting key performance indicators.

- **Time-sensitive**: Goals should have a time frame for completion. Having a time frame will provide a structure and allows the analyst to monitor progress. A timeline or completion date should be part of a goal. Being time-sensitive is helpful in measuring success along the path of reaching the goal. It also assists in developing a realistic action plan, including setting immediate objectives and strategies for reaching the goals. Environmental practices may be long tasks to achieve. That is why it is important to fix deadlines in order to improve and go ahead in the achievement of the goal as mentioned in the MBO.

In summary, by choosing the SMART theory we seek to have a broad vision of the goals’ establishment in the hotel. Thus, the *Business Excellence Model* (Quazy, 2001), the *green strategy* (Olson, 2001) and the EMS’s implementation cycle (Goosey, 2000) introduce the definition of goals as one important step the companies should follow. Later on, we focused on the *goal-setting* and the *MBO* theories (Zobel, 2006) in order to know the relationship between the specificity and difficulty of the goals and its effect on the hotel’s performance. Finally, we add the SMART theory (Shalin & Mahbod, 2006) in order to reinforce and complete the characteristics the goal must present in order to be classified as good goals.

### 3.2.5 Critics of policy implementation

Finally, finishing with the step of goal establishment in the Environmental Management process, Zobel (2006) criticized that the establishment of a policy is sometimes not related enough to the company goals. A policy can also be a general statement of a company presenting its compliance with any standard. According to Zobel (2006) most environmental policies are general in nature, and it is often difficult to see directly from the policy to what kind of organization the policy is related. Moreover, according to him, the policy document, which is mostly just a starting point for the EMS implementation, is seldom communicated within the organization. That is an obstacle for the personnel to commit to environmental measures and to the Environmental Management process. Furthermore, Zobel thought that time periods for goals are often chosen ad-hoc. He adds that goals with a long time period are usually completely missing. As we said in the MBO and SMART theories, it is important to have an explicit time period within your policy or goal statement. Sometimes companies are working on long-term goals, for example when applying for a green certification. These goals may not always be stated somewhere. Then Zobel criticized the form of goals by saying that many goals are not quantified and that employee participation is seldom used. This last critic refers also to the goal-setting theory and the MBO when they deal with the characteristic of commitment and participative decision-making. Another critic Zobel is doing is regarding the type of goals. He claimed that most organizations work mainly with goals in order to reduce consumption and mainly in the areas of waste, chemicals, energy and emissions. Environmental practices are each measure taken by a company, and in this case a hotel, in
order to be environmental-friendly. It can be related to waste reduction as well as recycling for example. Finally, Zobel claimed that the parties who are responsible for goals are usually well distributed throughout the organization. This last critic corresponds again to the essential notions of commitment and participative decision-making explained in the goal-setting and MBO theories when establishing good goals.

Zobel concluded his study by saying that organizations might achieve a more effective environmental policy implementation if they focus more on a process characterized by long and medium-term goals and annual plans and focus less on standards’ specifications on objectives, targets and programmes. This would help them to better develop the following steps in the Environmental Management process notably the environmental practices.

With Zobel’s critics (2006) we want to point out the main aspects that a company should pay attention to regarding the definition of an environmental policy or the establishments or goals. It is necessary to define a policy or goals, but also to focus on specific and attainable goals, within a predefined period of time to achieve it. The important idea is not the definition of goals, but yes the quality of the definition; if a hotel establish a bad definition or a bad goal, it will be rather difficult to achieve the objective the company is looking for. Thus, it reinforce the theories we have explain in this chapters in relation to the characteristics and features a goal must present.

3.2.6 Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

We explained above that goals need to be defined in function of few criteria or characteristics, in order to make the process of Environmental Management executable and consequently to improve the environmental performance of the company. This process can also be seen as a project and the criteria that evaluate the success of the project as indicators.

According to Chan (2008), the concept of project success is developed to set criteria and standards by which project manager can complete projects with the most favourable outcome.

Nevertheless, it is important to make a clear distinction between goals and indicators related to performance. Indicators measure progress towards and achievement of certain goals. (Shahin & Mahbod, 2007). Organizations often deal in different areas with what it is called as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). A set of KPIs is developed to measure project performance.

The aim of Chan’s study is to develop a set of KPI for measuring the progress of a process because according to him, project success means different things to different people. He considers a project as the achievement of a specified goal that involves a series of activities and tasks that consume resources. This definition can be related to the process of Environmental Management, which is the process of taking care of the environment by establishing goals and implementing them with the aim of increasing environmental performance. (Chan, 2008)
As KPI enable the measurement of project and organisational performance, the process of developing them involve the consideration of different factors. Chan claims that only a limited, manageable number of KPIs is maintainable for regular use. Having too many and too complex KPIs can be time – and resource – consuming. Moreover, the data collection for the project must be made as simple as possible, and a large sample size is required to reduce the impact of project specific variables. Furthermore, for performance measurement to be effective, the measures, or indicators must be accepted, understood and owned across the organization. They will also need to evolve and it is likely that a set of KPIs will be subject to change and refinement. And finally, graphic displays of KPIs need to be simple in design, easy to update and accessible. (Chan, 2008)

According to Chan, with these factors in mind, a set of KPIs includes objective and subjective indicators, which are developed to measure performance. He adds as well, that the measure of KPIs can be divided into two groups. The first group uses objective measures to evaluate criteria such as time, cost, value, safety, and environmental performance. The other group uses subjective opinions and personal judgement of stakeholders. This group includes the quality functionality of building and the satisfaction level of various stakeholders.

Adapting to the hotel industry, key performance indicators can be defined in order to evaluate the environmental practices the hotels develop following certain goals that they established at the beginning of the Environmental Management process. Thus, they will be able to check if their environmental projects succeed.

The definition of KPI allows the company to measure its environmental performance; this constitutes another step in the Business Excellence Model (Quazy, 2001) and in the implementation cycle of an EMS (Goosey, 2000). It is not only necessary to define goals, but also to know the contribution of those goals in the hotel’s environmental performance. The way we present to measure it is through the introduction of KPIs.

### 3.3 Barriers to implementation process

#### 3.3.1 Barriers

We saw that greening the business is a new trend for the hotel industry. However, there are still several barriers that deter hotels to develop Environmental Management and especially environmental practices. The aim for them is to detect the barriers and try to change them or adapt them in order to be even more or start to be environmental-friendly.

Chan (2008) found six factors that are likely to block a hotel from adopting and implementing an EMS: the lack of knowledge and skills a hotel can have, the lack of professional advice which could help them to develop environmental practices; the uncertainty of outcome especially if the hotel did not develop any measures first before something else; the certifiers and verifiers that could be strict and could require fastidious tasks to do; lack of resources if the company cannot provide what they need to be environmental-friendly; and the
implementation and maintenance costs because implementing environmental measures can be expensive especially if it is related to big environmental structures.

The most important barrier that could impede the adoption of EMS is the implementation and maintenance costs. For EMS to be implemented and maintained, regardless of whether or not the company then decides to certify itself to any standard, money, time and people as well as other implementation costs need to be allocated and provided on a continual basis to ensure the effectiveness of the system. (Chan, 2008) This may bring a financial burden to a hotel and may represent an on-going cost issue when implementing the system.

Chan noted some independent hoteliers’ opinions about financial aspects of “greening” the facility like the following:

- “It is too expensive to install energy- and water-efficient equipment”
- “Our financial resources have significant influence on type and scale of proecological initiatives undertaken”
- Proecological initiatives are too expensive, although profitable in the long run. That is in well-organized countries there are special financial schemes available, such as grants, loans, tax reductions, and other economic incentives. These are obviously economic aspects that play a decisive role in the decision-making process concerning environment-oriented solutions.”

The second important barrier factor is the lack of professional advice followed by the lack of knowledge and skills. Without professional advice, a hotel may not know how to start and implement the system or how to modify the guidelines according to the nature of its business and own organisational culture. Some hotels may not know what formal EMS is or how they should proceed. (Chan, 2008)

The factor lack of resources is also a barrier to EMS. Resources can be management and staff time, money and purchase of equipment. (Chan, 2008) The installation of some green facilities such as water restrictors, key card systems and heat exchangers all require the injection of significant amounts of money. Therefore additional resources are vital for an effective Environmental Management.

The following barrier that could impede the adoption of EMS is the certifiers and verifiers. Indeed, the high cost of certification can be a problem to hotels especially for the small or budget class hotels.

The last important barrier to EMS is the uncertainty of outcome. Environmental practices are usually not seen as the “first priority job”. Thus, the outcome can hardly be guaranteed.

Finally, according to the findings of Chan’s study, the latter added that the lower and smaller size hotels are usually more hindered by all these barriers. When implementing an Environmental Management process, it will increase costs initially and these costs may be critical for small to medium sized hotels. They may not have the ability to commit the time and the required resources to the process. (Chan, 2008)
In addition to Chan’s study, we found that the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES), a well-known code of environmental behavior for businesses (Wee & Quazy, 2005) composed by a national network of investors, environmental organizations and other public interest groups which works with companies and investors to address sustainability challenge such as global climate change; defined several principles of responsible environmental action. However, the road that companies must follow to be friendly with the environmental is not easy. According the CERES It is then possible to find two different types of barriers:

- **Industrial barriers:** these barriers reflect the special and unique features of the business activity in which the firm engages. It includes technical information, capital costs, configuration of current operations, competitive pressures and industry regulations.

- **Organizational barriers:** these barriers do not only relate to environmental problems, but affect also the capacity of any company to deal with any form of change, including environmental change. It includes issues as employee attitudes, poor communications, past practice and inadequate top management leadership. (Post & Altman, 1994)

Both barriers can impede the hotels to become green or the “green hotels” to develop more practices. It is then in the hotels’ interest to detect these barriers and try to work on them in order to avoid a maximum their effect.

### 3.3.2 Prioritization

As we just saw, we can detect factors that represent barriers for the hotels to develop Environmental Management especially environmental practices.

The lack of resources is, for example, directly related to the necessity of setting priorities within a company, as a way to determine which project must be fulfilled in terms of main concern. Owing to the firm used to have limited resources and small investments budgets, top management decide that certain actions that required investment would have to wait (O’heocha, 2000). The idea to prioritize the resources you need in order to be environmental friendly is then important in decision-making. The prioritization can be seen as a result of the barrier lack of resources though.

It also refers to the notion of commitment, as it is important for a hotel willing to be green, that the environmental concern is considered as a priority. Thus if it is the case, the hotel has more chance to develop environmental practices.

In a recent survey, 92 per cent of CEOs and board members agreed that the environment should be one of their three management priorities. Most of them also claim that within their major goals we can find the integration of environmental considerations into business strategy. (Quazy, 2001)

To finish, we noticed that in Chan’s quantitative study, the latter showed that eight out of ten respondents believe that environmental protection issues are important. However, he also presented the case of an hotelier from Denmark, which pointed out guests’ apparent disinterest. This hotelier claimed that in the period of five years when he worked with the
green organization World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), only two guests showed any interest in his environmental program. Thus it appears that patrons who include sustainability criteria in their decision-making process remain a niche clientele without sufficient purchasing power to influence the industry. Consequently, Chan assumed that due to customers’ apparent indifference, hoteliers are currently assigning eco-friendliness a low priority in their marketing efforts.

This notion of prioritization is important for our study, as it will enable us to know if the hotels we chose to work with, consider the environmental concern as a priority. If it is the case, they will be more likely to develop more environmental practices.
Chapter 4: Empirical part

In the present chapter, we are going to present the information we obtained from the interviews that we realized in the three «green hotels», STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, HOTEL AVENY and HOTEL WINN. As we have explained in chapter 2, we consider that the interviews with the SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL and the ROYAL HOTEL are not going to be used in this section, as the first one did not give us enough information and the last one cannot be consider as a green hotel.

Moreover, we realized two different types of interviews in each of them, one to the hotel’s manager, and the other to one employee of the hotel’s staff.

Then, we interviewed the employees in order to have a broader view of the environmental issue in each hotel, by asking the specific measures that the hotel is developing in the employee’s department.

In addition, the information given in this chapter comes from three different sources of data: the one we directly obtained from the interview, the one provided by the brochures or from the website (the managers make references to it in the interview) and the data which is written on their business documents, like the environmental policy or the environmental goals.

4.1 Interview 1: STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION

4.1.1 Interview with the manager of the STF Abisko Turiststation hotel

- Goals

The first aspect the manager pointed out was the fact that the hotel is really concerned about the environment. This explains the great effort the managers are doing in order to develop and include in their hotel more and more environmental practices. For this reason, they are continually looking for new certifications or international awards that prove their environmental performance. In fact, the hotel is member of the Swedish Tourist Association (STF) and was certified last year by The Green Key award.

According to the brochure of the Svenska Turistföreningen, STF is a large member organisation, focusing on the Swedish tourism. Their ambition is to offer the best experiences in nature and culture, being, at the same time, a forerunner in ecotourism. This association aims to protect the cultural environment, sensitive countryside and the right of peace and quiet. Furthermore, they take up the fight for nature. It is composed of 315 hostels, 9 mountain lodges and 43 mountain huts in areas inaccessible by road. In addition, it works in
cooperation with the IYHF (International Youth Hostel Federation), giving access to 4000 hostels in 80 countries across the world. (Svenska Turistföreningen, publ. nr. 3413)

The Green Key, however, is an international environmental award program run by the international organisation Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), which has several environmental programs and which works in 42 countries around the world. The manager gave us an information sheet about The Green Key, which explains that this award certifies that a lodge has an environmental policy and is actively working on environmental improvements. They have fulfilled international criteria and have been approved by the Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation (Stiftelsen Håll Sverige Rent). The award is valid for twelve months. In addition, the international criteria includes environmental education sessions for all personnel, recycling, saving energy and environmental-friendly cleansing and washing products, as well as offering ecologically grown food. The Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation, on the other hand, is responsible for the FEE programs in Sweden. It is in charge on reviewing regularly the accommodations in order to ensure that they fulfil the criteria. It focuses on reducing litter, promoting recycling and raising environmental awareness. (www.hsr.se, 2008-05-06)

The manager told us about the importance to receive awards or to be certified by international organizations, as it is a way to release to the customers that the hotel has turned into a green hotel, and that it is working continuously environmental-friendly. Furthermore, in order to get a strong position in the green hotel industry, the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION is going to apply next summer for another certification: “Ecotourism”. It is defined by the International Ecotourism Society as “responsible travel to natural areas that helps to conserve the environment and the well being of the local people”. This deals with the idea of having fun in your holidays at the same time that not damage or wear out what you have travelled or experience, to contribute actively to the preservation of the nature and the local culture as well as to help the local economy to be profitable and to stimulate visitor’s curiosity and respect for place and people visited. (www.naturensbasta.se/ekoturism/index.asp, 2008-05-02).

In addition, another way that allows the hotel to show that they are working environmental-friendly is through a policy. STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION has a general policy which states this fact – see appendix 1 –.

However, all the implications the hotel has with the environmental issues are presented in their environmental objectives plan that is based on a statement of goals, course of action and time plans. The definitions of these goals constitute a first approach in becoming a green hotel.

Following are the Environmental goals, courses of action and time plan for Abisko Turiststation 2008:

1. **Goal:** Reducing car transportations that our janitor does during his day: to the cable car, to the sauna, to the village, to the train station, etc..
   **Course of action:** Look at alternative vehicles such as electric mopeds, “fourrate wheeler”, regular bike, etc..
   **Time Plan:** Starting summer of 2008 and bought by winter 2009
2. **Goal**: Reducing the number of garbage transportations to Kiruna  
**Course of action**: Buy compressors to press unsorted garbage and use course of action 1.  
**Time Plan**: Installed by summer season of 2008.  
Unfortunately we could not make room for a compressor in our investment budget so we haven’t reached this goal yet. We will however, try to buy the compressor for the summer and then, we’ll compress both burnable garbage and paper. From May 2008, the municipality of Kiruna and the Recycling Agencies have been trying to improve and develop the possibility of recycling along E10 between Kiruna and Riksgränsen. Of course, we are in this project that will, among other things, lead to less transportation, since a bigger car is driving along the whole way, thus emptying everything all at once. At the moment, we are the only ones who do recycling along the road that leads to much transportation.

3. **Goal**: To make our co-workers more aware of the importance of environmental work.  
**Course of action**: Inviting “Keep Sweden Clean”, KRAV, “Kretsloppshuset” and/or other organizations in order to educate our employees once a year.  
**Time Plan**: Starting summer of 2007 and then every year after that.  
Summer of 2008: we’ll invite “hushållnings-sällskapet” in Norbotten to tell us about which local deliverers there are in Norrbonet concerning food and crafts. The education meeting is for the staff responsible for each of our departments.

4. **Goal**: To formulate more environmental goals according to ideas of the employees, ambition and devotion  
**Course of action**: During the introduction and educational days, we’ll also make time for establishing new future goals.  
**Time Plan**: Starting summer of 2007 and then every year after that.

5. **Goal**: To reduce use of energy  
**Course of action**: Switch to low energy lamps in the bed lights, in the main building: about 75 lamps  
**Time Plan**: Finished by fall 2008.  
We are also doing a project where we are trying out “air heating pumps” for heating the cabins and our workshop. A “air heating pump” have been installed in a cabin and in the work shop. We will compare the use of energy in a “regular” cabin with the project cabin.

6. **Goal**: To increase the share of organic and KRAV-labelled product in both kitchens, dining room and food store.  
**Time Plan**: Starting summer of 2007 and recurring every season
**Results**: See goal 3. We have, since the beginning of the year “Servera” as our main supplier and they have a big supply of organic goods.

7. **Goal**: Serving two completely organic (with KRAV labelled goods) lunches/week and one dinner/week or have organic meals on our “à la carte” menu.  
   **Course of action**: Keeping in touch with suppliers, planning the menu and educating chefs.  
   **Time Plan**: Starting summer of 2008.

8. **Goal**: Reducing the use of cleaning agents  
   **Course of action**: Even bigger use of dry cleaning methods. Educate cleaners in these methods.  
   **Time Plan**: Starting summer of 2007 and now we wish to continue as we have not quite achieved what we really wanted: to really do everything that is needed to use “dry cleaning methods”.

9. **Goal**: To reduce laundry transportation  
   **Course of action**: Change laundry supplier from « Textil Service » in Boden ‘400km from us) to a newly renovated laundry in Björkliden (8km from us)  
   **Time Plan**: Starting late fall of 2008 as we cannot and do not wish to switch deliverer during the high season.

- **Environmental practices**

Going deep in the history of *STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION* related to the environmental issues, we discovered that the actual managers, Mr. Putte and Mrs. Nicki Eby, started to work on environmental practices as soon as they took the direction of the hotel in 2003.

When discussing with the manager, we noticed that the hotel has experienced a big progress in six years, in terms of environmental practices as nothing was applied before. One of their first goals was to reduce the enormous quantity of oil they used for the heating. Owing to this, they built a “ground heating system”, that consists of making really deep holes in the ground, where they put big tubes in which they poor a liquid in order to take advantage of the heat from the ground which is higher than on earth. This makes hot water for the heating. This system allowed the hotel to save 180 m³ of oil a year.

Regarding the food left in the restaurant, they mix it in a machine with some solid product in order to produce *compost* for the ground. But aiming to reduce the quantity of this food wasted, they have a booking system, where the guest must book in advance if they want to
have lunch or dinner in the restaurant. Nevertheless, Mrs. Eby told us that they are usually used to cook about 20% more quantity to satisfy unpredicted customers.

They also consider themselves really involved in relation with the organic food. For this reason, the majority of the products the hotel sells in its shop are organics products. In addition to it, they are increasing each year the quantity of organic meals that they offer in the restaurant. Nowadays, it is possible to eat this kind of food twice a week at lunchtime. In the summer season they also offer one organic dinner a week.

Furthermore, we discovered also that the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION hotel has a recycle program using different bins for garbage.

Being environmental-friendly is usually implying everyone working in the organization even if there is only one or few persons managing the process. In this hotel, both managers, Mr. Putte and Mrs. Nicki Eby, are in charge of the environmental department. At the beginning of each season, they organize a meeting with the staff, composed of 45 workers, where they have the possibility to recommend new environmental suggestions and ideas. The manager agreed that it is really important to have people motivated with the environmental concern in order to work closely with their goals.

After the definition of goals, and the development of environmental practices, it is necessary to have control over the activities in order to ensure that they are being developed in the way it is supposed to be. In this hotel, The Green Key organization is the one that takes in charge this function. It controls its members once a year. This issue is reinforced with another company: KRAV- märkt, which have control over the food and the farmers. It certifies that the farmers that provide the hotel with food are selling organic food. This organization also provides the hotel with a magazine once a month that includes new ideas related to the organic food.

Another important point the manager described is related to the way of transportation to come to the hotel. The train station is really close to the hotel. So guests have the possibility to come not only by car but also by train. Moreover, in the summer time, the hotel rents bikes in order that customers avoid using their car. This makes the hotel again environmental friendly.

Finally, a last important fact for the manager is to show the guests that they are working with the environment. This is why the company displays information on a public board about the environmental organizations the hotel is working with.

All of these practices show the willingness the hotel is expressing in the environmental concern. This motivation in improving these activities is captured in the plans they have for the future. Thus, the hotel wants to focus on working closely with local people and not producing so much impact on the environment when they make their activities. The fact that it is situated close to the Abisko National Park makes this point really important.

Being environmental-friendly involves a big cost for the company. For this reason they work one step at one time. The hotel is now thinking about the next practices they want to develop in relation with the following specific issues:
- Food: offer more organic food in the restaurant.
- Energy: change all the lamps of the hotel to low-energy bulbs in order to save energy.
- Energy: all the energy required for the hotel must be provided by wind’s mill and from the water, in order to avoid all kind of nuclear energy or energy derived from the coal. Their dream is to have their own wind’s mill.

- Barriers to the implementation of practices

Dealing with the former environmental practices is not easy and these initiatives represent a big investment. The main barrier to implement environmental practices for the managers is related to the time. They are only two managers and 45 employees and it is not possible to give always the priority to the environmental issues.

However, despite this barrier, the manager considers these environmental practices as entertaining activities that help at the same time the environment. Furthermore, she told us that both guests and staff appreciate it. She also wants to educate guests in being environmental-friendly for example to introduce them into the habits to eat organic food. But she mainly considers these practices as something everybody has to do. The manager does not consider it as a burden at all.

Moreover both managers do not focus on the cost of these initiatives. She told us “we do it because we have to do it”. Anyway, in order to afford these practices, STF offers the possibility to lend money from them which is refunded in approximately 10-20 years.

4.1.2 Interview with the employee of the STF Abisko Turiststation hotel

After the interview with the Mrs. Eby, she gave us the authorization to interview an employee. We managed to talk to Åsa Nordebrink, working in the reception in the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION.

As we ran a structured interview, we asked her first what were the environmental practices she is applying within her department. First, she answered that she is trying to decrease the use of paper by sending booking confirmations as much as possible via e-mail. She also saves printed discarded paper and cut them into post-it sizes instead of buying post-it notes. Finally, within her department, she also separates paper from combustible garbage.

After the practices, we asked her if she was aware about any environmental policy existing in the hotel meaning goals, plans of action and if she had access to it. She replied that she is aware about The Green Key certification, which means that the hotel is continually working to lower their effect on the environment and to improve their environmental awareness.

For the third question we asked if she had any goal or objective within her department in relation to the environmental concern. She replied that she did not set any specific goals within her department.
Then we asked her if she was defining goals every year and evaluating the performance of them. As they do not define any specific goals, she does no specific evaluation at the reception.

Consequently, we enquired her if she felt the environment issue as a priority for her department and for the hotel. She said that if is definitely a priority the hotel as it is a very big issue and very important to many of their guests. Furthermore, she added that the fact they are situated in a National park makes the environmental concern even more important and that they have to have as little effect on the close environment as possible.

Then we requested her if she has the possibility, as well as the guests, to make suggestions to the general manager in order to improve the environmental performance of the hotel. She replied that she could make any suggestions if she finds that something could be improved.

At last, we asked her level of involvement in the environmental issue, that is to say if she feels really involved within her department. She could not fully reply to this question. However, she mentioned that the hotel could be better especially at giving information on how to separate garbage to the guests for example.

### 4.2 Interview 2: HOTEL AVENY

#### 4.2.1 Interview with the manager of the Hotel Aveny

- **Goals**

The *HOTEL AVENY* considers itself as environmental-friendly. They have a general policy stating that they are trying to work close to the environment. However, we could not access it. Moreover, when talking with the manager, Mr. Peder Holmström, we understood that they do not have any written goals for environmental practices yet. The manager, who has been working in this hotel for seven months, explained us that the hotel was quite new from 1997 and that they were acting on the environmental concern at a small level. They did not plan any goals for the moment as he explained us that they do not consider the environmental issue as a first priority. That is why the hotel is not associated or certified by any green association yet. Mr. Holmström added also that he considers doing the same environmental tasks as other hotels certified by green organization. Moreover, he insisted on the fact that they try to do everything they can as far as possible and that he never had any problem due to the fact the hotel does not have any written goal statement yet.

- **Environmental practices**

The *HOTEL AVENY* is developing environmental practices on different areas: recycling, energy savings, organic foods, ecological cleaning products. Although they are members of
the Profil chain, they do not need to ask them for permission if they want to develop new practices.

The hotel has established a good recycling program aimed to separate each category of garbage in function of the materials of the rubbish: paper, glass, newspapers, cans... It is, furthermore, working with two recycling companies, IR – RECYCLING and RANG – SELLS, which are coming to the hotel once a year to educate the employee on how to recycle well.

Furthermore, the hotel is saving energy by changing bulbs from high to low energy.

Moreover, as far as the restaurant is concerned, the hotel is serving organic food as much as they can. This kind of food is usually quite expensive so they try to buy products whose price is getting down through time. They use for example for breakfast, ecological milk, yoghurt, and muesli. They think to add more organic products in two or three years. Otherwise, if the person in charge of the bookings has the possibility to buy cheaper products, she/he will do it.

The manager also added that the hotel cannot afford to serve only organic food. And at the same time, he thinks that the guests will not be willing to pay a higher price for eat this type of food.

In addition, the hotel tries to buy, as far as possible, local products. Through the ProfilHotels chain, they have agreements with local companies who supply them with every product they need to buy.

Finally, they try to buy, as far as possible again, ecological cleaning product with no chemical ingredients.

We understood after the meeting with Mr. Holmström, that the hotel is making efforts to be greener. Concerning the future, the manager will continue to work on the current practices with the hope to add more organic food in the restaurant. Their first objective is still to fill in the rooms. However, Mr. Holmström still thinks that even if environmental practices are not the priority of the hotel, it works hand by hand with the rest of the activities.

Finally, regarding futures ideas of the hotel we find that they are thinking to refurbish the basement of the building in order to create a conference room, a sauna and a relaxed room. They will, then, rebuild it according to environment principles, including, for example, changing the level of flushing water in the bathrooms.

- Barriers to the implementation of practices

As written above, the hotel is doing its best to help the environment as far as they can. However, the manager found some barriers that unable him to develop more environmental practices. Among them, the main barrier for him is the cost. If the hotel is too expensive due to lot of environmental practices, the manager is afraid that customers will go somewhere else.
4.2.2 Interview with an employee of the Hotel Aveny

After the interview with the manager of the HOTEL AVENY, we were granted the authorization to interview an employee, Johanna Forsberg, who is working in the restaurant and in the cleaning department.

Continuing with the structured interview, we asked her first what were the environmental practices she is applying within her department. She mentioned the recycling program with the different garbage bins and confirmed that an external recycling company was coming every year to check and to educate employees regarding recycling.

Regarding the food, she is using ecological products and organic food. For example, she uses organic milk, some organic vegetables... She tries also to use ecological cleaning products; that is to say without chemical ingredients. Moreover, in order to limit the transportation cost of supplies, she tries to order products and food locally.

Finally, regarding the bed linens and towels, she is changing them twice a week and sending them to the company that washes for the hotel unless the customers want her to change more often.

Secondly, in order to match our research question about the steps to be green, we asked Johanna if she knew something about the environmental policy or goals of the hotel and if she can have access to these documents. Even if she is quite new in the hotel, she was aware about the hotel policy and she could have access to this document.

Then, we asked her if she had any goal or objective to achieve within her department in relation to the environmental concern and if yes if she could evaluate the performance of her department in environmental practices. Unfortunately, due to the fact that she was new in the hotel, she could not talk so much about it. However, each department chief and the general manager meet once a week discussing all issues among those regarding the environment. After the meeting she may be asked to apply a particular environmental practice.

Consequently, we asked her if she felt the environment issue as a priority for her department and for the hotel. As the manager, she confirmed that the main priority is to fill in the rooms. However, she agreed on the fact that the hotel and she take the environmental issue seriously.

Another question we asked her was to know whether she, as well as the guests, has the possibility to make suggestions to the general manager in order to improve the environmental performance of the hotel. She definitely can.

The last question we asked to Johanna was regarding her level of involvement in the environmental issue, that is to say if she feels really involved within her department. As she is the one in charge of recycling or cleaning the rooms, she admitted that she feels really involved in it.
4.3 Interview 3: HOTEL WINN

4.3.1 Interview with the manager of the Hotel Winn

- Goals

The particularity of the Hotel Winn is that the hotel has just been certified by the ecolabel Miljömärkt from the Svanen association since 25 February 2008. This standard is helping hotels to reduce their environmental impact, everything from how to reduce energy and water usage to minimizing their use of chemical products and recycling their refuse. Their certification is valid until 30 June 2012 but the company is checked every year the hotels in order to be sure they respect the requirements.

We managed to talk to the managing director of the hotel, Mr. Leissner. Within the conversation, we understood that even if the hotel does not have a special policy, being certified was a huge goal for the hotel. Before the certification, the hotel was used to plan goals every year. Now that they are certified, the goals will come from the Svanen organization. According to Mr. Leissner, being certified has been a long and difficult task as the Svanen was asking high requirements. He explained us that the hotel even had to employ an extra employee for 3 months in order to comply with all the requirements.

Now, the hotel is really satisfied with this label and thinks that it will bring them more customers. According to the managing director, being certified by the Svanen is necessary and is a real advantage for big companies who are looking for hotels. He thinks that being certified by a “green” association is a criterion for big companies when choosing a hotel. That is why, being environmental-friendly is, for him, considered as a priority as he feels to need this certification and that it is an obligation to work close to the environment. The hotel had to apply for it. Nevertheless, now that they are certified, their first objective is of course to get more customers.

- Environmental practices

Before the certification to the eco-label, the hotel had to change a lot their facilities in order to comply with Svanen requirements. Everything from food to machines has to comply with the association.

The main practices they are following now are about different areas: recycling, energy savings, water savings, organic food, and ecological products.

The hotel has a good recycling program where employees have to separate each category of garbage in function of the materials of the rubbish like: paper, glass, newspaper... They have eight categories. Only one room is provided with these bins.

Furthermore, in order to save water, they installed toilets using only 12 to 15 litters when flushing instead of traditional 40-50 liters. They change as well the linen, sheets and towels...
every three nights and send them to a company in charge of washing them. Of course, this company has always to comply with Svanen’s requirements in order to get the hotel credible.

In addition, the hotel is saving energy by putting low energy bulbs in the lamps. Moreover, it is provided by “green” electricity that comes from waterfalls. In addition, the hotel has installed a system where the card, which opens the door, switch off the lights of the rooms when the guests are not inside.

As far as food is concerned, the hotel only serves breakfast. They do not have so much food left after it though. However, it tries to serve organic or ecological food like tea or coffee which are at the same time products from the Fair Trade.

The hotel is also trying to use ecological products for the cleaning like for example no chemical ingredients in the products. Moreover, the hotel tries a maximum to order product locally to local suppliers.

Furthermore, the hotel is also working to make guests involved in the process of environmental concern. The hotel is distributing questionnaires in each room twice a year, in spring and in autumn in order for them to make suggestions to the hotel or to give their opinion.

As far as the employees are concerned, the notion of involvement is really present in the hotel as it is one of the criteria of the certification. Everyone has to be involved in the environmental concern, which is obviously really important when applying for a certification.

Finally, according to Mr. Leissner, the hotel still did not see any important impact of these environmental practices on the performance of the hotel. We think that it might be too early for the moment, as they have just been certified three months ago.

Now that the hotel has been certified, the managing director is relieved. As written above, the new goals and activities will be presented by the “Svanen” organization.

- Barriers to the implementation of practices

As written above, the hotel considered the application to the Svanen certification as a long and difficult task to do. The main barrier in being green that the managing director told us was, among others, the lack of resources. According to Mr. Leissner, it has been really difficult to obtain everything the Svanen asked. This barrier was followed by the cost and the time as it cost a lot of money (15,000 SEK) to apply for the certification and it needed time to fulfil all the requirements.
4.3.2 Interview with an employee of the Hotel Winn

Like for the previous interviews, we were granted the authorization to interview an employee working in the cleaning department. Her name was Elizabeth.

We again ran a structured interview; and asked in a first time what environmental practices she was applying within her department. In order to be environmental friendly, she is using ecological cleaning products when cleaning the rooms and bathrooms. She also recycles newspapers, bottles, light bulbs and metal. Furthermore, she added that she turns off the light each time she finishes cleaning the room in order to save energy.

Secondly, when asking if she knew something about the environmental policy or goals of the hotel and if she could have access to them, she replied that the staff has been informed about the environmental policy since the hotel became a member of the "Svanen" Certificate. She added that she could have access to this document if she wanted to read more about it.

Then, we asked her if she had any goal or objectives defined within her department in relation to the environmental concern and if yes if she could evaluate the performance of her department due to this practices. Elizabeth does not have specific goals to follow within her department but she insisted on the fact that she tries her best to maintain the environmental work every day within her department as well as within the whole hotel. Moreover, due to the fact that the Svanen Certificate has recently certified the hotel, she precised that she and the whole hotel have to keep the “green” habits they established when applying for the certification in order not to lose it now.

Consequently, we asked her if she felt the environment issue as a priority for her department and for the hotel. She completely approved that environmental practices was a priority for the hotel.

Then, to answer the question if she, as well as the guests, have the possibility to make suggestions to the general manager in order to improve the environmental performance of the hotel, she explained us that the staff has an open dialogue with the management who listen to any suggestions a staff member can have.

Finally we asked Elizabeth regarding her level of involvement in the environmental issue, that is to say if she feels really involved in environmental concern within her department. Due to the fact that the hotel has worked very hard to be certified by the Svanen association, everyone in the hotel felt involved in this concern.

4.4 Summary of the interviews

In the last section of this chapter, we want to present a table which presents the most important information we collected from the three hotels, STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, HOTEL AVENY and HOTEL WINN.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION</th>
<th>HOTEL AVENY</th>
<th>HOTEL WINN</th>
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</thead>
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<td>✓ No</td>
<td>✓ Time plan</td>
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<td>✓ International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF)</td>
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Chapter 5: Analysis part

In this chapter we are going to analyze the information we captured from the different interviews, linking it with some of the theories we described on the theoretical chapter.

Moreover, this chapter contains five different sections, regarding the question why hotels become green, the steps followed by the hotels to become green, including the definition of goals and the development of practices, as well as the barriers the hotels explained to us and that have made difficult the execution of this process. All of these sections are clearly link with our purpose.

5.1 Why the hotels become green?

Due to the fact that this study is focused on “green hotels” in Sweden, the first stage we want to analyze is the reasons why hotels decide to become green and change their behaviour in order to be more environmental friendly.

We found different motives that explain this trend on “greening the business”. Some of the hotels do it because of the pressure that they received from the stakeholders, mainly the customers, the corporations and the government (Quazy, 2001). While others try to follow this trend because they consider that is something really necessary for the natural environment (Tzschentke et al, 2004).

In fact, the HOTEL AVENY received pressure from corporations (Quazy, 2001), in a way that they pay attention to the action of the competitors. If the rest of the hotels are dealing with the environmental issue by including green aspects into their strategy, they may lose opportunities on the market if they do not do the same. One more hotel is affected by the competitors’ actions, the HOTEL WINN.

In addition to the former reason, another important group of stakeholders that makes pressure on the hotels are the customers. If they are more and more concerned with the environment, they probably will choose those hotels that take care about it (Quazy, 2001). So, as the hotels want to satisfy customer’s needs, it is in their interest to deal with the environment. The HOTEL WINN defines this reason as the one which really motivated them to become green.

Moreover, the government represents also an important lobby to develop environmental practices (Quazy, 2001). The existence of a strict legislation regarding the environmental issues may push hotels to take decisions concerning their environmental effects. Thus, the HOTEL AVENY represents an example of hotels guided by this pressure.

Nevertheless, some hotels develop environmental practices not only because of pressure, but also because they feel the necessity to help the natural environment (Tzschentke et al, 2004). The managers from the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, for example, define the environment...
concern as a problem where everyone must be involved, so they do not need a specific reason to develop this kind of practices, “they do it because they have to do it”.

Furthermore, a different motive for hotels to become green is the fact to be affiliated to a chain (Alvarez et al., 2001). If a chain defined itself as green, all its members must also be defined as «green hotels». Thus, hotels will be asked to follow certain green procedures. For example, the HOTEL AVENY has been asked by the PROFIL HOTELES chain to buy cleaning products from ecological brands and from local suppliers.

5.2 Steps to become green

Once the hotel has decided to accept the challenge to become green, there are a number of stages of organizational change and learning to follow. This important change experimented by the company can be explained through different models, as the ones we explained in the theoretical chapter, Business Excellence Model, the adoption of a green strategy or the implementation of an EMS, for example. But due to the fact that we have analyzed only three different hotels, it is difficult to generalize which of these models the hotels are following. Therefore, we are going to explain the different steps followed by the hotels in general terms without focus in any of the former models in particular. Thus, the first step in become green corresponds to the planning process, introducing the plans established by the hotel and how they are cascade down to the departmental level. In a second place, managers review, evaluate and improved their strategic planning.

As any process, it requires some time until the definition of the goals or statements as well as its implementation is really effective. In the same way, not all the steps are successive; hotels do not follow necessarily a line order. This justifies the fact that it is possible to find some hotels that are already developing environmental practices without following any specific goal or writing document. Due to the fact that it represents a quite new trend in the hospitality industry, not all the hotels have enough experience either knowledge of how to proceed or which kind of practices are the most suitable in relation with the natural environment.

With preciseness, some examples of how hotels describe their planning process are related to having weekly meetings with the hotel’s board of managers, where they talk sometimes about the environmental task. In this same hotel, the HOTEL AVENY, they also decided to have an annual training course where a company goes to the hotel in order to educate and teach the employees about how to recycle. The STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, however, places their effort in defining and establishing environmental goals; they do it once a year, precising how and when they will do it. The HOTEL WINN decided to have only one goal in order to become green, which was the decision to be certified by the “Svanen” company. Related to this goal, they also established smaller plans as to have information meetings with the staff during the year before to achieve the certification, to fit the requirements of Svanen to receive the certification and also to hire one extra employee during few months in order to help the company to fit all the requirements.

Furthermore, the following step in becoming a “green” hotel is cascade down the plans from the management to the departments’ level. In this case, the four hotels we have interviewed
present different environmental activities in function of their department, being the housekeeping and the restaurant the one who keep more attention.

The interaction with the department level can help the managers to review the plans and adjust any change if needed. In a third step, we find the implementation of these plans/goals, which correspond with the development of environmental practices.

Finally, the last stage corresponds to the evaluation of the practices and possible improvement. Those hotels that are certified by Svanen or other organization, HOTEL WINN and STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, are checked once a year to prove if they are still fulfilling the requirements of the certification.

5.3 Definitions of goals

One important aspect regarding the success of an environmental program starts by the definition of goals, as they guide the organization’s effort, establish the distribution of resources, trying to drive the firm to the success.

According to the SMART theory, a good goal has to match different criteria. Specifically, a goal must be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time sensitive (Shalin & Mahbod, 2006). Thus, regarding the goals and courses of action from STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, they can be perfectly classified as good goals, as they define concrete and detailed goals, in order to make them easier to achieve. For each goal, the hotel specified what can be done, how the hotel is going to proceed as well as which is the time-plan to make it feasible. In addition, talking about the only goal defined by the HOTEL WINN, now it is possible to say that it was realistic, specific and measurable. The goal for this year was to achieve the certification by the “Svanen” organization, and since the end of February they received it. Even if it was a difficult goal for the hotel, it was nevertheless realistic. In the case of the HOTEL AVENY, they do not have any formal document with defined goals; however they have a long-term goal related to the rebuilding of the basement, in order to include some environmental practices. This goal contrast with the others as it does not fit perfectly to the former criteria, as it is not yet really detailed enough.

Furthermore, all the managers agreed that it is possible to define a relationship between the goal difficulty and the performance. Thus, normally goals with moderate difficulty results on higher levels of effort and performance than do very easy or very hard goals. For example, the HOTEL WINN defined last year the achievement of the “Svanen” certification as a rather difficult goal for the hotel. This motivated all the employees to be really involved in the process. The result was satisfactory, as they managed to achieve their goal at the end of February, increasing their environmental performance. Moreover, the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION also defined few time ago a really specific and difficult goal, consisted on developing a new heating system. During all the time they spent in building it, all the employees and both managers were really focused on achieving this goal. Consequently, their environmental performance increased because they managed to reduce considerably the oil used for the heating.
Finally, the last aspect related to the goal definition is related to the commitment of employees, specifically to the participation in the decision making process. If someone is involved in a decision process, it feels himself more important inside the process, which will be translated into a better performance to achieve the goal. For example, the hotel STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, defined in their goal statement, in goal number 4 (see appendix 1) the objective “to formulate more environmental goals according to the ideas of the employees, ambition and devotion”.

5.4 Practices

The next step to become green after the definition of goals is to implement them; that is to say to develop environmental practices. Some factors may influence the development of these practices. We saw that the relationship between the age of the facility and environmental practices often guide the refurbishment of facilities or the introduction of new ones meaning that the older the hotel the more difficult the change of facilities. (Alvarez et al, 2001) The HOTEL WINN, for example, explained us that the hotel was quite old and that they had to renovate a lot amenity in order to match the requirements of the “Svanen” organization. For example, they had to install bathrooms with low water flush, as they were not complying with the standards. The new ones only use 12 to 15 litters when flushing instead of the traditional 40-50 litres.

However, the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, which can be consider as rather new in the sense that the actual managers started in the business five years ago, was able to set up directly new facilities like the “ground heating system” which was aimed to reduce the enormous quantity of oil they used for the heating. Concerning the HOTEL AVENY, this hotel is also quite new, from 1997. However, they did not plan to install a lot of environmental facilities yet. They are acting on small green activities for the moment, like recycling sorting paper, glass, newspapers or cans or changing bulbs from high to low energy; even if one is certified by the “Svanen” corporation and the other one not. It is evident that the hotel which is certified, HOTEL WINN, is likely to develop more environmental practices though. This hypothesis that the size of the hotel has an impact on environmental practices cannot be verified. Other factors need then to be taken in consideration, like the level of involvement or prioritization for example.

An additional factor that may influence the environmental practices is the size of the hotel meaning that large hotels have greater impact on the environment. (Alvarez et al, 2001) We asked the number of rooms to each hotel. The HOTEL AVENY and the HOTEL WINN are the smallest hotels we interviewed with 87 rooms each of them. The two hotels are developing small environmental practices like recycling sorting or saving energy by changing bulbs from high to lower energy; even if one is certified by the “Svanen” corporation and the other one not. It is evident that the hotel which is certified, HOTEL WINN, is likely to develop more environmental practices though. This hypothesis that the size of the hotel has an impact on environmental practices cannot be verified. Other factors need then to be taken in consideration, like the level of involvement or prioritization for example.

The next factor that may have an impact on the environment according to the literature review is the chain affiliation. (Alvarez et al, 2001) Being affiliated to a chain would help the hotel to be green quicker and more easily as the chain may provide technical advices or training about environmental protection and thus facilitating the process of being green. Among the hotels
we interviewed, two of them were chain affiliated: the HOTEL WINN from the BEST WESTERN CHAIN and the HOTEL AVENY belongs to the small PROFIL HOTELS chain. We noticed that belonging to a chain may help the hotel to have benefits like for example, the PROFIL HOTELS CHAINS is organizing a visit from the recycling IR – RECYCLING or RANG – SELLS companies in the HOTEL AVENY every year in order to educate the employees on how to recycle well. Moreover, the chain made agreements with local companies in order to facilitate the HOTEL AVENY to order ecological products. However, the STF ABISKO TURISTATION does not belong to any chain but this hotel appeared to us as the one that is developing the more environmental practices. They are working not only on saving energy by changing bulbs or recycling garbage but also on saving oil by their “ground heating system”, their system of compost with the leftover food which benefit to earth or their involvement in organic food. This hotel was the only one working with the association KRAV-MÄRKT. Consequently, the factor of chain affiliation cannot be hundred per cent verified. Again, the level of involvement and prioritization is probably an additional factor to take into consideration.

Furthermore, we saw in the literature review, that operations management is a factor that may influence environmental practices (Alvarez et al, 2001). Hotels that use operation management techniques deploy more extensive Environmental Management practices than their counterparts with less use. We discovered during the interviews we have carried out especially with the staff that the employees were quite flexible and multi-tasking. The departments that were the more represented were the restaurant and the housekeeping. However, in the HOTEL AVENY we discovered for example that Johanna, the employee we interviewed, was working in the restaurant as well as she was in charge of the cleaning. Departments are not really defined. In the other hotels we did not notice that many departments also. In general the hotels we interviewed were not as big as a resort for example. Distinction between departments is really small. Moreover, in almost all hotels we found that every worker in the hotel was involved in the Environmental Management. The manager in the HOTEL WINN precised us that one of the numerous criteria of “Svanen” to be certified was the fact that everyone has to feel concerned about the environmental. That is why, in all the hotels we interviewed employees had the right to make suggestions or comments about this topic. In some hotels even, the guests could give their opinion. In the HOTEL WINN, they put twice a year, in spring and in autumn, a questionnaire in all the rooms asking for suggestions or comments about environmental practices. Consequently, it is difficult to link the place of operations management techniques with the Environmental Management.

A last factor that may influence the development of Environmental Management is the type of tourism amongst a hotel’s clientele. (Alvarez et al, 2001) This hypothesis means that the type of activities carried out by a hotel and its location can have an impact on the environmental protection. The STF ABISKO TURISTATION for example, is located close the Abisko national park. Moreover, it benefits from its Lappland environment. That is to say, tourist that are coming to Abisko tend to be interested in nature and so they may be environmental-friendly. Consequently, STF ABISKO TURISTATION is likely to take even more care about the environment than other urban hotels in Umeå. This hotel rents, for example, bicycles to tourists in the summer in order that they avoid taking their car for displacements. In this way, we can agree on the fact the type of tourism may influence environmental practices.
5.5 Barriers

It is essential to define good goals, but also to define the priorities of the company, on the one hand, in order to know which resources are going to be granted to the environmental issues (O’hEocha, 2000), and on the other hand, within the environmental task, decide which actions must be taken in a first time.

Indeed, the fact that the environmental concern is not considered as the main priority for the hotels represent a big barrier in developing environmental practices. In most of the cases, such as in the case of the HOTEL AVENY and the HOTEL WINN, the main priority for the managers is to fill the rooms. So, most of the resources are going to be assigned to activities or goals that allow the company to attract more customers. Only in the case of the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION we find the environmental concern as a really important task. The results are more evident and visible: it is the hotel which presents the more environmental practices.

One important barrier for some hotels, as for the STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION, is the time. This hotel is only in charge of two managers and 45 employees. And the establishment of goals and its implementation requires working on them during a certain period of time. So, it is necessary to wait until the personnel are available to work on this issue to really develop new environmental practices. This barrier is also linked to the former barrier, as it is necessary to wait because the environmental issue is not always the first priority.

Moreover, other barriers that make difficult the process to apply environmental practices are in most of the cases the cost related to them (Chan, 2008), as in the case of the HOTEL AVENY, where the cost is a big barrier to become more environmentally friendly. It is possible to see it, for example, they cannot buy so much organic food because they are much more expensive than the current products, and the customer are not going to pay extra for these products. That is to say, the company have to assume the difference. The manager of this hotel is worried about the fact that if the hotel become too expensive due to the development of lots of environmental practices, customers can go to their competitors. The achievement of a “green” certification by the HOTEL WINN entails a really big cost for the hotel, as the cost was 15,000 SEK. Furthermore, the maintenance of this certification represents an additional cost.

Related to the cost, we find also another barrier. Not all the companies have the professional advice required when you are dealing within a new area of work, where the company does not have experience. (Chan, 2008) To develop an Environmental Management in hotels, they must have persons with the knowledge and skills to start and implemented the goals and practices related to it. Thus, we observe in the HOTEL WINN the necessity of hire a new employee to work only with all the requirements asked by the “Svanen” organization. The fact of hiring a person to work only with the environmental issue involves an important cost to the hotel.
Chapter 6: Conclusion and suggestions

This chapter represents one of the most important parts of the study, as we summarize the whole research. In fact, all study is done in order to have a deep knowledge on one specific topic. In this case, we will present how the situation is in Sweden regarding “green hotels”, in accordance with our research questions and purpose.

At the end of this chapter, we will provide some suggestions for further research.

6.1 Conclusion

The growing trend in “greening the business” attracted us to conduct a deep study aiming to know how the companies are dealing with the environmental concern. Narrowing down our thesis, we decided to focus only on the hospitality industry, specifically on “green hotels”.

The purpose of this study was, on the one hand, to discover why the hotels decided to become “green hotels”. According to the data collected in the interviews, and also in agreement with the written theories, we can say that almost all the hotels took this decision answering the continuing pressures they received from their stakeholders, specifically from the customers, who are the one reporting incomes to the hotel. The behavior of the competitors also represents an important point in developing environmental practices. Only in the case of really developed “green hotels” we find a different cause to become green, which is the own motivation of the managers to do something that we have to do, something that is really needed by the society. As they do it because they really look for it, we can really notice the difference: they are more environmental-friendly hotels.

On the other hand, knowing the main steps the companies have followed to become green represent also a purpose of this research. The first step is planning the process of how to include modifications in the hotel. Some hotels started by the definitions of annual goals. The more environmental-friendly hotel considers that it is essential to define really specific goals, measurable, realistic and possible to reach within a specific period of time. However, those hotels who are starting in becoming green do not defined so many goals; they focus on really simple practices which not required any previous goal. They have already defined some goals but for the long-term.

In addition, all the hotels agree on the importance of the employee’s involvement, as they play an important role in implementing the practices; for example, in the case of recycling the waste. The implementation of the practices represents the next step on the process. Almost all the hotels are implementing easy practices, as using low-energy bulbs or introducing organic food in the restaurant. Again the most environmental-friendly green hotel is also the one presenting more sophisticated practices. A last stage in the process is associated with the evaluation of the practices and its improvement.
The main barrier that difficult the greening process is mainly the cost, but also the time. In this case the difference is between those hotels that are affiliated to any chain, so they can be supported by the chain; for them the time is an important obstacle. While for the individual hotels the most important factor that makes difficult to implement is the cost associated to the introduction of new machines, organic food, ecological products, etc.

In a general conclusion, we can say that different factors explain the importance of becoming green, as well as the requirement of define specific objectives in order to achieve a better environmental performance.

In addition, we are presenting now some suggestions that we can help hoteliers in becoming green, as well as other suggestions in relation to future research.

### 6.2 Suggestions to hoteliers

Depending on the resources the hotel has and its level of involvement in the environmental concern, the suggestions we could give diverse.

When an hotelier with few resources wants to become green, we would suggest him first of all to define specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time sensitive goals and then to act on small environmental practices like saving energy by changing bulbs to low energy, switch off the lights as many times as possible, etc.

When an hotelier has available resources and really wants to act environmental-friendly, we would suggest him to turn towards green associations like the one seen in the case study in order that they could help him to develop environmental practices.

### 6.3 Suggestions for future researches

The suggestions we could give to future researches would be first to collect the data from more green hotels in order to have a broader view of the environmental concern in the hotel industry. Furthermore, we could suggest researchers to choose hotels from different cities, maybe from bigger ones than Umeå.

Another interesting point could be the comparison of hotels. We evoked in our research that the fact that a hotel is chain affiliated might influence it to become green. It could be interesting to compare the greening process between chain-affiliated hotels and independent ones.

Finally, we saw in our study that reaching personnel from a hotel was not an easy task when running interviews. A last suggestion that we could give may regard the method of data collection. It could be interesting to use a quantitative research to approach the employees of hotels for example in order to reach more personnel.
Chapter 7: Criteria for judging qualitative researches

In this last chapter of this study we will present the criteria to evaluate the quality of our research. After presenting the theoretical framework and the analysis of the data we got from the interviews, we found good to show to what extent our study can be consider valid, accurate and applicable or in other words trustworthy and authentic (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

They are important criteria to evaluate a qualitative research.

7.1 Credibility

The credibility criterion entails both ensuring that the research is carried out according to the canons of good practice and submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood that social world. In general, it usually responds to the question: How believable are the findings? (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

In our study, we judged the results we found as credible for several reasons. First, we decided to interview not only managers but also employees. As both persons were usually saying the same responses, we considered their answers as believable. As we explained in the methodology chapter, the hotel manager is the one who is the most likely to have a broader view of the activities. He is also the one who should have the more knowledge and the one who takes the decisions in the hotel. So we knew he was the suitable person to contact. Moreover, some information the manager or the employee gave us, can be verified through the website or information displayed in the hotel, especially the one concerning the certifications. For example, the Hotel Winn displays in the hotel a frame where we can see the certificate of the Svanen.

In relation to the interviews, we tried to explain the clearest as possible what information we wanted to get from them. We explained first our purpose; the type of interview we wanted to run in order to make sure that the interviewee understood clearly the aim of our research and our questions. For example, we tried to make clear the difference between policy (goals) and practice. Usually, each hotel understood what we meant by environmental practices but we explained that we called policies any document stating goals or course of action.
7.2 Transferability

The transferability criterion refers to the degree to which the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context. It refers to the judgment about whether findings can be transferred to other milieu. In general, it usually responds to the question: *Do the findings apply to other contexts?* (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

As we explained already in the methodology, we consider that our study cannot be transferable and adjusted to hotels in the world unless hotels are located in Sweden or other countries with similar advancement on the topic of environmental concern. We assumed in the problem background in chapter one that Sweden is really concerned about the environmental issues so we consider it in advance to other countries that pay less attention to this problem for the moment. We all the more think that other researches done in Sweden could come up with approximately the same findings as we had as during the interview in the *STF ABISKO TURISTSTATION* for example, the manager explained us that taking care of the environment is in the mentality of the population. Moreover, most of the interviewees told us that they really pay attention to this issue and that for some hotels it was a priority for them. Some hotels even told us that environmental practices were automatic gestures like for example recycling bottles or anything else. These gestures may not be automatic in every country in the world. That is why we consider that our findings cannot be transferred outside countries with same habits and mentalities as Sweden.

7.3 Dependability

The dependability criterion is a parallel to reliability, which is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable. The term is commonly used in relation to the question whether or not the measures that are devised for concepts in business and management - such as team working, employee motivation, organizational effectiveness - are consistent. Moreover, dependability usually responds to the question: *Are the findings likely to apply at other times?* (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

We consider our study as repeatable as we think that the interviews we ran can be carried out later on. Moreover, there are more and more hotels that tend to become green, as doing environmental practices is a kind of trendy action these days. The questions we asked during the interviews can really be repeated after few years for example. The results would probably be the same or hotels would come up with better policies and practices and measures, like employee motivation or organizational effectiveness as quoted above, would maybe result in higher environmental performance.
7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is a parallel of objectivity. Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith; in other words, it should be apparent that he or she has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it. The notion of confirmability usually replies to the question: *Has the investigator allowed his or her values to intrude to high degree?* (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

We consider that our results can be confirmed and verified because we asked hotels managers about goals and practices that were also explained by employees for example. Moreover, we did not affect the objectivity of the interviews or the theoretical part. We especially used a structured interview with hotel employees that just had to answer our questions. This does not lead us to subjectivism as the answers were perfectly responding the questions. In addition, even if we did not get so much information from the *SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL* and the *ROYAL HOTEL*, we added the only information they gave us in appendix without adding personal thought or values. We only added information from brochures or the website of the hotel.
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- Svanen Nordic Ecolabel
APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: environmental policy of Abisko

Miljöpolicy för Abisko Turiststation

Abisko Turiststation är Svenska Turistföreningens (STF) största fjällanläggning.

Då STF är Sveriges största ekoturismarrangör och att STF i sitt miljöprogram skriver att föreningens egna anläggningar skall vara ett föredöme inom miljöarbetet är det självlärt att Abisko Turiststation medvetet arbetar för att uppfylla detta.

Då Abisko Turiststation dessutom ligger mitt i en nationalpark känns detta arbete än mer angeläget.

Utifrån detta vill Abisko Turiststation vara:

- Ett föredöme inom miljöområdet genom att
- Ha kunning och engagerad personal
- I varje beslutsmoment hela tiden fatta beslut utifrån ett miljöperspektiv
- Göra våra gäster delaktiga
- Ställa krav på våra leverantörer

Abisko i januari 2007.
Appendix 2: Interview SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL

Interview with the assistant manager of the Scandic Plaza hotel

- Goals

Despite the lack of information we got from the interview, the assistant manager told us that one of the first goal the SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL and Scandic chain had was the certifications from green associations.

However, he could not tell us more about the hotel’s environmental goals. We still managed to get some information from the brochures and documents he gave us, mainly from the Scandic chain, that is to say, the “guest programme”, the “Scandic Plaza Umeå och Scandic Umeå Syd”, the “Sunt Miljöförnuft” and the “Svanen Nordic Ecolabel” brochures. The Scandic Environment sense brochure details all the green organizations the chain is working with that is to say the following organizations: “Det Naturliga Steget”, “WWF”, the “International Hotels Environmental Initiative (IHEI)”, “Svanen” and “KRAV”.

Moreover, according to the guest programme, the SCANDIC PLAZA HOTEL evokes its philosophy: “By choosing to stay at a hotel chain that not only talks about the environment,
but also minimises energy consumption, reduce waste, phases out disposable packages, offers organic options and cuts down on chemicals, you are contributing to a sustainable world”.

Looking for information on the Scandic website as the assistant manager suggested us, we discovered that the Scandic chain informs a lot its stakeholders that it is an environmental-friendly chain. The chain developed an environmental policy in 1994 –see appendix 3 – which states the commitment of the company in working looking for a sustainable society. (www.scandichotels.com, 2008-06-01)

Moreover, the chain promotes a lot their environmental aspect. For example, they display on their website an environmental commercial saying: “A good night sleep can be a good start; a good start can be a good cup of coffee; a good cup of coffee can be a good deed; a good deed can make things better; a better world is good thought; a good thought can make you feel good; feeling good and doing good can be the same thing. That’s what the sustainable society is all about. A good day is a day at Scandic. Bring some Scandic Home” (www.scandic-campaign.com, 2008-06-01)

Continuing with the certifications, the website claims that the chain owns over 90 Svanen ecolabeled hotels.

- Environmental practices

According to the Scandic website, the chain has been consciously tackling environmental issues since 1994.

Relating to the environmental practices the SCANDIC PLAZA hotel is developing, the assistant manager could not tell anything. However, we discovered by the website that the hotel is ordering organic foods and also Fairtrade coffee.

- Barriers to the implementation of practices

Due to the lack of information we got from the interview with the assistant manager, we could not find any barriers to the implementation of practices.

**Interview with the employee of the Scandic Plaza hotel**

Despite the fact we spoke with the employee of the Conference department, we almost have no information related to the environmental issue, as she didn’t want to answer any question without having consulted the manager.
Appendix 3: environmental policy of SCANDIC

**Scandics Miljöpolicy**

Inget företag kan undvika att ta ansvar för miljön och fokusera på miljöfrågorna.

Scandic ska därför ta täten och aktivt arbeta för en minskad miljöbelastning och ett ekologiskt hållbart samhälle.

1994

**Scandic’s Environmental Policy**

No company can avoid taking responsibility for the environment and focusing on environmental issues.

Scandic shall, therefore, lead the way and work continuously to promote both a reduction in our environmental impact and a better environment.

Scandic shall contribute to a sustainable society.

1994

Appendix 4: Interview with the ROYAL HOTEL

**Interview with the manager of the Royal Hotel**

The *ROYAL HOTEL* we interviewed was different from the other ones in the sense that we did not consider it as green. However, we managed to get some information by the interviews and the hotel brochure.
The ROYAL HOTEL, which is part of the RICA chain and that has been opened quite recently in 1997, is not part of any green association. However, according to the manager of the hotel, the fifteen people employed in the hotel are trying to fit to an environmental-friendly image but do not establish any goals.

- **Goals**

The ROYAL HOTEL is not part of any green association. However, the manager of the hotel has set goals to try to fit to an environmental-friendly image. These goals are limited in scope and include simple tasks such as changing light bulbs or keeping spare newspapers.

- **Environmental practices**

The environmental practices the ROYAL HOTEL is developing are limited to simple tasks like changing light bulbs or keeping spare newspapers. However, the manager explained that the personnel are not spending a lot of energy on it as it is not considered as their priority.

- **Barriers to the implementation of practices**

The main barrier to develop environmental practices is related to economic difficulties.

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### Interview with an employee of the Royal Hotel

After the interview with the manager of the ROYAL HOTEL, we were granted the authorization to interview an employee from the housekeeping department.

Continuing with the structured interview, we asked the employee what were the environmental practices he is applying within her department. He mainly does simple tasks like changing light bulbs or keeping spare newspapers.

Secondly, in order to match our research question about the steps to be green, we asked him if he knew something about the environmental policy or goals of the hotel and if he can have access to these documents. The housekeeper already knew that the hotel was not establishing particular goals in relation to the environmental concern.

Then, we asked him if he feels the environment issue as a priority for his department and for the hotel. He replied that the environmental concern was not really their priority that is why they did not develop those much environmental practices.

The previous one replied the next question indirectly though. We asked the housekeeper whether he, as well as the guests, has the possibility to make suggestions to the general manager in order to improve the environmental performance of the hotel. He replied telling us that due to the fact that the environmental issue was not considered as a big deal for the hotel,
they did not make suggestions. However, he added that if he had something to say regarding it, he could, without any problem, make suggestions to the hotel manager.

Even if the hotel is not really concerned about the environmental issue, we asked the last question of our structured interview that is to say about his level of involvement in the environmental issue. He felt involved but here again being environmental-friendly does not depend only on him as if the hotel does not develop environmental practices so much, he will not be able to work on it.