

### 2023 ROUNDTABLE SERIES - Phuket, Thailand

Date: 4 September 2023, 8 AM – 10 AM | Hosted by: SAii Laguna Phuket and PHIST

PHUKET THAILAND PARTICIPANTS OF HOT (HOTEL OWNERS FOR TOMORROW). HOT IS A COALITION RALLYING OWNERS IN ASIA TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO HELPING THE PLANET AND ITS PEOPLE.

#### 2023 Thailand Roundtable Participants

Andrew Dixon, Owner, Nikoi Island & Cempedak Private Island	Bill Barnett, Managing Director, C9 Hotelworks Company Limited
Chris Teo, Deputy CEO, Roxy-Pacific Holdings Pte Ltd	• Christian Pucher, Senior Director of Development Asia, Hilton
Eric E. Ricaurte, Founder & CEO, Greenview	Fabricio Muzzio, Chief Development Officer, Cloud Collective
Jeff Smith, Vice President of Sustainability, Six Senses	• Jennifer Klar, Director Corporate Sustainability, Six Senses
Jesper Palmqvist, Area Director Asia Pacific, STR	<ul> <li>Liz Ortiguera, Managing Director of Asia-Pacific and Sr Advisor to the CEO, World Travel &amp; Tourism Council (WTTC)</li> </ul>
Melissa Gan, Chief Commercial Officer APAC, World Hotels	<ul> <li>Matawee Mujchapan, Operations Manager - Environment &amp; Sustainability, Centara Hotels &amp; Resorts</li> </ul>
Michael Sagild, Co-founder & President, Cloud Collective	Nikhom Jensiriratanakorn, Director, Horwath HTL Asia Pacific
Paul Pruangkarn, Chief of Staff, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)	Rakesh Patel, CEO & Founder, Alta Capital Real Estate
Randy Durband, CEO, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)	Robert Hecker, Managing Director Pacific Asia, Horwath HTL
Tom Mallet, Global Director, Decarbonisation and Sustainable Performance, Accor	Yeoh Siew Hoon, Founder & Editor, WiT

#### THE FIVE ACTIONS FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

To take sustainability to the next level in our industry, hotel owners will make the difference. HOT is simple: hotel owners commit to 5 basic actions. There is no cost to join, and the 5 actions do not require a financial commitment. To support HOT, a coalition is being built of hotel brands, management companies, industry bodies, and other supporters in hotel development to help owners carry out the actions.



Incorporate sustainability from the beginning of investment decisions

- Discuss sustainability at the onset of developing a project or acquiring a property to explore opportunities to improve.
- Talk about sustainability, its challenges, and its opportunities with capital advisors, developers, managers, and brands.
- Talk about energy, water, waste and carbon footprint of the building as well as external factors such as climate risk, water stress and protecting nature to identify risks and opportunities to get more value out of your investment.



Evaluate one renewable energy project efficiency project per property per year

- Review and consider at least one renewable energy-related project and at least one project relating to reducing energy, water, or waste for each property in the portfolio per year, either onsite or offsite.
- This entails assessing the onsite or offsite feasibility, possible funding mechanisms, and potential cost savings from pursuing renewables.
- Encourage partners to develop good projects for you to review.
- If you have a portfolio, you can consider one project and see how it may apply across your properties.



Routinely monitor and benchmark sustainability performance

- Track each property's energy, water, waste, carbon emissions, and community impact for the entire portfolio.
- Review at least once a quarter.
- Benchmark these results among your portfolio, among peers, or through industry benchmarking.



4 Support brand efforts

- Encourage your property teams to actively participate in brandand management company-led initiatives.
- No-cost options include participating in surveys, using their sustainability software, communicating their initiatives, keeping related signage updated, and participating in global volunteer or community events.
- For independent hotels, demonstrate how you support the branding of sustainability.



5 Share your best practices

- Help spread awareness and best practices that demonstrate solutions that are working to create value for the owner with the investment community.
- Communication methods include case studies, articles, and reports.



#### **Roundtable Summary**

Industry leaders from the Hotel Owners for Tomorrow (HOT) coalition convened for the third time in Phuket on 3 September 2023. The two-hour event divided sessions into thematic topics, with participants taking turns facilitating moderated discussions on the overarching topic of the roundtables: how to get hotel owners and hotel development professionals to be more engaged in sustainability.

#### **Updates from Previous Roundtables**

#### facilitated by Eric Ricaurte, Founder & CEO, Greenview

Eric Ricaurte, Founder & CEO of Greenview, kicked off the roundtable by setting the context for the HOT Coalition and highlighting the main purpose of holding HOT Roundtables: to put hotel owners and hotel developers in conversation about sustainability. Historically, there has been a systemic disconnect between hotel owners and hotel developers that hinders the implementation of sustainability measures and best practices earlier in the hotel development cycle.

As one of the co-organizers of PHIST, the event where the roundtable was held, Bill Barnett, Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks Company Limited, echoed that this is one of the problems that PHIST seeks to address. With a series of talks by professionals in the hospitality industry, as well as the congregation of solution providers for hotels, PHIST aims to engage hotel stakeholders in conversation and inspire good ideas for hoteliers to take back to their properties.

Participants were then invited to share their insights on the changes in the first year since recovery from COVID, as well as the progress made in hotel sustainability.

#### The current landscape of sustainability among hotel owners

Jeff Smith, Vice President Sustainability of Six Senses, observed that more hotel owners are talking about sustainability and actively requesting support and advice for implementing sustainability measures. Based on his conversations with owners, Smith explained that this observation is likely to be driven by financial reasons and the need for compliance. Christian Pucher, Senior Director of Development Asia of Hilton, reaffirmed Smith's observation and elaborated that cash is usually tight for expensive new builds, and owners are eager to seek cost-savings from implementing measures to be more efficient.

Robert Hecker, Managing Director Pacific Asia of Horwath HTL, reiterated Smith's point on compliance as a primary driver of interest in sustainability and added that it is not just compliance with laws, but also compliance with standards set by hotel operators, where implementing sustainability measures is explicitly a part of partnership agreements.

Pucher then pointed out that the increased interest is also likely to stem from a generational shift in hotel ownership, where more owners are also interested in operating sustainably. When Pucher first started in his role, discourse about sustainability was scarce. In more recent years, however, increased interest from owners coupled with a stepped-up focus from Hilton has seen the ESG strategy on Travel with Purpose brought to the forefront of a pitch, rather than just another mention among many Hilton highlights.

#### Hotel owners' take on sustainability

Hotel owners at the roundtable were then invited to share their perspectives on hotel sustainability and their experiences thus far. Chris Teo, Deputy CEO of Roxy-Pacific Holdings, raised one of the challenges he faced and recounted his experience in looking for solution providers as a hotel owner. Teo raised that it is often difficult to find solution providers that are most appropriate for their specific contexts and requirements. Even when owners wish to

pursue sustainability, there is often a lack of contractors available to execute the measures on the ground. In countries where there are specific guidelines and well-established certification schemes, it is easier to use such frameworks as a benchmark for how to develop hotels.

Raising the <u>Green Mark Certification Scheme</u> by the Building and Construction Authority of Singapore as an example, Teo recounted that it was easier to look for local solution providers due to the prevalence of this certification scheme as a mark of assurance for buildings. In contrast, it was more challenging for Teo to emulate the Green Mark principles in his Phuket portfolio because global consultancies were not as familiar with and lacked the understanding of this specific certification scheme. Ricaurte reiterated this and pointed out that this had been a recurring issue even before the onset of COVID, which sparked the creation of PHIST to connect solution providers with hotels.

Andrew Dixon, Owner of Nikoi Island & Cempedak Private Island, encouraged the roundtable participants to approach owners with a cost-saving perspective rather than looking at the pricing premium. For Dixon, it is often difficult to accurately name a pricing premium for sustainable properties because of the difficulties in quantifying monetary values for benefits. Projected or proven improvements in resource efficiencies that translate to concrete cost savings are more likely to convince owners to take measures that enhance hotel sustainability.

#### Demand for sustainability from consumers

The conversation then pivots to the demand for sustainable accommodation among consumers. Participants agreed that there has been a surge in interest in sustainability among consumers. As a result, there is an increasing need for everyone at the table to become familiar with the sustainability language that consumers use. Tom Mallet, Global Director, Decarbonisation and Sustainable Performance of Accor, summarizes discussions about sustainability into two main threads: how do efforts to be more sustainable drive asset value, and what are the specific things that customers are asking from hotels?

From a business-to-business perspective, Mallet shared that large percentages of companies have already developed internal travel buying programs with specific targets for carbon emissions. These carbon emission reduction targets, such as Science Based Targets (SBT), heavily influence the decision-making process for corporate travel. Companies with stricter targets have completely avoided staying at hotels with carbon emissions that exceed a specific limit. To continue to profit from the corporate travel market, hotels need to reduce their carbon intensity and keep information about their sustainability readily available for travel buyers.

#### Pre-competitive sharing

"Pre-competitive sharing is so important to move sustainability forward. We need to get a lot done faster to overcome barriers in sustainability."



Randy Durband, CEO, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

Further elaborating on Mallet's point, Liz Ortiguera, Managing Director of Asia-Pacific and Senior Advisor to the CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), pointed out that whether it is corporate or leisure travelers, focus on sustainability is now driven in good measure by consumer and client interest which research shows is the highest in Asia-Pacific. Consumers want to make better choices and are frustrated by the lack of transparency. OTAs need to play a leading role in providing fair and consistent insights and comparisons. Standards need to be better aligned in order to drive consumer trust and clarity. Randy Durband, CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), echoed Ortiguera's sentiments and shared that GSTC has been helping Booking.com on that front to design and develop ways that are easy for consumers to understand and identify a wider range of more sustainable stays.



#### Geographic variations in sustainability maturity

While there has been more interest in sustainability among hotels and consumers, there are differences in the level of maturity and progress among different geographies. To illustrate the geographic differences, Yeoh Siew Hoon, Founder and Editor of WiT, shared the use of sustainability badges on OTAs as an example. While OTAs have started to award sustainability badges to hotels based on criteria such as certification status, Yeoh noted that there is a stark difference between the number of hotels that are awarded in Asia compared to the rest of the world.

Durband explained that each geography has different interests and prioritizes different issues to address. In the United States, there is a greater emphasis on addressing social issues such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) than carbon. While countries that are mandating GSTC certification such as Turkey and Singapore are more focused on addressing the environmental impacts of tourism. There are promising signs of improvement but there is a general lack of cohesion at the global level.

Melissa Gan, Chief Commercial Officer APAC of World Hotels, shared that the sustainability maturity of a market in itself might be a factor in causing geographic variations in interests for sustainability. The potential returns from implementing sustainability measures might potentially be higher in non-mature markets where they can be differentiated as a leader. Gan observed that it is the immature markets that are asking for support in pursuing sustainability. However, most of the time, owners tend to be dependent on governments to advance the industry using legislation.

To accurately identify hotels that are lagging, Mallet emphasized that hotels should always bring it back to the core metrics: energy, carbon, water, and waste. These metrics are universally applicable to all hotels and are a good way for hotels to communicate their efforts and remain transparent to their guests.

#### CAPEX challenges and opportunities

facilitated by Robert Hecker, Managing Director Pacific Asia, Horwath HTL

Robert Hecker, Managing Director Pacific Asia of Horwath HTL, opened the second discussion on challenges in funding, financing, and executing investments to improve property sustainability performance, inviting hotel owners and participants to share their experience in tapping on green financing mechanisms for their properties.

#### Approaching green financing

Several participants pointed out that green financing mechanisms are becoming more widely available, but hurdles in accessing these funds are shaping the way they approach sustainability projects. One of the main questions that hotels need to assess is the payback period for sustainability projects.

Mallet explained that while shorter-term projects yield quicker returns, the efficiency improvements for such projects tend to fall short compared to longer-term projects. Five-year payback periods are standard and common but there is a step change when it comes to projects with a seven-year payback period, even if the latter could bring in more investments, more substantial cost savings, and larger sustainability performance improvements. To inculcate a mindset shift among owners to favor longer-term projects, Mallet shared that their team is trying to incrementally increase the payback period, and build a business case for long-term projects.

Further elaborating on Mallet's point of building a business case, Pucher highlighted that at an industry level, there is a general lack of success stories in Southeast Asia that get communicated effectively to hotel owners. From a hotel operator's perspective, there are not enough ready-made solutions that are scalable and easily replicable across different regions and jurisdictions. Pucher shared that while a detailed engineering guide is available as a resource for

owners to assess efficiency measures, it often gets lost due to its sheer volume and technicality. To this issue, Mallet suggests building success stories and business cases around the core energy, carbon, water, and waste metrics, which are more tangible to communicate and educate owners.

#### Understanding requirements for green financing

Another aspect of green financing lies in the requirements for accessing these funds. Participants with internal investment funds for sustainability projects were invited to share their approach and requirements for dispersing these funds to their hotels.

Mallet shared that Accor's investment funds do not explicitly go into sustainability projects, but the fundamental requirement for hotels to access these funds at a lower interest rate is to meet specific targets for energy, carbon, water, and waste reduction. In this case, it creates tangible financial implications that favor projects that can bring about higher resource efficiencies, aiming to motivate more hotels to pursue green projects.

Matawee Mujchapan, Operations Manager, Environment and Sustainability of Centara Hotels & Resorts, shared that while Centara does not have an internal investment fund specifically for sustainability projects, they have received more interest from owners about green financing that comes with lower interest rates. A key requirement will be hotel owners' commitment to sustainability, and the commitment to follow through with the pursuant of a proposed solution.

### Numbers are the best way to show transparency.

"You can't manage what you don't measure. Always bring it back to the core metrics, energy, carbon, water, and waste to communicate impact."



Tom Mallet, Global Director, Decarbonisation and Sustainable Performance, Accor

Externally, there is also green financing from banks with specific requirements. Rakesh Patel, CEO and Founder of Alta Capital Real Estate, shared his experience working with banks for green financing and observed that banks often look for certifications to identify sustainable hotels. Specifically, established building certifications such as BREEAM, EDGE, and LEED are often the main indicators of sustainability projects that are aligned with well-established best practices.

Mallet also pointed out that most banks have their own Science Based Targets that influence the way they make loans and invest in projects. If hotel owners want to gain access to this pool of green funds, they would need to start looking into the specific requirements and outcomes that these banks expect from the projects. However, owners at the roundtable also raised that green financing might be still in its infancy due to the ambiguity of bank requirements, making it less accessible to some owners.

#### Overcoming resistance to changes

Beyond the profitability of sustainability measures, even when specific investments are proven to result in positive financial benefits, it is still difficult for owners to get their hotels aligned on whether to pursue the solution. Even when a particular solution has a low capital expenditure (CAPEX), ticks all the boxes for compliance with laws or standards,

and can bring about substantial cost savings, uptake can be low because of resistance to changes from different hotel stakeholders.

Pucher pointed out that the task at hand is to align enterprise-level sustainability goals with hotel-level action. Where financial investment is required, conversations can be difficult to have with hotel owners which can in turn impede meaningful progress and change. Mallet further elaborated that from the hotel owner's perspective, it can be difficult to get middle management onboard and trained.

To overcome this resistance to change and reluctance to start conversations, the timing to bring in solutions is crucial. For managed and franchised hotels, Mallet shared that the ideal time would most likely follow management and franchise agreement renewal cycles, where owners are already assessing and negotiating new terms for hotel operations.

#### Embedding GSTC criteria in hotel development

#### facilitated by Randy Durband, Founder & CEO of GSTC, and Jeff Smith, Vice President Sustainability of Six Senses

Randy Durband, CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), started the final discussion by providing an introduction to the GSTC Criteria, which serves as the global standard for sustainable travel and tourism. As an operation-based standard, the GSTC criteria seek to provide a holistic framework for sustainable and responsible hotel operations. While it is not a building standard, some components are specific to site selection and design which need to be taken into account at the hotel development stage, as well as during renovations.

Specifically for site selection, choosing between greenfield (undeveloped land) and brownfield sites (with existing infrastructures due to past developments) for hotel development can have significant implications. Building hotels on brownfields is typically more environmentally sound but if developers choose to build on greenfields, GSTC Criteria A7 on buildings and infrastructure contains specific guidelines on the environmental elements that need to be considered.

Additionally, Durband encouraged hotel developers to better understand what current and future customers want before developing hotels. Travelers might not want what developers expect, and developers can only uncover this when they conduct thorough research on consumer sentiments. In this case, the GSTC criteria could provide a good range of topics for developers to clarify with consumers.

#### Environment and ecology as assets

"Use Environmental Impact Assessments as an opportunity to find new assets onsite."



Jeff Smith, Vice President Sustainability, Six Senses

#### Experiences in going through the GSTC process

Jeff Smith, Vice President Sustainability of Six Senses, shared his experiences with going through the GSTC process, specifically for new developments at greenfield sites. Smith mentioned the importance of conducting Environmental **Impact** Assessments (EIA) environmentally sensitive areas and encouraged developers to change their perception towards EIAs. Instead of seeing EIAs as a hurdle to hotel development, Smith advocated for everyone to see it as a resource and an opportunity to understand the geography and community of the operating site, both of which are important elements to successful hotel operation.

Smith raised the EIA conducted for Six Senses Fiji as an example of how a thorough appreciation of the site



contributed to their operations. Through the EIA, they discovered that the site was home to a critically endangered native species of iguanas, the Fijian Crested iguanas. With this information in mind, they were able to set up an iguana reserve, do spotlight tours, and weave this conservation story into the customer experience. Smith encouraged participants to see local natural heritage as an asset and use EIAs as an opportunity to discover new assets within the site. On top of the local ecology and biodiversity, Ortiguera indicated cultural heritage discovered through EIAs can also be valuable assets that hotels can use for their storytelling and create new cultural products.

Conducting EIAs for greenfield developments allows hotel owners and developers to design hotels that are more environmentally and culturally sensitive to the local site, both of which play a big part in meeting various GSTC criteria.

#### Sustainability beyond hotel development

Dixon then shared his experience in championing conservation and sustainability at Nikoi Island and Cempedak Island resorts in Bintan. The process of learning and understanding a site does not end beyond the site selection and EIA. As part of their conservation efforts, regular flora and fauna surveys were conducted to help develop a management plan that conserves local biodiversity. Through the surveys, they identified 8 new species of fish and were able to rally for the establishment of a Marine Protected Area around the islands.

Dixon also shared about his hotel's efforts in minimizing food waste, which was a primary waste stream for his hotels. Currently, his properties use black soldier fly (BSF) larvae as decomposers to break down food waste into compost. On top of breaking down food efficiently, the BSFs also turned out to be effective pest repellents because of the hormones that they release. Dixon's team was also able to turn this sustainability initiative into a compelling story by offering tours to the BSF facility and showing them how the BSFs turn food waste into compost.

In terms of staff engagement, it is also important to keep staff involved in ideating and executing sustainability solutions. On this front, Dixon established a Green Leaders Program where volunteers from each department were invited to share best practices and ideas on sustainability.

#### The collective effort to be more sustainable

The roundtable concluded with participants raising the benefits of hearing about what others have done to be more sustainable. Gan pointed out that there is always a starting point for all, and hearing about how far others have already progressed presents a healthy form of motivation. For Ortiguera, the roundtable session presented a great opportunity for parties to openly share learnings and challenges and hear best practices.

#### **COALITION MEMBERS**

As of October 2023

#### **OWNER SIGNATORIES**

- 1. Akaryn Hotel Group
- 2. Alphanam Group
- 3. Alta Capital Real Estate
- 4. Brightland Hotel Pvt Ltd
- 5. Cempedak Private Island
- 6. Centara Hotels & Resorts
- 7. Crystal Creek Meadows
- 8. GreenPlace Assets
- 9. Harilela Hotels
- 10. Hong Kong Cyberport
- 11. Intermass Engineering & Contractors
- 12. ITC Hotels
- 13. Jasminn by Mango Hotels
- 14. Leopard Rock Hotel
- 15. Nikoi Island
- 16. Pro Invest
- 17. Pt Anugrah Karya Bangsa
- 18. Pt Dua Cahaya Anugrah
- 19. Swire Hotels
- 20. Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces
- 21. The Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels

#### **INDUSTRY PARTNERS**

- Estilo Hotels
- Hyatt Hotels Corporation
- Kokotel Bed & Café
- Marriott International
- Meritus Hotels & Resorts
- Six Senses Hotels, Resorts, Spas
- Wyndham Worldwide

#### **NETWORK PARTNERS**

- GreenOtels
- International Tourism Partnership
- Pacific Asia Travel Association
- Phuket Hotels Association
- Subic Bay Hotels, Attraction, and Tourism Stakeholders Visitor Board

#### **SUPPORTERS**

- C9 Hotelworks
- Craft House Consulting
- Greenview
- Horwath HTL
- Northside Consulting
- Tajara Leisure & Hospitality Group
- Tourism Solutions International
- TTG Publishing Travel Trade



#### JOIN THE COALITION

Hotels for Owners of Tomorrow (HOT) is a true coalition, with limited overhead or administrative structure, intended to advance peer-to-peer sustainability discussion among owners and investors. Ongoing roll-out is undertaken by the coalition's constituents through their various roles, channel, and initiatives including roundtables, internal presentations, and a resource library. Types of entities that may

- ❖ Signatories owners of hotel real estate who commit to the principles and follow them. Some entities may play a dual role for both owning hotels and managing hotels for other owners.
- ❖ Industry Partners entities with a direct relationship with owners and whose performance directly benefit from owner commitments (e.g., hotel brands and management companies).
- Network Partners entities that benefit indirectly from the initiative's success because it is also aligned with their mission, purpose, or complementary initiatives (e.g., industry associations and initiatives).
- Supporters entities that help hotel owners make investment decisions, or media that helps promote them.

  Not vendors of green products or services.

#### HOW TO JOIN THE HOT COALITION

- The entity or a significant portion of its parent ownership of the entity is **headquartered in an Asian country** and owns a controlling interest in at least one property classified as a hotel/resort.
- ❖ All four types of Coalition members, including Signatories, Industry Partners, Network Partners, and Supports can join by signing a commitment form found here: <a href="https://www.hotelsfortomorrow.org/jointhecoalition">https://www.hotelsfortomorrow.org/jointhecoalition</a>, subject to approval for meeting the criteria for each membership type.
- The Owner Signatory carries out its commitments and promotes becoming a signatory to other entities who become interested.
- ❖ The Industry Partner and Development Supporter roles are to engage owners to become signatories, and support signatories in implementing the principles.
- The Network Partner and Media Supporter roles are to **provide external credibility to the initiative** and **help disseminate it throughout their networks**, further enabling signatories to be recognized.