4.4 Recommendations for franchisees

Background and key arguments
The franchisee model is heavily dependent on the brand reputation of the hotel chain. As both individual and business travellers continue to demand greater environmental practice from the brands they buy into, the sustainability ethos of the brand will have an increasingly greater impact on your property’s long-term profitability.

The relative independence of the franchisee is an opportunity to go beyond minimum brand requirements and set properties apart through their environmental excellence. Consumer trends indicate a willingness to pay a premium price for sustainable hotels, therefore franchised properties can increase their RevPAR by communicating with this growing consumer segment.

Key recommendations for franchisees

1. Pick a franchisor that aligns its brand fully to sustainable operations
   A sustainable brand association leads to better sentiment score reviews which is reflected in guest satisfaction and repeated service. Franchisees can make the most of their affiliation with brands by using the resources and expertise developed at corporate level (e.g. marketing, brand standards, software, environmental incentives and staff engagement tools).

   How to do this:
   • Review the brand standards for sustainability criteria when selecting a franchisor.
   • Work with your franchisor’s corporate teams to benefit from their sustainability experience and resources.

2. Communicate sustainable practices to consumers
   Franchisees depend on a dedicated business-to-business sales force that is usually centrally managed and nationally deployed by the franchisor. As companies consider responsible travelling for the business traveller, sales agents need to be aware of your best sustainable practices and responsible travel programmes when presenting your properties to customers.

   How to do this:
   • Ensure your sales agents are kept informed of your sustainable practices.
   • Review your interactions with customers and stakeholders to evaluate how you are communicating your sustainability goals and actions.
   • Use IFC’s Marketing Toolkit for guidance on communicating your sustainable practices.146