

# **Sustainability in the Tourism Industry**

## **Case Studies in the hotel and restaurant industry in Vietnam and Finland**

LAB University of Applied Sciences  
Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management  
2022  
Quan Bui  
Quyên Trinh

## Abstract

Author(s) Quan Bui and Quyen Trinh	Publication type Thesis, UAS	Completion year 2022
	Number of pages 2	
Title of the thesis <b>Sustainability in the Tourism industry</b> Case studies in the hotel and restaurant industry in Viet Nam and Finland		
Degree, Field of Study Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management		
Institution LAB University of Applied Sciences		
Abstract <p>The study aims to highlight the differences between restaurant and hotel sustainable development in Finland and Viet Nam, and its main objective is to identify the main drivers of sustainable development as well as offer suggestions to Vietnamese businesses to be better at sustainable development.</p> <p>The study uses 2 case companies, representing 2 success stories of sustainable development in the Finnish hotel and restaurant industry as well as an interview of 5 Vietnamese hotel and restaurant owners to draw up conclusions about how Vietnamese businesses can learn from their Finnish counterparts.</p>		
Keywords Tourism, Sustainability, Sustainable tourism, case study, hotel and restaurant industry		

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

Appendix 2: Answers

## 1 Introduction

Sustainability has been the keyword of our century. It appears in every aspect of our human existence, from culture, business, all the way to society. While sustainability is not a complex concept to acknowledge, it is still perhaps one of the most misunderstood concepts of all, especially in the field of business and economics. Our basic idea of sustainability has always been overly simplified within the business context, so a trend towards eco-friendly measures aimed towards the environment, which, although correct, only represents a third of what sustainability in business truly encompasses.

This study sets out to highlight the differences between sustainable tourism development goals in Finland and Viet Nam, specifically in the hotel and restaurant industry via interviews with business owners and archival study. This goal is to paint a better picture of what sustainable tourism is, what drives it, and what Vietnamese businesses should change or focus on to become more sustainable. The study also strives to correct certain misconceptions about sustainable development and what many businesses in developing countries are forgoing when drafting their sustainable development plans.

The study involves 3 parts: The theoretical segment, where the idea of sustainability is explained and explored; the archival study segment, where archival data from one of the biggest hotel chains and one of the biggest sustainable restaurants in Finland are examined and interpreted; and finally, the interview segment, where results from 5 interviews with 5 business owners and managers in Viet Nam are analysed.

## 2 Objective, Aims, and Research questions

### 2.1 Objective

- Describe the current policies on sustainable tourism development of both countries.
- Identify the factors affecting the sustainable development of both countries' tourism industries (awareness, conditions, economic and social problems...)
- Evaluate the response of local business and perspective of local people on sustainable tourism development in both countries.
- Identify the barriers and solutions to develop sustainable tourism.
- Provide recommendation in doing sustainable business in Vietnam.

### 2.2 Aim

The thesis and its research aim to provide perspectives on the factors affecting the sustainability of the tourism industry's development in both regions of Viet Nam and Finland, as well as offer recommendations to businesses in Viet Nam to implement sustainable tourism development.

### 2.3 Research questions

The thesis aims to answer 3 main research questions:

- How have environment, economic and social cultural factors affected the development of sustainable tourism in both countries, specifically in the hotel and restaurant industry?
- What is the importance of receiving support (what kind?) from government or other funding sources for businesses to implement sustainable solutions (what kind of sustainable solutions?)
- What kind of recommendation could be given to get Vietnamese tourist businesses to operate more sustainably?

### 2.4 What is included

- Sustainable tourism in 2 countries, Vietnam, and Finland.
- The hotel and restaurant industry

### 2.5 What is excluded

- Tourism outside Finland and Viet Nam.

- Businesses outside of Viet Nam.

## 2.6 Research design

The research will centre around the aforementioned 3 main questions set forth in the previous section. According to Brickman and Rog (2009, 218), there are a number of factors influencing the design of a qualitative research, and they will assist in formulating the structure of the research as well as its report in this thesis itself.

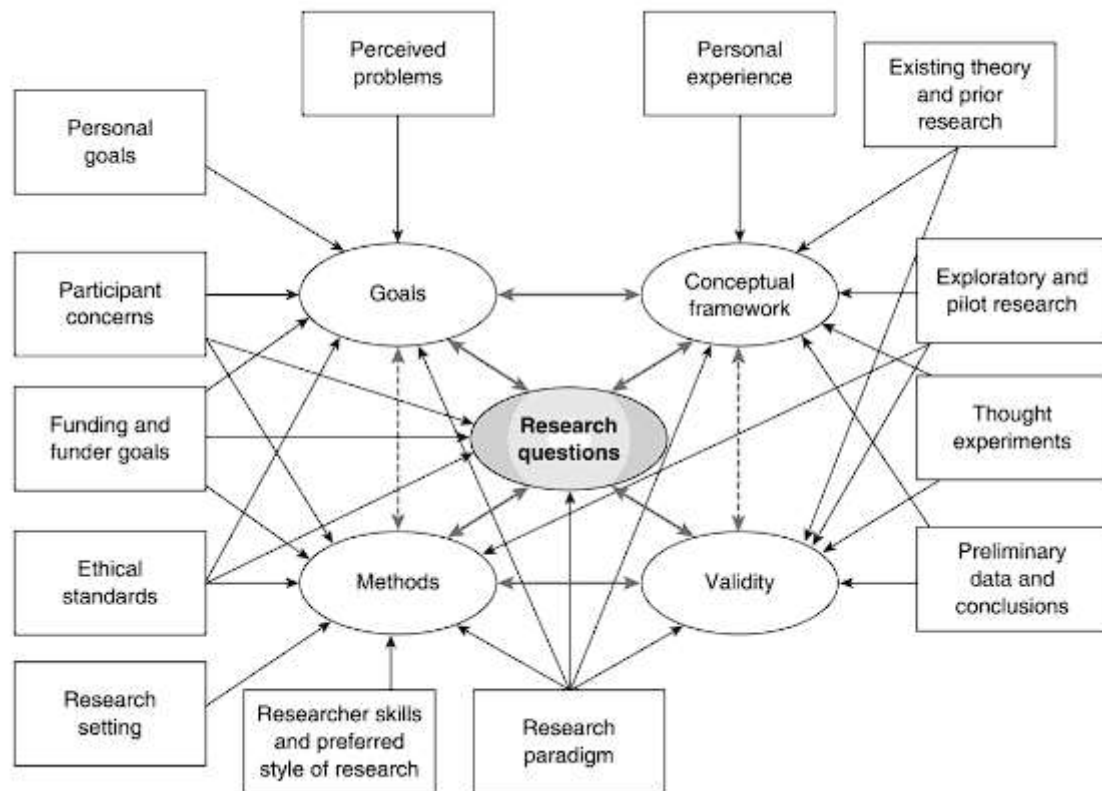


Figure 1. Factors to consider in designing qualitative research (Brickman and Rog, 2009, 218)

The study and thesis will follow these preliminary factors and explore most of the goals, methods and conceptual framework of the topic, as well as what elements contribute to them.

### 3 Key concepts

#### 3.1 Tourism

Tourism is an activity that brings joy, relaxation, experiences, and adventures to travellers, it was once only for the rich and high position in the society, but now, anyone can travel with different types, prices, and places. In recent decades, travelling has become a natural and indispensable thing in people live. By the time, the tourism industry developed and currently one of the most profitable industries in the world, become a sector of global social, environmental, and economic significance and in some countries, it is the main industry. Also, tourism plays a key role in closing the gap between cultures and religions at a global level and thus help communication between cultures are directly promoted peace between nations. (Ravi Kumar, 2018, 37.)

Besides bringing back financial benefits and creates millions of jobs, this massive growth industry also leaves some serious issues, one of which is the negative impact on the environment. The impact on the environment is substantial, it includes a massive increase in carbon footprint, pollution, waste, and the destruction of natural resources. Therefore, it is needed to promote and raise awareness about sustainable development, reducing negative impacts on the environment will help the tourism industry grow more, while also protecting the natural resources and somehow affect positively on other industries as well. It also brings back a meaningful trip and experience for tourists, raising their awareness, and practice eco-friendly behaviours. Moreover, there are more tourists nowadays, especially from developed countries, demanding and tend to seek out about eco-friendly travelling, to places where sustainable tourism is practiced by the local businesses and people.

The consequences of the negative impact to the environment can be seen easily by everyone, global warming, air pollution, water pollution, forest destruction, forest fires, affecting the wildlife habitat and the seriously degraded of natural resources are the effects that each people and clearly see. Even though the tourism industry is not the main cause, but if sustainable tourism is strongly promoted, it will significantly reduce harm and damage to the environment and at the same time bring good effects to other industries, as well as it is also a way for people to practice eco-friendly behaviours and habits.

#### 3.2 Sustainability in the business context

Sustainable development is the process of developing and maintaining in a certain space and time, where communities and environment exist. In addition, the development will not reduce the ability to adapt to the environment of humans while preventing the negative long-

term development impacts (Butler, 1999). In Tourism, it is about the development of tourism products and services which is concerned with long-term economic and social benefits while ensuring the contribution to the conservation and embellishment of resources, maintaining the cultural integrity for the development of future tourism activities, for environmental protection and contribute to improving the living standards of local communities (World Tourism Organization – WTO.)

It is often the last part of this definition that most people will overlook when developing an idea of sustainability. Sustainability is based on 3 pillars, which are environment, economy and society. One of the most common misconceptions about sustainability for the average individual is that sustainability is all about being green and protecting the environment. This, although true to a certain extent, is not the complete picture when it comes to the subject matter.

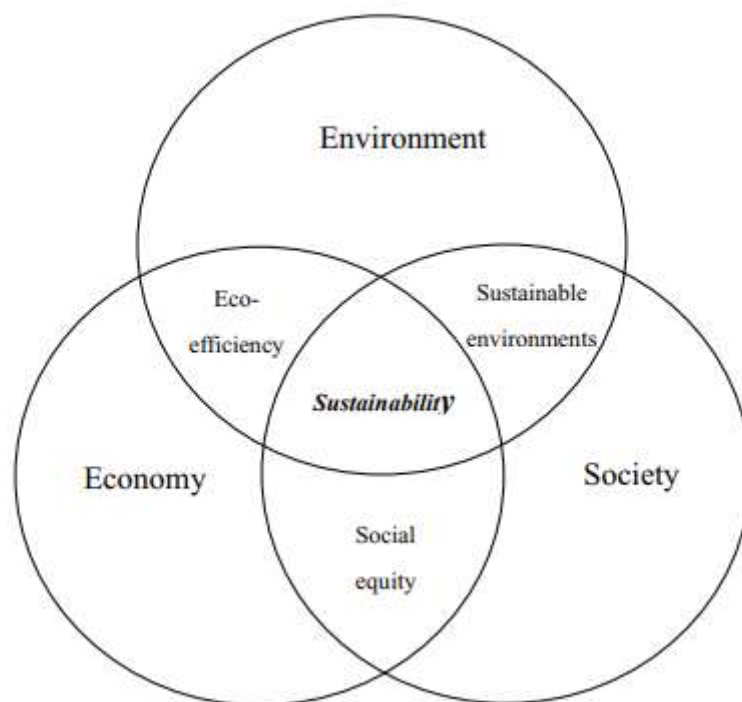


Figure 2. The 3 pillars of sustainability (Curran, 2009, 8)

As can be seen from figure 2 above, sustainability is only truly achieved when a business fulfils all 3 of these pillars, including social and economic sustainability alongside environmental protection. In short, sustainability in the business sense is the sweet spot when a business develops sustainably and responsibly in these 3 aspects.

The phrase 'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to

meet their own needs' first coined by Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland in the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (Brundtland, 1987, 16) applies to all aspects of life, not just towards nature preservation.

With this on the table, it is important to note that sustainable tourism is about how the tourism industry affects the environment, the local economy and society, how it affects its local cultural values and way of life. True sustainable tourism considers all of these aspects and ensures that its existence does not compromise the future stability of the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural landscape that it resides upon. (Curran, 2009, 9-12.)

### 3.2.1 Environmental sustainability

The most understandable aspect of sustainability and one of the most common key considerations for modern businesses to follow when drafting their sustainable development plans, environmental sustainability sits at the forefront of the sustainability discussion and is one of the three pillars of business sustainable development.

### 3.2.2 Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability – the second pillar of sustainability - is a very important and therefore usually overlooked, aspect of business sustainability. At the same time, economic sustainability is also the hardest to attain for a business, as it involves the largest number of variables and is often quite hard to control for an SME (Doane and Macgillivray, 2001, 19). This complexity can in part be experienced through figure 2.

ECONOMIC IMPACT	INDICATORS			EXAMPLE: IMPACT ON WIDER ECONOMY/SOCIETY
Profit	Levels of profit	Dividends paid	Geographical location and distribution of profit	Benefits the local economy; ensures companies stay in business
Human capital and knowledge (Intangible Assets)	Investment in training	Breakdown of intangible assets	Intellectual property rights and technology transfer business	Builds skilled-labour; benefits general region/community and
Investments	Fixed capital investment	Investment in knowledge	Acquisitions	Provides spin-off economic effects through longer-term investments
Employment (Labour Productivity)	The market value of people's productive capabilities (measured by # of employees, annual wage and salaries bill, etc.			Higher wages contributes to greater economic growth and overall wealth; More efficient use of people's skills produces more efficient outcomes
Community Development	Support for community economic regeneration	Partnerships with core company activities		Strong communities will be more likely to lead to stronger economic participation of its members; this benefits both the organisation and reduces long-term costs for reparative social services, such as welfare, crime, etc.
Outsourcing and procurement: (Suppliers)	Financial spend on outsourcing and procurement			A companies' direct spend on its supply chain has a great influence on economic development and sustainability; which a company does this (i.e. respecting human rights or environment) can have even greater spin-off effects
Goods and Services (Products and Services) produce	Externalised economic effects	Contributions to the wider economy		Some goods and services are more sustainable than others and positive benefits: i.e. a public transportation service not only helps people with community, it contributes to reduced traffic congestion and, in turn, less environmental harm
Public Policy	Financial contributions to political parties	Methods of influencing		Ways in which organisations lobby public policy government can have positive or negative economic affects, for example through privatised utilities; or who bears the cost of climate change

Figure 3. Adding values: an approach to economic sustainability summary table (Zadek and Tuppen, 2000, according to Doane and MacGillivray, 2001, 26)

### 3.2.3 Socio-cultural sustainability

Socio-cultural sustainability refers to a business' impact on the social and cultural aspects of the region in which it operates. This term deals with whether or not the business adversely affects its local community in terms of social changes or cultural diversification.

To put it simply, to be socio-cultural sustainable, the tourism industry in question needs to make a positive influence on the society, such as lend a hand in lowering poverty, providing income to the poor in certain capacity, as well as preserve the local cultural identity and even improve upon it in some given cases.

#### 3.2.4 Relationship between business sustainability and CSR

Social sustainability can often be referred to as CSR, or Corporate social responsibility. However, these 2 concepts are not one in the same, as one is a theoretical concept for developmental goals, while the other is an expected part of corporate operation. This concept of CSR has been a driving force for European businesses for the past few decades, and the term CSR has long been a familiar subject of discussion in business and hospitality management programs in European educational institutes. CSR is a company's commitment to the community where it operates and eventually the world at large, striving to improve the societal and environmental conditions of its vicinity and the global landscape in general (Banerjee and Shastri, 2010, 3).

#### 3.2.5 The complete picture

Although a distinction is present, the 3 types of sustainability already go hand-in-hand when it comes to practical applications. Improving economic sustainability will provide social stability to the local region via the creation of jobs. Furthermore, improving environmental responsibility will in turn have a positive impact on the local region via a reduced level of pollutants making its way into the area's natural resources such as rivers, lakes and farmland.

### 3.3 Sustainable tourism

To understand the aim of sustainable tourism, one must first comprehend the reach of tourism on the economic, socio-political, and environmental landscape of a region. The tourism industry is, first and foremost, a business. And it, like any other businesses, leaves behind a footprint on the region it operates in. These footprints can either be small and negligible, or they can be large and irreversible, causing the region to change to a certain degree even after its source is removed (Spitzech and Hansen, 2010, 5).

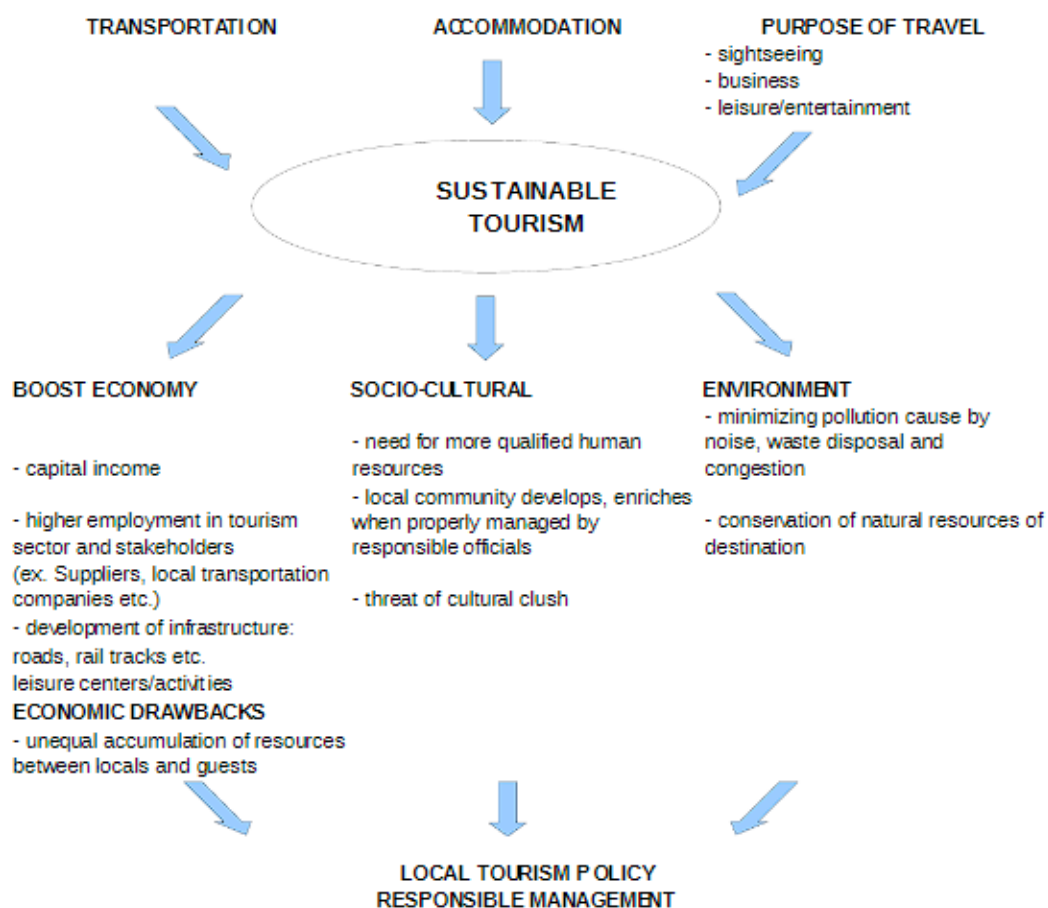


Figure 4. Relationship between tourism and local policy, accounting for economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects (Niedziółka, 2012, 9)

Impacts of tourism to a local community is extensive, but can be summed up into 3 main impacts, namely economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts (Niedziółka, 2012, 7-8), which nicely corresponds to the 3 major areas of business sustainability mentioned in previous sections

True sustainable tourism, therefore, is one that can address all 3 of these impacts adequately and bring about a positive influence on the local and global scene.

## **4 Sustainable tourism in Viet Nam and Finland**

### **4.1 Sustainable tourism in Viet Nam**

#### **4.1.1 Overview**

The term sustainable tourism or sustainability in general is a relatively new concept to Viet Nam, even though there has been projects and workshops organized by national and international organizations like UNTWO, EU, UNESCO, SGS in big cities like Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang and other famous tourist cities across the country. Sustainable and sustainable tourism development were mentioned several times, but it has not been taken seriously by both the government and people of Vietnam. There were almost no or very few policies or solutions applied, as well as very few commitments from businesses and locals about this problem.

Most Businesses in Vietnam tend to focus on short-term benefits, instead of the long-term needs. This trend is seen more in SMEs, as financial difficulties of operating a small business make the owners prefer profit over everything else. This has led to cases of environmental and cultural neglect, prioritizing their shrinking margins in a competitive environment over the need to ensure a future for the country's tourism. A similar situation can be observed from the government, where many natural sceneries in Vietnam are currently being overexploited, which is affecting the region's inherent beauty and purity.

In short, Viet Nam's tourism industry is not sustainable, and is, in fact, very destructive in nature. Although public awareness has improved in recent years, there is no denying that the process towards true sustainability is taking place rather slowly and is adversely affecting the country's natural, economic, and cultural identity. However, the groundwork is there, and there is hope for sustainable development in the country.

#### **4.1.2 Public awareness**

The awareness of the general Vietnamese public, although improved greatly in recent years, are not there yet to act as a main driving force for sustainable tourism development as a marketing tool (Nguyen 2012, 215-216). However, there is an existing large portion of the Vietnamese youths that understand the need for sustainable tourism as a counterbalance to the negative impacts of traditional tourism and the scar it has left on the Vietnamese values.

#### 4.1.3 Government awareness

On the government sector, the Socialist republic of Viet Nam's government has promoted a lot of activities to assist in raising the public awareness, as well as the awareness of Vietnamese business owners, especially in the tourism industry. Despite all their shortcomings, they are showing a willingness to improve the current situation. This has been in part a result from the COVID pandemic in an attempt to improve the image of Vietnamese tourism in the eyes of international tourists. (Vietnamese Press release of the Law Enforcement agency, 2022, 1-2.) In fact, according to the Vietnamese Press release of the Law Enforcement agency (2022, 1), the government acknowledges Gen Z's part to play in sustainable tourism development, going so far as to say they are the tip of the spear when it comes to promoting sustainable development in the Vietnamese tourism industry.

The Vietnamese government also acknowledge the need to reduce the destination's capacity in order to preserve the natural, cultural, and social values of these destinations, following the overcrowded Da Lat city in 2021 shortly after the COVID ban was temporarily lifted (Vietnamese Bureau of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2019, 1-3 and Vietnamese Press release of the Law Enforcement agency, 2022, 3). They have gone so far as to promote events at crowded tourist sites to encourage awareness and promote lesser-known areas to reduce load on overcrowded popular attractions (Vietnamese Bureau of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020, 1-2), as well as organizing or funding small events in Vietnamese schools to educate the young on the benefits of protecting the environment at a very young age. New developments also require that all schools and educational institutions organize at least 1 event per year to promote environmental protection or awareness when traveling to students (Vietnamese Bureau of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2018, 1-2).



Figure 5. Tourists and locals join the call to pick up trash in Nha Trang beach, organized by Mrs Nguyen Thi Le Thanh, vice director of the Bureau of Tourism (Vietnamese Bureau of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2020, 1)

The government has also passed a number of new laws regarding sustainable, or as they refer to it, green tourism. These laws were passed in 2017 and focused on both tourists and service business owners at the same time (Vietnamese Library of Law, 2017).

## 4.2 Sustainable Tourism in Finland

### 4.2.1 Overview

Contrary to Vietnam, sustainable development in Finland is a concept that has been implemented and applied in different industries across the country for decades and the tourism industry is not an exception. Ranking the world's leading country in sustainable development (2022 Sustainable Development Report), unlike Vietnam, almost all citizens and businesses of Finland are involved in the sustainable development process. Visit Finland has announced that Finland will be aiming to become the most sustainable tourism destination in the world by 2025 (Visit Finland). And these changes are not only on paper but have already been implemented extensively in all aspects of business, from recyclable take-away utensils to encouragements in recycling cans and bottles for fractions of the actual drink. The Finnish economy practically encourages eco-friendly practices in terms of tourism.

#### 4.2.2 Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) member

The GSTC is a global organization that provides the GSTC standard for sustainable tourism and certifies a tourism industry based on four categories, namely effective sustainable management, social and economic issues, environment, and cultural heritage (GSTC 2021). As Finland is a GSTC member, the country has met the criteria for all four categories and is deemed a sustainable tourism destination and a role model for European's green tourism.

#### 4.2.3 Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) program

The STF program's pledge to commit and develop together towards responsible tourism is an open request for all tourism companies in both private and public sectors to join. This is a free program and is a reliable label to identify for businesses (Kokkarinen and Aittokoski 2019) and can be beneficial to the sustainable development of the entire country's sustainability in tourism.

The STF label is a reward for companies to add to their overall repertoire and can improve said company's public image in terms of sustainable development.

#### 4.2.4 Government strategy

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2023	2028
Demand (mil)	15,7	16,3	9,7	11,2	15,8	20
Export (mil)	4,9	5,3	1,5	1,3	3,5	8
Domestic demand (mil)	10,8	11	8,1	9,9	12,3	12
Direct added value of tourism	2,7	2,7	1,7	Data unavailable	2	3
Turnover of tourism	19,5	20,7	13,4	Data unavailable	18	29
Employment generated by tourism (part-time and full-time employees)	147700	154100	128700	Data unavailable	152000	164000

Table 1. Data from 2018-2021 and goals for 2023 and 2028 (Translated and summarized from Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2022)

Finland has pledged to become an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable economy (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2022, Finnish Government 2019), and has oriented all industries towards this goal, the tourism industry included.

The government goals are to increase the employment rate of the 16-64 age groups to at least 75% and ensure Finland's place in circular economy leadership as well as improving welfare of animals by the end of 2023 (Finnish Government 2019). Additional long-term goals include ushering in a new vision for waste management and reducing needless consumption and food waste in the restaurant industry, as well as reducing the tourism industry's carbon footprint and orientate the country towards carbon neutrality by 2035. These goals are what drives the Finnish tourism industry into becoming a more sustainable and leading example for the rest of Europe and the world (Kokkarinen and Aittokoski 2019).

## 5 Research process

### 5.1 Research methodology

The study uses the qualitative methodology, more specifically, a mixed method structured qualitative interview and archival study.

The choice of qualitative method was since that the study was meant to be a case study of less than 10 companies, and the objective of the thesis is to acquire qualitative data on sustainability, namely what influences it, how businesses respond, what barriers exist, and finally, what solutions or recommendations that can be derived for future Vietnamese businesses to follow. These are best collected and analysed via interviews and non-quantitative means of data acquisition.

As will be explained in section 5.2.2., the structured interview method, although a strange choice for a qualitative study, has been carefully selected and implemented so as to preserve the value of its results and provide the most effective means of reaching said results.

#### 5.1.1 Qualitative method

The qualitative methodology is the most appropriate research methodology to pursue of 5 specific goals, which are understanding of meaning, context, phenomena, processes, as well as a casual explanation (Bickman and Rog, 2007, 221).

It is because of this that the qualitative method excels at formative studies, where existing practices are improved upon, or to glean from the success of one program and apply it on another (Bickman and Rog, 2007, 222). This is exactly the aim of this thesis, where the steps that Finland is doing right can be applied to the Vietnamese program and system of development.

#### 5.1.2 Structured interview

Structured interview, as its name suggests, is an interview-based tool meant to assess, quantify, and analyse a specific and narrow area of inquiry (Rogers and Bender, 2020, 422-423). This type of interview method is ideal for a focused investigation of a phenomenon and its responses are, therefore, highly standardized, leaving no room for extra, off-topic inquiries. The interview type is ideal for a written form of interview, as questions are fixed and responses are collected regarding the pre-planned questions only, thus ensuring a high focus and low time requirement (Clarkin et al, 2007, ii).

Its only weakness is that it will affect the result's overall reliability, as no inquiries allowed will lead to a more limited response format and offers a conforming, less inclusive result (Clarkin et al, 2007, ii).

## 5.2 Data collection

### 5.2.1 Part 1: Archival study

The study will first present an archival study of one of the biggest hotel chains in Finland, Scandic Hotels (owned by Hilton group). An archival study is necessary for Finnish businesses because it was not possible to arrange an interview with a high-level manager of these hotel chains. As a result, the second-best source for information was their annually published sustainability reports and archival records. As a result, this calls for an archival study of the two chains in question.

The Scandic hotel chain was chosen because it represents a large portion of the hotel market in Finland and is one of the biggest chains in the country. This ensures its reliability in terms of archival information and operational integrity.

The brand is also highly rated in terms of sustainability and consumer trust, ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> place on the Finnish Industry ranking for sustainability in 2022, just behind SOKOS hotels Suomi, and standing at 58<sup>th</sup> place overall in the total number of businesses from all industries (Sustainable brand insight, 2022, 59.)

The chain also offers a detailed look into their sustainability development via an annual report of its sustainable development that can be accessed by the public. This making it very accessible to both customers and researchers at the same time. The reports are also very professionally written and provide detailed information and up-to-date data from the primary source themselves, rather than having to rely on 3<sup>rd</sup> party secondary sources.

The second source for archival study is restaurant Nolla, the first restaurant in the Nordics to adopt the Zero-waste dining concept. The restaurant was chosen due to the powerful message that it embodies, namely zero-waste dining, which can adhere to a lot of Vietnamese businesses as well.

### 5.2.2 Part 2: Interview

The second primary data collection method for this study is the structured interview research methodology. This methodology is distinguished by its structured format and pre-established interview questions as opposed to the unstructured or semi-structured nature of its counterparts, where a lot of leeway is given to the interviewers to ask beyond the

printed questions. Structured interviews are ideal for cases where the research questions are well-defined and the need for follow-up interviews or off-topic discussion is not on the table. The participants of structured interviews are asked from a fixed list of questions and are not to stray from the topic at hand, leaving less room for off-topic discussions and only encompasses the correct information needed from each participant so as to save time and energy (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, 314-315). Because our participants are all business owners or managers, thus their time is valuable, and we do not wish to waste it.

The choice of interview type is justified by the fact that we are not able to arrange face-to-face meetings with our interviewees due to the schedule of their jobs and the time-zone difference, as they are all business owners or managers in Viet Nam who had been kind enough to allow us a bit of their free time to answer our interview questions. As a result, most of the interview questions were asked in short and brief video calls to save their time. This means a solid, fixed list of interview questions is the ideal form to send to these participants.

These circumstances make the choice of a structured interview rather than a semi-structured one much more sensible as it eliminates the need for follow-up interviews and ensures everything can be finished within the least amount of time as possible to save our participants' time.

A significant drawback of using this interview type in this context is that structured interviews are most often used to generate quantitative data much closer to a survey than an actual interview (Qu and Dumay, 2011, 240, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, 314). However, due to geographical limitations and time restrictions, it will need to be implemented to gather the needed data within the shortest span of time possible.

### 5.3 Data analysis

The study uses MaxQDA to analyse the interview transcripts. MaxQDA was chosen because it is a commonly recommended software for projects such as this. The application offers an easy and comprehensive approach to analysing texts for qualitative analysis.

Furthermore, the tool in question also possesses a massive online presence, with a great deal of online tutorials and a huge community that can assist in learning and using the software. (MaxQDA 2022.)

Alongside this tool, the study also calls for an extensive archival study of public records from the 2 hotel chains. These 2 hotel chains will act as a grounding point for comparison that the study will utilize to help analyse the Vietnamese businesses.

## 6 Archival study results

### 6.1 General trends

#### 6.1.1 Room service on-demand in the hotel industry

This is not a new concept from a hotel standpoint and has been implemented in a lot of hotels and hostels around the world. The concept of room service on-demand is a basic in hotel functions, where customers can deny room service by hanging a do not disturb sign in front of their rooms so that housekeeping may not enter the room. However, in Finland, certain brands like SOKOS and Scandic have given a new value to the concept, by adding a second side to the sign, saying 'I love the environment'. Speaking from personal experience of working as a part time housekeeper in SOKOS Original Lappee in Lappeenranta, as well as Saimaa Holiday Inn, the authors can confirm that these signs basically say I want to protect the environment by deny room service, as changing of towels and sheets will mean unnecessary laundry, wasting water and other resources. The point is not the do not disturb function in room service, it is the ingenuity of adding a second meaning to that denial of service and promoting sustainable tourism that counts as a plus for these hotels and many more like them.

#### 6.1.2 Circular economy

Circular tourism industry is a part of the circular economy and is a vital step in the sustainable development of a country's tourism industry. The purpose of the circular economy is to enable better utilization of natural resources and minimizing possible waste from the consumption process. This concept does not only apply to the manufacturing industry, but as intangible values are also subject to a circular cycle, with the tourism service industry also taking part in it.

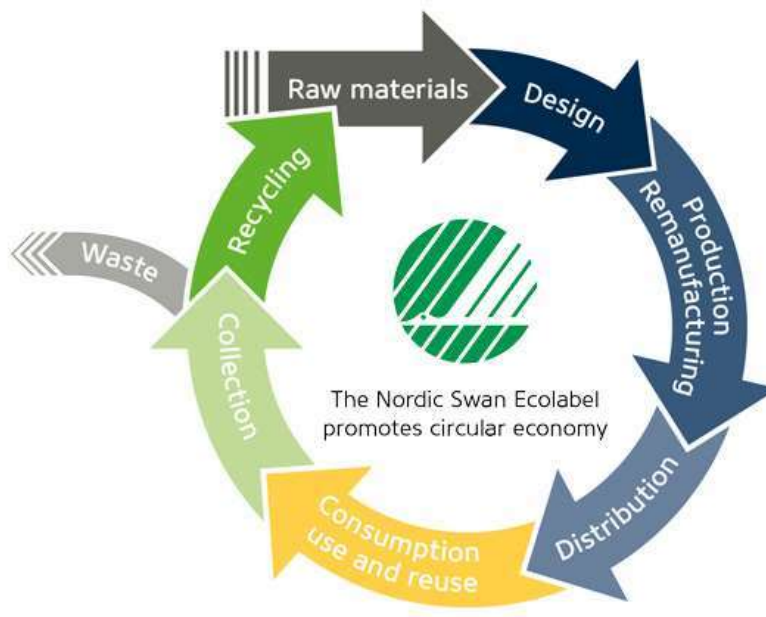


Figure 6. Circular economy (Nordic Ecolabeling, 2018, 1)

Nordic Ecolabeling, provider of the Nordic Swan Eco Label set forth 6 basis on which businesses should operate, and where applicable, intangible product and service providers should also adhere to.

### 6.1.3 Nordic Swan Eco Label

The Nordic Swan Eco Label is an esteemed label that signifies a business' commitment to sustainable growth and development. Most large Finnish hotels and hotel chains adorn this label to show their commitment to the environment and strengthening their positions as a part of the circular economy.

Nordic Ecolabeling stresses the need for eco-friendly life cycle, green public procurement, and the participation in the circular economy for all businesses under its label.

### 6.1.4 Zero-waste dining

Zero-waste dining is a new concept pioneered by restaurant Nolla. The journey to zero-waste dining does not only stop at the food, how it is processed, cooked and disposed of. Zero-waste dining covers the entire process of dining, from sourcing, preparation, to final disposal.

According to Nolla (2022), their operations are wasteless all the way from the origins of their ingredients to their food waste's final destination in the hands of local farmers. The restaurant has implemented many eco-friendly processes that not only reduce the amount of

plastic and high-cost material in the kitchen, but also cut down the costs on said material and lend a hand in the recycling process of old candy boxes and paper wrappings. The kitchen ensures that food is not prepared to an excess, and that everything is used before they expire. Excess or expired food will not be thrown away, as the kitchen area do not feature trash containers, and every biodegradable waste is composted in the back and sent to local farmers to reuse as fertilizers.



Figure 7. Composting at Nolla (Restaurantnolla Instagram, 2022)

Their products are also sourced from seasonal ingredients, thus assisting in the consumption of excess food from the agricultural sector and lending a hand in reducing overall food waste from farm products in season that are not consumed in time.

The restaurant's chefs also can reinvent dishes and make new creations from the bio waste. Whenever a food ingredient is put in the bio-recycle bin on the kitchen top, such as bones and skin, the chefs can use those to make other creative dishes from them, or simply make stock with them before they go to waste (Matintupa, 2021).

Apart from this, the kitchen also uses recycled materials whenever it can, from glass bottles, recycled food containers to recycled employees' clothing.



Figure 8. Used broken glass bottles as water containers in Nolla (Matintupa, 2021)

The owner's choice of furniture and electricity, water is also a conscious choice, opting for wind power as the restaurant's main source of electricity, and LED as the main source of lighting due to its low energy consumption (Matintupa, 2021).

### 6.1.5 Theme of nature

The theme of nature is omni-present through out the 2 brands researched. From room and Sali layout, to small details on room cards, hallways, kitchen and greetings area, Scandic and Nolla presented an overarching theme of Finnish nature and sustainability.



Figure 9. Nolla Sali design (Matintupa, 2021)

The same can be observed from Scandic hotels. Figure 9 shows the decors of Scandic Grand Central hotel Sauna and gym.



Figure 10. Scandic Grand Central Hotel in Helsinki (Scandic, 2022)

## 6.2 Scandic hotels (Hilton group)

Scandic hotels code of conduct follows the UN's established goals for sustainable development and has been adding more goals completion to their repertoire over the years (Scandic 2018, 54). The study looked at the 4 most recent sustainability report published by Scandic hotels over the years 2018 to 2021. The reason 4 most recent reports were analysed is because this way, a clear development trend of the brand may emerge.

### 6.2.1 SDGs acquired from 2018 to 2021

In 2018, the Scandic hotels group reportedly completed goals 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the SDGs (Scandic, 2018, 54-55). They are equality among genders, sanitary practices, healthy workforce, more emphasis on equality, building of a sustainable city, responsible consumption of natural resources, and take climate action to mitigate climate change's effects on the world (United Nations 2022). In their 2019 report, Scandic reported goal 17 was also completed, which stated the group began partnering with other stakeholders to attain sustainability. Finally, in 2021, which is the most recent report from scandic hotels, they have accomplished 11 out of the 17 SDGs proposed by the United Nations. Below is a complete summary of their implementation in 2021.

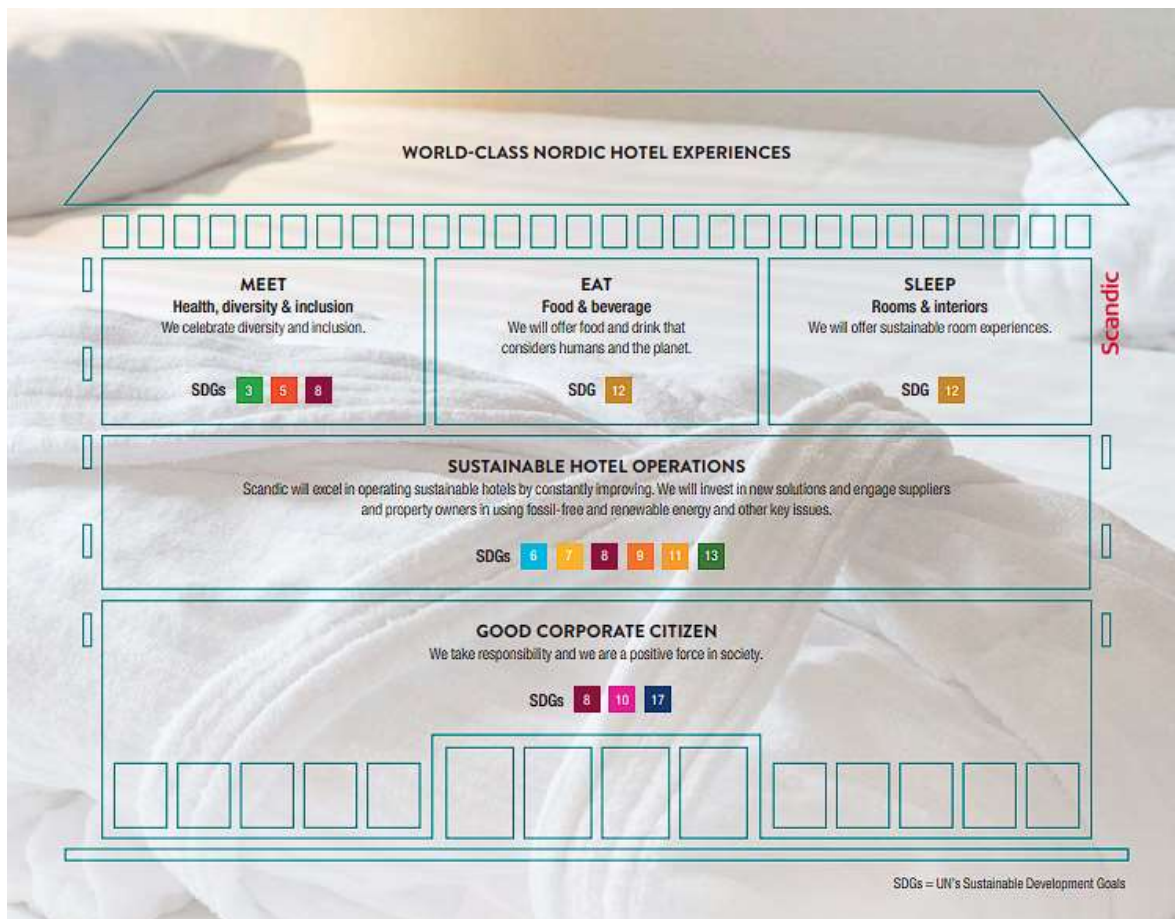


Figure 11. SDGs implementation in Scandic hotels in 2021 (Scandic, 2021)

### 6.2.2 Health, diversity and inclusion

The group cares for its employees' health, especially in light of the Covid pandemic of 2019, 2020 and ongoing until 2021. The company saw a much lower rate of sick leaves than other hotels in the industry. However, exact numbers and statistics were not provided in the 2021 report (Scandic 2021, 42).

In every report, Scandic repeatedly stressed its need to care about employee' physical and mental wellbeing. The group offers subsidies for exercises (Scandic 2018, 52), established the Scandic Health Club to promote employees' welfare (Scandic 2019, 56), and provides training to all staff members to spread awareness, as well as prevent the use of drugs in the work environment and outside of work (Scandic 2020, 46).

The hotel maintains a roughly 40%-60% distribution of gender throughout the 4 years, with 56% female to 44% male in 2018, 53% female to 47% male in 2019, 52% female to 48% male in 2020, and 56% female to 44% male in 2021 in upper management positions. In terms of lower-level employees, Scandic maintains a rough 65% to 35% over the 4-year period, with 63% female to 37% male in 2018 and 2019, and a 1% dip at 64% female and

36% male in 2020 and 2021 (Scandic 2018, 47, Scandic 2019, 49, Scandic 2020, 41, Scandic 2021, 34). It is safe to say from these figures that Scandic has a stable male to female distribution ratio. However, it is not by any means close to a 50-50 distribution for low level employees.

Scandic 2018 report is the only report that mentioned the nationality of the workforce, with 120 nationalities working at Scandic. This makes Scandic one of the most diverse workforces in the hotel industry. The hotel chain offers opportunities to people of all backgrounds and strive to make a difference in society wherever its hotels are located (Scandic 2018, 47).

### 6.2.3 Sustainable dining

Scandic is also a part of the restaurant industry, as the hotel chain has dedicated restaurant which serves breakfast and buffets for its guests. Scandic restaurants service list abides to the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and strives to increase the percentage of plant-based food in its guests' meals. This not only promotes a healthier lifestyle for guests, but also offers a more cruelty-free culinary experience for all its customers and at the same time reduce carbon footprint brought about by the meat industry (Scandic 2021, 44).

### 6.2.4 Emissions and waste management

The primary goal Scandic has for its carbon emission is less than 2.5kg per thousand SEK of revenue generated. This goal has been met numerous times from 2017 to 2019. However, as the brand explains, data for 2020 and 2021 was not possible to acquire, as these 2 years saw the hotels being hit with the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly lowered the number of guests and thus lowering the company's overall revenue. The justifications for the increase in emissions in relation to sales was that although many premises were only half full, the rooms still needed to be heated, thus generating much more emissions than they are making in terms of revenue.

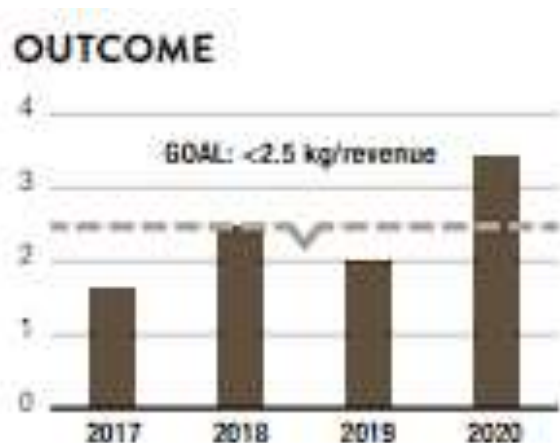


Figure 12 CO2 Emission goals 2017-2020 (Scandic 2020, 46)

In terms of waste management and waste recycling, Scandic has seen a reduction in overall waste in total in 2020 and 2021. This can be in part contributed to by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, their ratio of recycled waste compared to total waste remain stable and relatively high. The majority of Scandic's waste is non-hazardous, with glass and paper taking up the majority of the total waste, as illustrated in figure 14.

Total weight per method of disposal, tonnes	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Hazardous waste	Non-hazardous waste	Hazardous waste	Non-hazardous waste	Hazardous waste	Non-hazardous waste	Hazardous waste	Non-hazardous waste
Reuse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recycling	15.8	10,249.9	14.0	11,301.2	4.9	5,357.7	3.1	5,705.2
Energy recovery*	23.1	1,025.6	29.8	274.4	17.6	109.5	18.9	150.0
Combustion	28.2	0.0	38.6	0.0	24.0	0.0	26.5	0.0
Landfill	3.7	234.1	5.1	41.1	3.2	18.2	3.4	18.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>11,509.7</b>	<b>87.5</b>	<b>11,616.7</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>5,485.5</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>5,873.5</b>

\* Household waste is not included due to lack of data on weight that many Swedish hotels do not receive from municipalities.

Data on waste from acquired Restel hotels is insufficient.

Figure 13. Total waste by method of disposal from 2018 to 2021 (Scandic 2021, 54)

Hazardous wastes include toxic chemicals used in room service and room cleaning performed daily by housekeepers and sanitary staffs. This takes up a small portion of the total waste and the majority of which is used for energy recovery and combustion in thermal power plants.

<b>Total weight per type of waste, tonnes</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Paper	2,396.4	2,539.7	1,189.6	1,298.4
Glass	2,067.4	2,255.3	1,066.0	1,150.9
Metal	161.9	199.9	102.0	97.6
Plastic	304.9	331.0	180.5	212.2
Other	6,579.1	5,975.3	2,995.9	3,166.4

Figure 14. Total weight per type from 2018 to 2021 (Scandic 2021, 54)

#### 6.2.5 Sustainable room designs

Scandic rooms are design with the circular economy in mind, and they strive to redesign heir rooms and hallways to they reflect that vision. Scandic rooms are redesigned every 15 years, and their goal is to make these design elements last longer and longer. This can be achieved by using recycled furniture and recyclable material for their walls and floors. In the event of a room redesign, Scandic hopes to ensure that any and all furniture that are still functional get to be reused elsewhere if possible (Scandic 2021, 46).

#### 6.2.6 Sustainable operations

Scandic's aim is to eventually be free of fossil fuel and operate completely on renewable energy. Most Scandic hotels are currently using Nordic Swan Ecolabeled chemicals for their sanitary operations such as housekeeping, restaurant cleaning and hallway sanitation. However, the brand strives to achieve the target of utilizing only these eco labelled chemicals in all of their premises world-wide.

The brand has also done a lot in terms of encouraging water conservation, with numerous programs and campaigns encouraging less water usage in their hotel bathrooms. These efforts include their 1995 initiative of installing smaller and smart showerheads to conserve

water (Scandic 2018, 48) and their 2008 endeavour to supply their guests with 100% locally sourced water in reusable bottles that have been tailored to the Scandic hotels group.

Eco Stay is also a very sustainable means of operation, where the room service carried out by housekeeping can be done to the guests' preferences. This helps promote guests' environmental awareness and ensure they understand the environmental costs of each time cleaning is done (Scandic 2021, 39).

Hang up your towel was also a very successful initiative by Scandic, as it enables towel recycling in the hotel, thus lowering hotel emissions and waste. This has since become a mainstay of the hotel industry as a whole (Scandic 2018, 48).

In their 2020 report (Scandic 2020, 46), Scandic also mentioned how they avoid room service for customers only staying one or two nights, or reduced room service needs for rooms used by one customer for a number of nights. This helps contribute to a rough 17 million liters of water saved during the period of 2019 (Scandic 2020, 46)

Scandic removed all plastic straws and other plastic related drinking apparatus from their premises. This was a positive step towards environmental protection (Scandic 2018, 49).

In 2019, Scandic also reportedly saved 155000 left over meals from being trashed via re-selling of said food through various resellers of leftovers like ResQ in Finland. These meals would have contributed to a large amount of unnecessary bio-waste if not recycled in this way (Scandic 2019, 52).

### 6.2.7 CSR

Apart from direct involvement in reducing their in-house waste and consumption, Scandic also part-takes in various CSR programs, such as an encouragement to animal welfare initiatives, such as their 2021 endeavour of refusing eggs from caged and factory-raised hens. This helps promote awareness in animal welfare and is a noble cause for the brand to stand behind (Scandic 2021, 50).

Scandic has also be sternly objected to human trafficking and prostitution since 2016, when it enforces against anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution activities in all Scandic premises (Scandic 2018, 48).

Scandic is also heavily involved in public health and safety following the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the welfare of its employees, customers and local citizens. These measures include better cleaning from all staffs, more hygienic practices from all stakeholders, and readily available alcohol hand wash dispensers and free masks for all visitors and

staffs alike. This is part of their aim to limit the spread of the Corona virus in their premises (Scandic 2021, 50).

Another issue that is part of Scandic's CSR development is anti-corruption both in their premises and in the local region where they are operation. This is a common obligation from all businesses, as bribery as well as other forms of fraud or abuse of power is not tolerated by Scandic's management (Scandic 2019, 62). Scandic also expects the same level of intolerance to corruption and illegal activities from all its stakeholders as well, including suppliers, staffs and management. Scandic local management is responsible for carrying out anti-corruption measures in their own respective branch and region.

Scandic also cares about its suppliers' sourcing and practices. The Scandic purchasing policies mandates sustainability screening of the supplier before a purchase is made. The screening considers all of the supplier's performance regarding all sustainability aspects. The demands from Scandic are also very strict and at times hard to attain for many suppliers. However, the brand maintains an open communication with its suppliers to help them in their sustainable development as well. As a result, this is a two-way street when it comes to demands in sustainability (Scandic 2019, 66).

The Scandic in Society initiative also helps promote Scandic's place in the local community and help improve it in any way possible. The program required that all Scandic members need to do at least 3 activities every year that help contribute to the local community in a meaningful way. This is a very active way to help the local community, and the activities can vary from donating old hotel sheets and blankets to the local homeless, or to rent out empty rooms to students at an affordable price (Scandic 2021, 51).

### 6.3 Restaurant Nolla

Nolla is one of the Nordics' first zero-waste restaurant concepts. Nolla in Finnish means zero and is quite fitting for its mission of zero-waste dining, where everything, from bones to spoilt veggies never go to waste. Nolla is an ideal example for sustainable development in the restaurant industry in Finland and will act as a grounding point for the suggestion for the Vietnamese restaurant industry. The most common trends in Nolla's vision and implementation are recycling, green energy, composting, source ingredients locally, and source equipment responsibly.

#### 6.3.1 Recycling

Recycling at Nolla encompasses all aspects of their operations. This includes food recycling, equipment recycling, and even employee clothes are recycled materials. A recent

study by Silvennoinen, K. and her colleagues from the Finnish Natural Resources Institute (Silvennoinen et al 2015, 142-144) highlighted that the majority of Finnish restaurant food wastes come from the customer left over foods, and the second highest contributor is kitchen wastes, ranging from failed orders to burnt or overcooked food. This is an amazing revelation, as reducing this means reducing the amount of food left over on customers' plates or putting that wasted food to good use. Kitchen waste is handled by using an ingenious waste bin right in front of the countertop, so that each of the chefs can look at that waste while cooking and come up with creative dishes made from said waste. The recycling theme in Nolla is so prevalent that the restaurant features no trash bins. Instead, everything is meant to be recycled at the end of the day (Matintupa, 2021).

### 6.3.2 Green energy

Nolla uses energy saving LED lights and source their energy from wind turbines. They also employ the use of energy saving dryers as well to replace hand towels both in the kitchen and in the dining area. This means they can reduce the amount of paper towels they need to use both when cooking and for customers to wipe their hands.

Water is also used very responsibly at Nolla, as well. Built up water in jugs are used to mop the floor at the end of the day, and the chefs as well as staffs are very conscious about their water waste (Matintupa, 2021).

### 6.3.3 Composting

Composting is a way for the restaurant to recycle its food waste. It is also a very nice practical selling point Nolla has that can return some of the costs in the form of sold compost. The restaurant partnered with a number of local Finnish farms, such as Green City Farm to sell their compost and ensure that the bio wastes are properly recycled as fertilizers (Restaurantnolla Instagram, 2022).

Fertilizers are also claimed to be used to trade in for crops from time to time, and Nolla's partners are also happy to trade freshly grown produce for a bag of compost produced in the restaurant's kitchen (Nolla, 2022).

### 6.3.4 Source ingredients locally

The owners stressed on their Instagram page that over 90% of their ingredients are sourced locally. The only types of ingredients they need to import are those that cannot be grown or produced domestically, like salt, coffee, wine, olive oil and seaweed. Other than that, the

restaurant sources most of its ingredients from local farms and fishermen (Restaurantnolla Instagram, 2022).

The restaurant has a strong emphasis on seasonality, and their menu changes according to the season to reflect that, with the best produce of the current time of year being highly promoted on their menu (Nolla, 2022).

#### 6.3.5 Source equipment responsibly

The equipment used in the kitchen are also responsibly sourced, with used candy boxes and paper wraps for many items. According to one of the founders of Nolla, Kaffa Roastery even agreed to change their packaging just for Nolla, replacing their traditional plastic and paper with just paper packaging. Mr. Henriques also mentioned during an interview that they go out of their way to avoid buying expensive containers and single-use plastic containers for the kitchen. Instead, many of the boxes and bowls in the kitchen are recycled items (Wonderland coworking, 2022).

## 7 Interview results

A total of 5 business owners answered our call for interview, and their responses and questions were exchanged via video calls. The exchange was in Vietnamese, and the transcript of the conversation was translated to English and written down for analysis.

All 5 of the interviewees were business owners in the hotel and restaurant industry, and all of them were from Viet Nam. The analysis process will attempt to answer the 3 research questions with the interview results, in conjunction with the literature review of the 2 cases above

### 7.1 How have environment, economic and social cultural factors affected the development of sustainable tourism in Viet Nam, specifically in the hotel and restaurant industry?

All three factors play a crucial role in developing sustainably, especially in the restaurant and hotel industry. This contrast can be seen in the review of 2 successful examples from Finland and 5 big and small businesses in Viet Nam. The Finnish society has grown too familiar with the concept of sustainability and eco-socio stability that the general public can understand and appreciate their attempts to become more sustainable. However, in Viet Nam, where a lot of people still live in the middle class and awareness for such preservation had not been long implemented in the society, most consumers do not see the need to spend more on businesses that operate sustainably. This was a common urge among the business owners to boost the people's awareness and thus providing them with the drive to become more sustainable.

The local economy also plays an important role in the sustainable development of businesses, as 2 business owners mentioned the fact that most of their customers care more about actual value of the product, they are getting rather than how that product may have affected the environment, local society, or economy. This means that without the incentives from a thriving local economy or market, it can be also very hard to establish any meaningful changes towards true sustainable development.

The environment is also a driving factor, as all business owners acknowledges that they are aware of the state of the environment in Viet Nam, and all wanted to do something about it. However, this might not be the most powerful factor in the developing economy, as 2 out of the respondents said that knowing this, they still had bills to pay, costs to cut and margins to meet.

## 7.2 What is the importance of receiving support (what kind?) from government or other funding sources for businesses to implement sustainable solutions (what kind of sustainable solutions?)

From the 5 interviews, all 5 agreed that they did not receive any kind of governmental incentives to encourage sustainable development. This is a very telling revelation, as the speed and effectiveness of sustainable development depends in part on the support from the government. However, in light of the fact that 3 out of 5 businesses had sustainability in their values, it is safe to say that government incentives, although important, only plays a part in boosting sustainable development of businesses in Viet Nam.

The most often stated reason the business owners stated for their adoption of a sustainable approach was to increase sales, lower costs and make an impact on their home. Business owners in Da Lat such as those in interviews 1 and 3 were aware of the beauty of their hometown and expressed the wish to preserve it through their eco-friendly practices. 3 out of 5 respondents believed that locally sourced produce was much cheaper than those brought in from other regions.

## 7.3 What kind of recommendation could be given to get Vietnamese tourist businesses to operate more sustainably?

In all 5 interviews, the most common aspect of sustainability that was mentioned repeatedly was environmentally friendly approaches to running a hotel or restaurant. However, no respondent mentioned the other 2 pillars of sustainability, namely social impact and economic impact on the local region where they operate in. This is a very naïve outlook on sustainable tourism, and offers an incomplete picture, which can in many ways affect the healthy development of a sustainable tourism industry.

Another aspect to consider is to raise the living standards of the local community, as sustainable practices will often cost more, and act as a deterrent to a large number of Vietnamese tourists who are living at or under the poverty line.

In relation to the business hotel and restaurant industry, in order for sustainable solutions to gain traction, the population that utilizes it needs to know what are at stake, hence a need to raise the population's awareness and giving them a reason to pay a higher price for these services.

Nolla's approach to dining is also a learning point for Vietnamese restaurants. ECO café bar showed some applications of minimized-waste dining with their composting of various thrown away ingredients. However, this is not common enough in the Vietnamese

restaurant industry. Using this practice also helps restaurants reduce operational costs outside of creating a good image for them in the public's eyes. As a result, this is a win-win situation for them.

As mentioned above, all of the participants did not see the importance of providing jobs to the local populace and contribute to a healthier economy in the region. This is a very big factor, as employee welfare is a very important factor to a business success.

## 8 Ethical considerations

The study uses all sources published after 2000, which means they are recently published and are relatively reliable. Sources for the Vietnamese analysis were all taken from official government websites, while sources from the 2 Finnish case companies are taken directly from their company websites, with the only exception of restaurant Nolla, where not enough detailed information was available on their website. As a result, the researchers turned to secondary sources of articles interviewing the founders to conjure up data for this section of the study. This can be a negative aspect of this particular study. However, since the authors could not arrange to have an interview with any of the restaurant's three founders, a first-hand account was sadly impossible.

As for the interviews with Vietnamese business owners, 4 out of 5 gave their interviews in Vietnamese and we had to translate to English. As a result, errors during the translation process could happen and lower the reliability of the study.

Researcher bias was also an issue constantly on our minds. Because we grew up and experienced the Vietnamese tourism industry firstly, there was bound to be personal opinions found in our analysis. However, we have tried to make as little personal judgements as possible in order to preserve the validity and reliability of the study. All sources of information were gathered through governmental websites so as to minimize the risk of personal opinions in the analysis.

Another issue to take into court with the study is that it is relatively narrow when it comes to sample pools. This means the sample size is small compared to other studies of its type, with only 2 case companies and 5 interviews overall. This means the picture painted on the Vietnamese businesses' side may not be completely accurate.

## **9 Discussion, conclusion and the need for future studies**

### **9.1 The need for future studies**

The research calls for a need for future studies into the subject, more specifically into the zero-waste dining concept of restaurant Nolla and others like it. This could be preferably done through an actual interview with a founder of Nolla, a goal this study failed to attain.

The research also needs to expand its scope of study, particularly in the Vietnamese hotel and restaurant industry. This expansion is to address the reliability issue with the current research, where the sample pool was too low and of 5 respondents representing 5 businesses, they only came from 4 major cities in Viet Nam. A future study should expand this concept of interview and apply it to more restaurants and hotels in more cities in Viet Nam to offer a more complete view of the Vietnamese hotel and restaurant industry.

Another way future studies into this topic can be carried out is either via a quantitative study utilizing the survey method to gauge the actual awareness of the Vietnamese population and consumers when it comes to sustainable tourism and the effects of the traditional tourism industry on the region's environment, society and economy.

Another suggestion for expansion may be in turning the study into a quantitative study of business owners' views on sustainable development in tourism and whether or not they acknowledge the other 3 pillars of sustainable development in their operations.

### **9.2 Discussion and conclusion**

The research narrowly accomplished its predefined goals of identifying the effects of environmental, social and economic aspects on the sustainable development of hotels and restaurants in Finland and Viet Nam, how governmental support plays into the encouragement of said development, as well as what Vietnamese businesses could improve upon to become better at developing sustainably while still maintaining their business margins.

In short, social, environmental, and economic factors play a major role in the sustainable development of business in the restaurant and hotel industry. Although governmental support plays an important role in this development, it is by no means a be-all-end-all in terms of sustainable development. Many of the businesses interviewed still showed an interest in sustainable development driven by other factors although all of them agreed that no practical support was given by the government. Environmental factor although a very well-known issue in the Vietnamese economy, is not powerful enough to drive sustainable development.

In fact, the interview, if nothing else, showed that the economy and purchasing power of the customers are the biggest drivers in Viet Nam.

Finally, a number of important recommendations can be drawn out for future Vietnamese business to ensure a more stable and healthy sustainable development process. Most of these recommendations stem from the fact that most of the business owners interviewed only focused on the environmental aspect of sustainable development while ignoring the other three.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Q: Can you tell us about your business?

Q: What is your opinion about the importance of developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam?

Q: Have you ever considered sustainable development as the prerequisite goal of the company from its inception?

Q: Do you source your supplies locally to support your local community?

Q: As a head of the company, do you provide your staff with information, tips, and training on how to be more environmentally responsible?

Q: Has your business received any support or policies that related to sustainable development?

Q: Do you have an environmental policy which you adhere to?

Q: Can you tell us a little but about your business?

## Appendix 2: Answers

### **Interview 1: Ms Mieu Vo – COO (Chief Operations Officer) of Rung La Kim resort**

Q: Can you tell us a little but about your business?

A: I am currently a COO of Rung La Kim resort which is located in Lam Dong province. Our main customer is mostly kids, students, and families. We are also partly a luxury hotel with an in-doors restaurant that can also cater to occasional business conferences.

Q: What is your opinion about the importance of developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam?

A: Working in tourism, I can define sustainability as the most important thing to be concerned about. Vietnam is a potential country for tourism that attracted 10 million tourists in 2017 with lots of attractions from North to South. In Vietnam, when life is developing, business purposes are always led to satisfying customers' needs, we often forget about environmental protection such as: using a lot of plastic items and clearing forests while sustainability is not too popular in Vietnam and most of the Vietnamese people don't really consider sustainability as a big concern. As the tourism industry is the most likely to affect the environment than others so I can say that it is a big responsibility for people that are working in the tourism industry to have knowledge and awareness of the environment and sustainability.

Q: Have you ever considered sustainable development as the prerequisite goal of the company from its inception?

A: Yes, we always consider sustainable development as a priority goal of the company since protecting the environment has become the biggest concern of people all around the world. And our country - Vietnam is now heading toward a sustainability country by spreading awareness about the environment among all Vietnamese people and businesses.

Q: Do you source your supplies locally to support your local community?

A: Actually, in our hotel, there are a lot of activities that allow our customer - students and kid to experience making local food and local items such as Vietnamese conical hats and mortar bags so all of the materials that we use are 100% locally. Our hotel is also located in the dreamy city of Da

Lat, so the city of Da Lat is also a big supplier of locally grown produce such as strawberries, red sweet potatoes and so on.

Q: As a head of the company, do you provide your staff with information, tips, and training on how to be more environmentally responsible?

A: Since the company's goal is sustainable development, the company always trains employees on the company's development goals: - Company employees must always be aware of environmental protection - Drive customers toward sustainability and environmental protection. - Every action of the company should always be toward sustainability. - Trying to spread awareness about the environment to as many people as possible.

Q: Has your business received any support or policies that related to sustainable development?

A: Since Vietnam is facing an alarming rate of environmental damage, the Vietnamese government has issued some policies for businesses and Vietnamese people. Some of that include encourage using sustainable materials, reduce using plastic and non-recyclables in business and also in daily life. Encouraging ecotourism and sustainable tourism for both inbound and outbound tourism.

Q: Do you have an environmental policy which you adhere to?

A: Yes, we make sustainable tourism a priority, so we are always: - Organizing various types of eco-tours - Reduce the use of plastic and paper materials by using and directing customers to use more environmentally friendly items - Protect the natural environment, do not participate in activities that destroy the environment. Our hotel design is also under my obligation to be as close to nature as possible, so making it through the pine forest to our premises might be a challenge as we do not encourage expanding Da Lat's roads through the natural Pine Forest, which is also a pull of the region.

## **Interview 2: Mr.Tu Bui – owner of ECO restaurant, Hue**

Q: Can you tell us about your business?

A: WE are a small eco-friendly coffee bar in the ECO village of Thua Thien Hue. We serve all types of beverages and offers a nice place to rest after a long trek through the ancient city of Hue.

Q: What is your opinion about the importance of developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam?

A: As an owner of an eco-cafe, I always understand that sustainability is very important. As Vietnam is a developing country and sustainability development will be a good way to help Vietnam to reach the target. However, not much Vietnamese residents know about the sustainability. That is the reason why the climate is facing an alarming rate. So, I think it is an essential thing to educate and covey people about the important of sustainability and how it is affected to our environment and also the economic. Our aim is that tourists can learn while they are resting in our cosy café bar.

Q: Have you ever considered sustainable development as the prerequisite goal of the company from its inception?

A: I would say yes and no. From the first stage of inception, our primary goal is to provide our customer (here is kids and student) with knowledge about the culture of Vietnam. This is why we named our place ECO café bar. This is, admittedly partly a ploy to get more customers on our end. But it is also our vision, and we do believe in providing eco-friendly services. However, after a

time of operation, the company's finances are now more stable so we can be able to handle the high price of the environmentally friendly items so now I can say that our future goal would be towards the sustainability tourism.

Q: Do you source your supplies locally to support your local community?

A: As I have mentioned before, our goal is now toward sustainable tourism, so we are now using sustainable sources in our business. All the ingredients and items sold in our café are all regional products. We aim to both make sales and promote Hue tourism at the same time. Moreover, all the information and knowledge about the local culture of the destination is taught by local people so that all the tourists can have the most practical information.

Q: As a head of the company, do you provide your staff with information, tips, and training on how to be more environmentally responsible?

A: Yes of course I do. Our staffs are mainly young people, so they all have a basic knowledge and awareness about sustainability. However, it is also my responsibility to raise their awareness about how the importance of sustainability in our daily life.

Q: Has your business received any support or policies that related to sustainable development?

A: According to my knowledge, there is no policy to support businesses in sustainability development. Only general policy for all the residents to follow for the purpose of environmental protection.

Q: Do you have an environmental policy which you adhere to?

A: Yes, we always try to minimize the use of unfriendly environmental items such as plastic bags and plastic cups,... Moreover, conveying the message of environmental protection to everyone is also a prerequisite. ECO is now developing more eco-friendly drinks mixing methods to reduce waste of ingredients. Our mint for cocktail, for example, will be used as compost rather than thrown away. Since mint is the most often thrown away item in a drink, this makes a big impact.

### **Interview 3: Mrs. Hue Lin – Owner of Nha Ca Chep Hostel in Da Lat city.**

Q: Can you tell us about your business?

We are small hostel near the centre of Da Lat. We have a good location near the Da Lat golf course, and we proud of our private garden and koi pond that is available to visit by all our guests.

Q: What is your opinion about the importance of developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam?

I believe it is very important because as you know, Viet Nam is a very popular tourist destination, and Da Lat has been a very popular ever since the end of Covid 19. We have nearly twice as many visitors compared with before covid. So environmental awareness is very important for tourists, so they do not destroy the beauty of Da Lat.

Q: Have you ever considered sustainable development as the prerequisite goal of the company from its inception?

We had no choice, in fact. We just have very beautiful location and opening in a very beautiful scenery, will be a shame if we ruin it. I try my best to keep the local area nice and protected while I still own this hostel.

Q: Do you source your supplies locally to support your local community?

We have a very big and cheap supplier from Da Lat city. And buying from local farmers are much cheaper than delivering from other cities. And I don't see what the point in that is. Tourists mainly come to Da Lat to taste our local strawberries and seasonal fruits and vegetables. They can buy standard stuffs at their hometown, no need to come here. So, we save some money and tourists like it better that way. We offer a breakfast eatery down at the garden. Guests can buy strawberry with chocolate dip and enjoy the view while eating.

Q: As a head of the company, do you provide your staff with information, tips, and training on how to be more environmentally responsible?

I don't have many staffs. But for those that are here I treat them like family and teach them all I know. This includes environmental protection. I always tell them to put trash in the right bins and to remind our guests nicely to do it too.

Q: Has your business received any support or policies that related to sustainable development?

Sadly no. But we do get a benefit from developing sustainably. We get cheaper local products and tourists like us more than other hostels because we are green, clean, beautiful.

Q: Do you have an environmental policy which you adhere to?

I don't know about environmental policies. Our government has that song that they sing from year to year to protect the environment. But I don't receive any specific thing to do. I just do my best and make sure guests know it too.

#### **Interview 4: Ms Lien Ly – Owner of Hai Lam Restaurant**

Q: Can you tell us a little but about your business?

A: Hi, my name is Lien, I am the owner of Hai Lam restaurant, a medium-size seafood restaurant located near the central of Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Hai Lam restaurant was first opened in 2018, serving traditional Vietnamese foods and seafood.

Q: What is your opinion about the importance of developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam?

A: Vietnam tourism is heavily depending on the natural resources. Therefore, sustainable development is extremely important, not only in the tourism industry. However, as far as I know, mostly small to medium-size businesses have not implemented campaigns or strategies related to sustainable development. It can only be seen from large company and enterprises. Moreover, Vietnamese people do not really care too much about sustainability, since the life quality is quite low in the country, so they focus more on fulfilling the basic needs, which minimize living costs as much as possible, while sustainable solutions cost much higher.

Q: Have you ever considered sustainable development as the prerequisite goal of the company from its inception?

A: No, as a medium-size restaurant owner in Hanoi, Vietnam, I always try to minimize the costs of supplies as much as possible, therefore keeping our menu prices low and reasonable. Especially there are many competitors and the cost escalate day by day.

Q: Do you source your supplies locally to support your local community?

A: I could say partly, our restaurant serving local foods, so our food and beverage supplies are local, which somehow support local farms, but the packaging and other supplies are cheap products with unknown origin.

Q: As a head of the company, do you provide your staff with information, tips, and training on how to be more environmentally responsible?

A: At the moment, not many. Our staffs are only trained to understand their job, therefore do it as smoothly and quickly as possible. But they are always reminded to turn off lights and electrical devices if not necessary.

Q: Has your business received any support or policies that related to sustainable development?

A: At the moment, no. At least for small business like us. There were a few times that the local authorities came by to check and inspect food safety, hygiene, food supply sources and related issues. But since the opening days, there were no particular support, instruction or policy received from the government related to sustainable development.

Q: Do you have an environmental policy which you adhere to?

A: Currently, we are following the energy saving solution, we will try to establish and implement more strategies related to sustainable tourism development in the future.

### **Interview 5: Trinh Nguyen – Co-Owner of SIA café**

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your business?

A: My name is Trinh, I am one of the owners of Sia café, which is a small chain of café in Ho Chi Minh City with 3 branches are still in operation Sia café provide a diverse menu, including traditional Vietnamese coffee, tea, smoothie, and other snacks and desserts. There used to be 5 branches, but after the Covid-19 pandemic, facing financial difficulties, we decided to close 2 of our branches.

Q: What is your opinion about the importance of developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam?

A: For me personally, it is extremely important, but there needs to be huge changes from the people's awareness, from education, from government and from businesses. There are only a few small businesses which has some commitment to sustainable development.

Q: Have you ever considered sustainable development as the prerequisite goal of the company from its inception?

A: I would say sustainable tourism development is not one of our prerequisite goals of our business from the beginning, but we always considered it as an important part of our development plan and goal.

Q: Do you source your supplies locally to support your local community?

A: Yes, our coffee and ingredients are 100% local, we import those directly from Buon Me Thuot, which is a famous city in Vietnam producing coffee, fruits and other ingredients are also imported from local farms.

Q: As a head of the company, do you provide your staff with information, tips, and training on how to be more environmentally responsible?

A: At the moment, our staffs are only trained to do their job with maximum productivity and customer services, not about environmentally responsible.

Q: Has your business received any support or policies that related to sustainable development?

A: We have not received any policy or support from any sources that related to sustainability development.

Q: Do you have an environmental policy which you adhere to?

A: At the moment, we only focus on minimizing the food waste by control carefully the amount of imported ingredients how to make it no differs to much with the amount of food and drinks sold.

