

Sustainability Plan for The Lion Fish Hostel

Jenna Koskimäki, Nea Norjos

Authors Jenna Koskimäki, Nea Norjos	
Degree programme Bachelor's degree in Hospitality, Tourism and Experience Management	
Thesis title Sustainability Plan for The Lion Fish Hostel	Number of pages and appendix pages 52 + 5
<p>As the world is waking up to the reality of the climate change, environmental issues are becoming more and more important and demanded both by businesses as well as customers. Tourism has a great responsibility in global development towards sustainability as it directly affects the environment and local communities, both socially and economically. The core of sustainable development is in understanding the value of the environment and its resources and choosing to preserve them. Sustainability covers the environmental, social and economic dimension which all go hand in hand in the tourism industry. All tourism businesses should have a positive triple bottom line where nature is not exploited, people are valued, and profit is guaranteed.</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis is to help a small accommodation business in Costa Rica to act in a more sustainable way in their everyday practices. We created a sustainability plan for The Lion Fish Hostel with practical guidance based on different theories, industry guidelines, previous researchers and the interviews we conducted with local professionals. The sustainability plan helps the business to identify its key issues and impacts on the environment, gives recommendations on how to change the business policies into more sustainable direction and focuses on giving practical advice on the daily procedures. It also introduces the educational aspects of sustainable management as well as local partnership possibilities.</p> <p>Our research-oriented thesis is a qualitative research which mainly consists of field observations and interviews conducted in Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica. From these interviews, we gathered a good amount of insights on local environmental issues, practices for sustainable development and knowledge about the need and demand for environmental management. According to the interviews, observations and previous research, the most important aspects regarding environmental management are water and energy management, waste treatment, environmental education and social engagement. The created sustainability plan can work as a guidance also for other small accommodation businesses around the world.</p> <p>Practical examples that The Lion Fish Hostel could do to act more responsibly, according to the created sustainability plan, are for example recycling, informing guests about saving water and avoiding plastic, organising events such as Beach Clean for both staff and guests, as well as investing in energy-efficient equipment and eco-friendly cleaning products.</p>	
Keywords Sustainable tourism, Sustainability plan, Environmental Management, Accommodation, Ecotourism, Costa Rica	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Sustainable Tourism	1
1.2	Environmental dimension of sustainability	2
1.3	Introduction to the sustainability plan for The Lion Fish Hostel.....	3
1.4	The objective	3
1.5	The structure of the thesis	4
2	Methodology	5
2.1	Research approach	5
2.2	Field study	6
2.3	Semi-structured interviews.....	7
2.4	Interviewees' backgrounds and discussed themes	7
2.5	Research questions	8
3	Costa Rica	9
3.1	Tourism in Costa Rica	10
3.2	Sustainability in Costa Rica	11
3.3	Puerto Viejo.....	12
3.4	The Lion Fish Hostel.....	12
3.5	SWOT – the current state of The Lion Fish Hostel.....	13
3.6	Environmental movements in Puerto Viejo	15
4	Theoretical background	17
4.1	Environmental management.....	17
4.2	Environmental management in accommodation business.....	18
4.2.1	Environmental management systems EMSs	19
4.2.2	Eco programs and certifications	20
4.2.3	Creating a sustainability plan for an accommodation business.....	21
4.3	Triple bottom line	23
4.4	The Experience Pyramid.....	24
4.5	Guests' demand on sustainability	27
4.6	Customer segments: millennials	28
5	Sustainability Plan for The Lion Fish Hostel.....	30
5.1	Guidelines	31
5.2	Models for sustainability plan.....	32
5.3	Practical implementation of the plan	33
5.3.1	Staff.....	33
5.3.2	Education.....	34
5.3.3	Energy efficiency	35

5.3.4	Recycling and waste	36
5.3.5	Water management	36
5.3.6	Food	38
5.3.7	Purchases.....	38
5.3.8	Guests and guests' rooms	38
5.4	Partnerships with environmental organisations	39
5.5	Guest experience.....	39
6	Recommendations	43
6.1	Future scenarios	43
6.2	Eco programs and certifications.....	43
7	Discussion.....	46
7.1	Ways to build sustainably oriented operations for The Lion Fish Hostel.....	46
7.2	Validity and reliability	50
7.3	Self-assessment	51
	References	53
	Appendices.....	60
	Appendix 1. Golden Rules for the management of The Lion Fish Hostel.....	60
	Appendix 2. Sustainability Plan practical guidelines for The Lion Fish Hostel	61
	Appendix 3. Interview with Elias Brown.....	62
	Appendix 4. Interview with Victoria Harding	63
	Appendix 5. Interview with Beate Haycke	64

1 Introduction

The main perspective of sustainable development is to sustain and improve the overall quality of life in three dimensions, environmental, social and economic. In the core of sustainability lies the understanding that humans and societies depend on the environment and that it is our responsibility to preserve it, both for ourselves and for the next generations. Environmental aspects and issues should therefore be addressed in daily management and processes in businesses. (Schaltegger, Burritt & Petersen 2003, 21–22.)

As a growing industry, tourism has a great responsibility in global development towards sustainability as it has a great effect on the social wellbeing of local communities and in addition, it is directly linked to the wellbeing of the environment. (United Nations 2019) UNWTO suggests that sustainable actions should be highly valued in the tourism industry, so that sustainability would stand as a norm of the industry instead of representing a niche tourism. (UNWTO 2013, 17.)

This thesis focuses on what a local small accommodation business can do to act in a more sustainable way in their everyday business practices. We have put together a sustainability plan tailored for The Lion Fish Hostel. Our research oriented thesis is a qualitative research which mainly consist of field observations and both informal and semi-structured interviews.

To narrow down the topic, we left out the economic and social dimension of sustainability. The reason for this limitation is that we didn't have access to the financial information of the hostel and to properly apply the aspects of social dimension into the sustainability plan would require a more steady and paid staff. Most of all, we wanted to focus on the environmental aspect as it's something the owner of the Lion Fish Hostel and both of us are interested in and want to get a deep insight of.

1.1 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism follows the three dimensions of sustainable development, focusing on the sustainable use of natural resources, the respect towards the host communities and cultural heritage as well as providing fair and stable socio-economic benefits. (UNEP & UNWTO 2005, 11–12.)

Sustainable tourism has the potential to foster both economic and social growth globally and locally. A well-executed sustainable development plan should succeed in minimizing the negative impacts of a business on the environment as well as, for example, including

all stakeholders in the process. (UNWTO 2013, 8–11.) Sustainably managed tourism can have a great positive impact on the surrounding society for example by educating the locals about environmental values such as conserving nature's biodiversity, and by teaching skills. (OECD 2018, 50.)

According to UNWTO (2013, 10) sustainable actions and development plans in tourism industry are highly valuable as tourism stands for 9 % of the world's GDP. Tourism industry is considered to have great potential to foster global movement of sustainable development, and the year 2017 was celebrated as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations (OECD 2018, 50).

1.2 Environmental dimension of sustainability

In 2015, the United Nations gave out 17 Sustainable Development Goals, part of which were precisely about protecting the environment, including improved resource management and issues around climate change. Sustainable development works on sustaining rather than compromising the resources and therefore, environmental planning is a crucial part of sustainable development. (United Nations 2015, 3, 6–11, 14–16.)

Not only governmental policies should be in line with sustainability values but also the tourism businesses should locally ensure that all of their procedures are promoting sustainability, for example from the use of natural resources to emission reduction, so that sustainability would be valued through production, planning and operations. (UNWTO 2013, 10–11, 18, 22.)

Together with transportation globally, accommodation businesses from the tourism industry created 5 % of the world's CO₂ emissions in 2013. (UNWTO 2013, 16.) In addition to the direct emissions from the accommodation businesses, the tourism industry's main issues are the inappropriate activities of businesses that negatively influence on a local level. Poor waste and water treatment causes polluted land and water areas, and unsustainable use of local natural resources such as overusing water can cause social inequality locally. Poor visitor management can lead to severe biodiversity damage and therefore have negative impacts, for example, on cultural heritage sites. (UNWTO 2013, 16–17.)

Environmental sustainability is about sustaining the environmental purity, minimizing the tourism industry's direct pollution by sustaining instead of worsening the state of the environment, including biological diversity and minimization of use of scarce resources, in other words, being resource-efficient. (UNWTO & UNEP 2005, 18–19.)

1.3 Introduction to the sustainability plan for The Lion Fish Hostel

The Lion Fish Hostel, founded in 2016, is a small accommodation business on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, in a town called Puerto Viejo. The 48-bed hostel has a relaxed, family-like atmosphere and the staff consists of about 12 international volunteers at a time, a changing manager and a cleaning lady in addition to the owners, Elias Brown and Mari Midttun.

We spent spring 2019 working for the Lion Fish Hostel for three months and got familiar with the local community, business owners and conservation organizations. We quickly learnt how unique the nature in the area is, and how passionate people are about preserving it. We wanted to contribute to the community and found a way through a beach clean where we picked up rubbish from the beaches of Puerto Viejo. It also turned out that Elias Brown had ambitious dreams about turning the hostel into a more ecological business. We decided that we could help him make those dreams come true. The sustainability plan for the hostel is our way to help.

Costa Rica is known for its wild jungles, rich biodiversity and ecotourism (Visit Costa Rica 2019.) The Caribbean Side of Costa Rica is still slightly quieter area what comes to tourism and therefore now is the time to raise awareness about sustainability and it's essential to implement sustainable practices and policies in the local businesses. Tourism can have serious negative impacts on communities regarding social, economic and environmental issues, such as price rises, excessive water usage or harm to traditional values (UNWTO 2013, 104,109). Especially accommodation industry has a unique opportunity to directly impact the local communities. (UNWTO 2019, 45–46.)

The sustainability plan will focus on the environmental dimension and consist of environmental education of both tourists and employees, practical advice for sustainable actions as well as proposed events, such as Beach Cleans, to improve the sustainability of the business.

1.4 The objective

The objective of the thesis is to provide a sustainability plan for the Lion Fish hostel with practical advice and recommendations on how to be more sustainable, help the business raise awareness about environmental issues through education, provide a platform for both locals and tourists to easily contribute to protecting the environment and supporting the local community. In addition, we will introduce networks and cooperation possibilities in order for the hostel to keep developing its practises towards sustainability.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven main chapters. In the introduction, we define sustainable tourism and its importance, introduce Costa Rica and the commissioning party, Lion Fish Hostel, as well as go through the objective and structure of the thesis.

The second chapter is methodology, where we define and explain the research methods we used in our thesis. We present our research questions and introduce our interviewees, tell about their background and the interview process, as well as about the rest of the field study such as observing and how we will analyse and apply all received data.

The third chapter is dedicated to Costa Rica. It has general information about the country, about the hostel and the town the hostel is in, as well as about some local examples of sustainable movements and organizations. We discuss sustainability and its importance in the country as well as tourism and its effects.

The fourth chapter is the theoretical background for the thesis. We introduce and define different theories which are the base of our sustainability plan for the Lion Fish Hostel. We discuss about eco-certifications, the demand of sustainability from the guests' side and the hostels main customer segment, adventurous Millennials.

The fifth chapter consists of the actual sustainability plan and guidelines. We have divided the plan into different subsections where implementation of each aspect is individually explained. We present possible cooperative parties and partnerships and explain the benefits. We take into consideration guest experience in the hostel and how it goes hand in hand with sustainability actions.

The second last chapter is about giving recommendations for The Lion Fish Hostel. In addition, future scenarios are discussed, eco programs, future tourism demand as well as development regarding sustainability.

We end the thesis with a discussion and self-assessment. We discuss the research questions and if were we able to answer them as well as the validity and reliability of the research. We do a self-assessment about our thesis process and success.

2 Methodology

Our thesis is research oriented and it is conducted with semi-structured individual interviews and observations made in Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica. Other data collection methods were field notes, which we started to collect in February 2019 based on our observations while working in the Lion Fish Hostel for three months. We interviewed Elias Brown, the owner of The Lion Fish Hostel, Beata Haycke, sustainability consultant and co-founder of Planet Conservation as well as the Beach Clean coordinator Victoria Harding about general practices, ideas and attitudes towards sustainability. The interviews were conducted in April 2019.

We focused on collecting first hand data while we were still in Costa Rica and soon came up with the idea to create a sustainability plan for the Lion Fish Hostel. We observed how sustainability issues were concerned in the town and in local businesses, how the municipality supported sustainable actions and what were the common attitudes of locals and travellers towards sustainability. After returning to Finland in June 2019 we started to go through the collected data and slowly create the sustainability plan.

We decided to focus on the environmental dimension of sustainability, as it was something Brown was looking for help with. Environmental sustainability aims to preserve nature's biodiversity, to which the hostel can contribute with its sustainability policies in everyday procedures such as waste management, as well as with events, such as the Beach Cleans. (UNEP & UNWTO 2005, 11–12.) The sustainability plan is beneficial for the hostel as sustainability is proved to enhance competitiveness (Williard 2012, 2) and in the long run it will also have positive impacts on the surrounding nature and in the well-being of the local community (UNWTO 2013, 11, 17–18).

The new step towards sustainability might also change the general attitudes of locals and tourists in Puerto Viejo as well as inspire other businesses to be more sustainable (Brown 28 April 2019) It also seemed like a good way to narrow down the topic of the thesis. There will be some mentions about the economic and social dimension too, as they're inevitable part of sustainability, but we will discuss them very briefly.

2.1 Research approach

Our research oriented thesis is a qualitative research which mainly consist of field observations and both informal and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is exploratory, answering the questions why and how regarding a phenomenon, like sustainability. Qualitative research encourages new perspectives and for example open interviews

where the studied people can express themselves freely and take the lead of the conversation. (Simply Psychology 2019.) Exploratory research explores a phenomenon without intending to provide a clear solution but to better understand the problem that may not have been previously researched much. Exploratory research produces multiple options to tackle the problem, not just one clear solution. (Research methodology 2019.)

As quantitative research focuses on numerical data and is often used to test a theory (Simply Psychology 2019), it's not suitable for our research where we try to find out attitudes and specific issues and ideas around sustainability in a small Costa Rican town. Qualitative research, on the other hand, let us ask open questions, observe and grow with the study without having a specific expected theory or reason in mind.

2.2 Field study

Throughout the three months we spent in Puerto Viejo, we were continuously observing and collecting data about the town, its people and businesses from the sustainable point of view. Most importantly, we got a close look on the Lion Fish Hostel, how it operates, what are the values and customer segments and main points of improvement. We were closely in contact with the guests, heard their opinions and suggestions while we were working in the reception.

Participant observations, like field notes about things seen and heard, are taken in natural situations. (Russel 2006, 143.) Participant observers refer to people living in a community while observing everyday life, while participating observers are people from outside who participate partly in the life of the community. (Russel 2006, 347.)

We conducted our field study as participating observers. We were part of the community, but only for a relatively short period of time, and very new to the culture and language. Even though we were much more inside in the community than other travellers on a holiday, finding out about local businesses' procedures, municipality's support and biggest environmental and social issues took some time.

Informal interviewing is a good method used in the field study. Especially in the beginning of observation, informal interviewing might bring up new topics that could otherwise be missed. As it is not controlled, participants are much more relaxed and could be more willing to talk about issues than in formal situations. (Russel 2006, 211.) We used informal interviewing with hostel guests about sustainability and heard their stories from other places they had been to. We talked with locals about tourism, how much it has increased in the previous years and its effects on the town. All this information was useful and helped us to

form a better picture of the town and its state. In addition to observing, we did some benchmarking about other accommodation businesses in town, how they took sustainability into account and visited hostels for inspiration

2.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interview is an open interview, where the interviewee can also lead the conversation and talk about wider aspects of the topic than what the interviewer may have originally planned to ask about. However, it is still a scheduled interview that follows a certain script and certain topics. (Russel 2006, 212.)

We conducted semi-structured interviews in person with three people who were all working in Puerto Viejo, in different areas of tourism and sustainability. We chose the interviewees because of their professions and backgrounds and for their local knowledge. We discussed topics around sustainability, sustainable tourism, sustainable businesses and business operations, including issues around environmental management in Puerto Viejo area, as well as future scenarios and dreams, projects and events.

These interviews were conducted in Puerto Viejo and recorded with mobile phones. We had made up a list with possible topics and a few specific questions, however, we kept the questions open and gave the interviewee a possibility to also lead the conversation. This way the interviews were more relaxed, more informative, educative and passionate. We let the interviewees also concentrate on issues that were the most important for them

2.4 Interviewees' backgrounds and discussed themes

Our first interviewee was Mr. Elias Brown, the owner of the Lion Fish Hostel. Brown was born and raised in Puerto Viejo, a local man who knows the area, its people and nature extremely well. He opened up the hostel in 2016 with his partner Mari Middtun.

Brown has a close relationship with nature and sustainability is something extremely important for him. He has seen the town change with years and the growing tourism they brought. He is concerned about the future of the town and the nature if tourism keeps growing but local businesses don't follow sustainable guidelines. Brown is passionate about the hostel and its future and is dreaming about having the hostel as a completely plastic free property and a leading accommodation business in town, what comes to sustainability. He is interested in starting recycling, but worried about the expenses of certain sustainable choices, such as eco-friendly cleaning products, as buying them would mean that the hostel should raise their prices.

The second interviewee was Beate Haycke, Sustainability Consultant and Co-Founder of Planet Conservation organisation. She is from German origin, but has lived in Puerto Viejo for years. She is working with international co-operations and is responsible for the organisation's international volunteer programme. Planet Conservation works on conserving Costa Rican nature and educating locals and tourists about environmental issues through various projects, programmes and events.

Haycke is very aware of Puerto Viejo's environmental issues as she is the head of the environmental organisation that is trying to fight against unsustainable practices. She is very concerned about Puerto Viejo's environmental issues, as tourism is growing and illegal activities happening. Corruption affects the environmental regulation planning, and the poor infrastructure of Puerto Viejo area is causing damage and pollution to the water sites and surrounding nature, as the polluted water from all properties flows into nature. She works closely with projects educating local children on schools about environmental issues and sustainable practices, such as why and how to recycle.

The third interviewee was Victoria Harding, the Beach Clean event coordinator and Planet Conservation volunteer. She is originally from the United Kingdom where she graduated in Zoology. She is working with Planet Conservation's Caribe Libre de Plastico project where her role is to promote environmental awareness and plastic issues in particular. She is creating events and projects around environmental education about zero waste, alternatives and permaculture. She is coordinating the Beach Clean events around the coast in Puerto Viejo and neighbouring towns engaging tourists and locals for the sake of environment and sustainable development in local community. She is very passionate about zero waste lifestyle as well as finding solutions to issues around the global plastic pollution.

2.5 Research questions

The main problem and question in our thesis is how could the Lion Fish Hostel operate in a more sustainable way? We try to answer this question by presenting all collected data and drawing up a conclusion and guidelines. We are trying to answer the main problem by creating sub problems that all surround the main issue. We have five sub problems that are listed below:

- Why is the sustainability plan important?
- Which guidelines could be used?
- Which practical actions should be taken?
- How would these actions develop the guest experience?
- What proved benefits do sustainability plans provide for companies?

3 Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a Central American country located between Panama and Nicaragua, between the Pacific Ocean on the West and the Caribbean Sea on the East. With a population of about 5 million people in 2019 the country's surface covers about 51,100 square kilometers (World population review 2019). 26 percent of the country's territory is under protection and 5 percent of the whole world's biodiversity can be found there while the country itself covers only 0.03 of the world's surface (Visit Costa Rica 2019).

The country is democratic and there has been no army since 1949 (Visit Costa Rica 2019). With its political stability it has become a popular destination for people all over the world. In 2018 the country attracted over 3 million tourists (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo 2018).



Figure 1. Map of Costa Rica (Wikipedia 2019)

3.1 Tourism in Costa Rica

Tourism plays a significant role in Costa Rican economy, creating 28 % of total employment. As many as 2.9 million visitors travelled to Costa Rica in 2016 and stayed from 11 to 13 nights on average, which was nearly 60 % more than in 2010. The industry is also expected to continue to grow for 6 % until 2021. (OECD 2018, 320–324.)

Costa Rica was mentioned in ABTA's Travel Trends 2019 publication as part of the list of 12 Destinations to watch during the upcoming year, stating that Costa Rica is one of the trendiest destinations at the moment. Costa Rica was promoted as a tropical dream destination for nature enthusiasts, a paradise with smart conservation policies and where one can immerse in the rich natural biodiversity. (ABTA 2018.)

Nowadays, Costa Rica is seen as a prime ecotourism destination, and tourism in Costa Rica is built upon the country's rich natural resources, such as range of habitats and wide biodiversity. (Bien 2010, 49–50.) The International Ecotourism Society TIES defines ecotourism as a low-impact and responsible way of traveling to natural areas. Ecotourism carries the same principles of minimizing negative impacts on physical environment and local communities as well as conserving the environment and raising awareness as sustainable tourism in general, but the policies are implemented by both consumers, the ecotourists, as well as stakeholders who participate in ecotourism practices via their businesses. Sustainable tourism is seen to focus more on the development of social, ecological and environmental practices of the industry to a more sustainable direction. (TIES 2019; WWF 2019.)

Costa Rican ecotourism started growing already in the 1980s, when nature-based tourism was recognised as a market potential by group of intercultural biologists from the Organization for Tropical Studies in Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. (Bien 2010, 50.) Costa Rica has been one of the most popular ecotourism destinations since then, and in the 1990s the country was acknowledged internationally by The U.S. Adventure Travel Society as the number one ecotourism destination. Around that time, according to the government survey in Costa Rica, most visitors were as a matter of fact, ecotourists. (Condon & Honey 2008, 160.) This trend has kept up for decades, and Costa Rica's immerse natural and cultural richness as well as the country's conservation policies and marketing strategies are key elements in succeeding in the ecotourism field. Also, the Chamber of Ecotourism CANAECO and the Costa Rican Tourism Board ICT have worked on developing sustainability and environmental performance of the tourism industry in Costa Rica, leading to successfully maintained position as a well-known ecotourism destination. (Bien 2010, 49–51.) Costa Rican tourism industry began to focus its marketing on promoting

eco-, adventure-, sun and beach- and rural community tourism in 2007, after which sustainable tourism has found its stable place in Costa Rican tourism industry. (Condon & Honey 2008, 161–162.)

3.2 Sustainability in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is seen as a pioneering country in global sustainability development, having launched programmes and new policies since the 1990s (Go Visit Costa Rica 2019) that have helped the country to reverse deforestation (World Bank 2019) and for example find ways towards an emission neutral nation. There is an ongoing process to reach carbon neutrality and develop the country's sustainability procedures (Reuters 2019; The Tico Times 2019), especially by developing the tourism industry into a more sustainable direction.

Costa Rican tourism board ICT was working on sustainability matters already as early as in 1997 when it launched the Certification for Sustainable Tourism CST. The certification is for all businesses in tourism, including accommodation businesses, and it consists of 5 levels of responsible action, aiming to increase awareness around sustainability matters and increasing quality of life by gaining both social and environmental benefits. One aspect of the plan is to improve the system management practices, including waste management, water consumption and recycling possibilities. (Go Visit Costa Rica 2019; ICT 2019; United Nations 2019.) For example, in Puerto Viejo many basic things such as infrastructure, including proper water treatment system and recycling system, are not sufficient enough to meet the standards of the national Certification for Sustainable Tourism. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

To support a continuum of tourism development, the Costa Rican tourism board, ICT, launched a new Tourism Development Plan in 2017 called the Plan de Desarrollo turístico de Costa Rica 2017–2021. The plan's main objective is to keep tourism as a main economic factor focusing on, for example, improving resource management as well as on raising awareness of the issues around sustainability. The ICT is promoting Costa Rica as a sustainable tourism destination with high potential and tries to improve its competitiveness in the market. (OECD 2018, 320–322.)

To support this, in the beginning of 2019 Costa Rican government launched a plan to become a pioneer country in carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan is to cut the country's greenhouse gases so that the non-offset carbon emissions would be zero, and to show an example to other nations. This would lead to drastic changes to, for example, the most fossil-fuel dependant and polluting sector in Costa Rican economy, transportation, as new

and modernized technology such as electric vehicles would take their place. (Reuters 2019.) In 2019 Costa Rica had succeeded in generating more than 98 % of the needed energy from renewable sources for four years in a row, year 2019 is expected to be the fifth one. Renewable energy is generated mainly from hydropower but largely also from wind and geothermal. (The Tico Times 2019.)

3.3 Puerto Viejo

Puerto Viejo is a small town in the canton of Talamanca, a province in Limón, in the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica. The town consists of a nice mix of locals, tourists and expatriates. It attracts tourists for its beautiful beaches, wild jungles and animals, tropical climate, great waves and slow lifestyle. There are several small accommodation businesses in the town, but no big hotels or resorts. The town is very small and the main road is ideal for cycling leading to smaller towns with beautiful beaches, such as Playa Cocles, Playa Chiquita, Punta Uva and Manzanillo. Cahuita National Park is 16 kilometers away from Puerto Viejo and the border of Panama only a bit over 60 kilometers away. A lot of the travelers in Puerto Viejo are indeed on their way to Panama.

3.4 The Lion Fish Hostel

The Lion Fish Hostel is located in Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica. It has 48 beds, both in dormitories and private rooms. The premises also include a lounge and dining area, kitchen, garden and bar. The hostel has excellent location near the beach and the centre of the town and its prices are competitive. The prices for a night in a dormitory vary from USD10 to USD15 and private room from USD30 to USD35.

The hostel has two owners, and the rest of the staff are volunteers. The normal minimum stay requirement is two weeks, but usually volunteers stay from one month to two months. The fact that the hostel is run by volunteers makes the atmosphere quite young and lively and it's easy for people to get to know each other. Also, guests are welcomed with a family-like attitude, each guest is taken around the hostel and explained personally the rules and services provided. Some activities are organized in order to create a sense of togetherness and general good atmosphere. One of them is a potluck on Mondays, a get together where guests and staff all can bring their own dishes to share and have a barbeque together.

The hostel rents out surf boards, hammocks, bikes and towels. In addition, they sell shuttles to Panama for USD25, which is among the cheapest offers in the town. They also offer surf lessons and shuttles to other destinations.

The hostel guests are from all over the world, also from all age groups. Biggest nationality groups are German, North American, Chilean and Argentinian. Majority of the guests are young adults from around 20 to 35 years old, millennials. Usually they are budget travelers on their way to Panama as the border is close to Puerto Viejo. The high season for tourism is from February until the end of April, and especially around Easter the town is very busy and the hostel is fully booked most of the days.

3.5 SWOT – the current state of The Lion Fish Hostel

SWOT analysis is a tool created by Albert Humphrey of the Stanford Research Institute in 1960. It is a method for businesses to indicate the strong and weak spots of their operations. It is a beneficial tool for taking into consideration different aspects of the business when developing the business or making important decisions. Strengths and weaknesses reflect internal factors, such as experience and resources, while opportunities and threats refer to external forces, like trends, regulations and funding that are out of the company's control. (Business News Daily 2019.)

The Lion Fish Hostel has a great potential to become the leading example of a sustainable accommodation business in Puerto Viejo and in Costa Rica. We created a SWOT to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the hostel has regarding its current state of sustainability.

The hostel has many strengths what comes to improving sustainability and applying changes. Because of its small size and small management, it's a lot easier to change practises than it would be in a corporation. They are able to try out different things, different management styles and different ideas, and they will quickly see if it's working or they need to try something else.

In addition, Elias Brown, the owner of the hostel, is convinced that sustainable practises are needed and wants to develop the hostel into a more responsible business. He believes that the sustainability plan will help starting the process. Also, sustainability is already an important topic in the country, so the starting point is very different from a country where sustainable practises are not considered as important.

As the hostel staff is mainly Millennials, young adults from 20 to 35 years old, who have travelled to Costa Rica not only to work but mostly to explore and enjoy, many of them are genuinely interested in sustainability and would like to participate in projects to help local communities and environment. They have seen other hostels throughout Costa Rica and

other countries, and might have new ideas, opinions and suggestions. Also, they represent the customer segment of the hostel, so their opinions are valuable and predictive. Innovative and educated people are in the core of the sustainable development.

There are, however, some weaknesses as well. First of all, as the hostel is in a small Caribbean town, the infrastructure is something that cannot be easily improved. The roads are in a poor condition, waste and water management is insufficient and corruption makes changes slow and difficult. Also, some of the hostel's equipment, such as laundry machines, are not very energy-efficient and so some new investments would be needed. These purchases, of course, would require capital investment, which then again can be a complicating factor.

One major challenge is the big turnover in staff members, as the hostel is mainly run by temporary volunteers. Even though having new staff members on a regular basis creates lots of possibilities for innovation, having to manage continuously changing staff team is challenging. Especially, as the manager of the hostel is never a full-time employee either. For example, in many companies, the management is able to assign a green team from its staff members, who then will be responsible for the sustainable practices and needed development. In The Lion Fish Hostel this type of set staff roles are quite difficult and even impossible to maintain in the long run and therefore, the hostel faces a major challenge in having to incorporate all its staff members to the company policy and train everyone equally to value and become responsible for sustainable actions within the hostel.

One great opportunity for the hostel is its customer segmentation, as the vast majority of the guests are millennials, young adults who like to explore and look for authenticity and have strong values regarding sustainability. They are open minded and looking for meaningful experiences and to educate themselves. (Benckendorff & al. 2009,9.) Therefore, The Lion Fish Hostel can offer a lot for its guests, especially when engaging them into the region's sustainability projects. Having a partnership with one of the environmental organisations in the area, such as with Planet Conservation, who organise events and projects such as Beach Cleans on a regular basis, can be a good opportunity for The Lion Fish Hostel.

Another opportunity for the hostel is recycling. The waste management in the town is not sufficient enough, but Brown has his own farm a bit further from the town where he could be able to take the hostel's food waste and compost it. It would require driving even once a day to the farm to get rid of the waste, but it was something that Brown considered as a

realistic possibility. This type of action would then again help the local waste management, which is already facing challenges dealing with the growing amount of waste in the area, due to the growing number of visitors.

The hostel can also take bigger steps such as prohibiting plastic bottles from the hostel, and therefore, promoting reusable consumption, such as using glass bottles. One opportunity is to train staff members and guests to behave in a more sustainable manner and educate them about environmental issues of the area, including raising awareness of plastic pollution, and encourage them to engage in sustainability actions and environmental projects, such as Beach Cleans. This will also create an opportunity for the hostel to foster the local sustainable development when including local community members in its projects and events.

What comes to threats, there are a few of them as well. The biggest threat lies with the local municipality and problems with corruption. If the municipality is not interested in developing the environmental regulations of the area, or developing the recycling center and infrastructure for waste and water management, the local community and businesses will suffer from it. For tourism businesses this can mean that it is impossible to receive a national sustainability certification, a recognition for sustainable businesses, due to the insufficient town infrastructure. One of the biggest threats to all tourism businesses in Puerto Viejo is to lose the natural beauty and rich ecosystems of the area due to pollution that is caused by poor water and waste treatment, as well as illegal activities such as deforestation, as ecotourism is the main source of living for local businesses.

3.6 Environmental movements in Puerto Viejo

Planet Conservation is an environmental organisation, influencing in Puerto Viejo area through conservation and educational projects, programmes and partnerships. According to Beate Haycke, the co-owner of Planet Conservation, environmental organisations have worked together in Puerto Viejo already for decades, but local associations are still causing environmental damage and even natural disasters in the area. Current environmental issues are a threat to the local businesses who rely on ecotourism, as tourists are visiting Puerto Viejo specifically for its natural beauty, and for example surfing possibilities and clean beaches. Therefore, it would be important for not only local municipality but also local individuals and tourism businesses to take practical actions towards sustainable development, with an aim to maintain the pristine ecosystem of the area. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

According to Victoria Harding, Zoologist and Planet Conservation's Beach Clean event coordinator, plastic pollution is a big issue globally and it is visible also in Talamanca region's coastline, such as on beaches in Puerto Viejo. Plastic pollution directly pollutes environment and endangers wildlife, causing for example physical entanglement, hormone disruptions and ingestion problems to wildlife, and microplastic pollution is affecting the whole marine food chain and through that also to human beings by exposing our food chain to chemicals. (Harding 26 April 2019.) The plastic pollution being a serious issue, Talamanca region has signed a single use plastic free commitment Caribe Sur Libre De Plastico, assessed by Planet Conservation, which got over 35 000 signatures indicating that there are many locals in the region who are aware of the plastic issue in the southern Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. The campaign participation numbers also show that there is truly a need and a demand for sustainable development in the area. (Harding 26 April 2019.)

To support this development to happen, Planet Conservation launched their Beach Clean campaign for the beaches around Puerto Viejo coastline. Beach Cleans' main idea is to engage both locals and tourists to work together for the common good, to raise awareness about plastic pollution and educate how to consume in a more sustainable manner. Beach Cleans also teach how to recycle in a correct way. When locals get involved and learn about the issues around plastic waste, they take this new knowledge and values to the local community, which can lead to businesses wanting to get involved too. Participants can feel that they are helping and carry the ability to make a difference through their own decisions and actions. It is very important to raise awareness and appreciation of clean beaches, especially as ecotourism is being the main income source of the area. (Harding 26 April 2019.)

4 Theoretical background

The theories we chose for the sustainability plan are common and easily adaptable also to smaller businesses. Environmental management is a big topic that we divided into several sub chapters. It provides the theoretical background for environmental sustainability and its importance as well as practical examples of sustainable actions in businesses. Triple bottom line discusses the importance of all three dimensions of sustainability and the benefits that sustainable actions bring to businesses. Experience pyramid on the other hand is the theory behind the guest experience which is an extremely important aspect as we are creating the sustainability plan for a small accommodation business.

4.1 Environmental management

Environmental management is sustainably focused management style with an aim to reduce the business' environmental impacts. Having an environmental management strategy helps the business to meet its sustainability goals and can ultimately create success and profit. Environmental management guides the management of the business towards a more environmentally oriented style by helping to create more effective strategies. It provides tools for the process and helps to set goals and milestones along the way.

(Schaltegger, Burritt & Petersen 2003, 8–9, 30–32, 60.)

Due to current challenges with climate change and its effect on biodiversity and ecosystems, environmental management is the utmost important in order to prevent and limit the damage on the environment. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 18–19.) There is indeed a need for sustainable development as the public is reacting by increased concern for global issues around environment and social changes. In order to succeed in sustainable development, the management of businesses must value responsibility in their choices and actions.

(Mikulčić, Duić & Dewil 2017, 867.)

To create an environmental strategy a business should be aware of the impacts of its procedures. In order to understand the overall environmental impact, the company should measure its performance from three perspectives; efficiency, sufficiency and consistency. This will help the business to find out which of its technical solutions cause the most harm to the environment, how the material consumption patterns look like and in what ways could the business include sustainability values in its everyday decisions and actions.

(Schaltegger & al. 2003, 25–27.) The performance of each business procedure should also be measured by their individual economic ecological efficiency, the eco-efficiency. To be highly eco-efficient means that procedures have minimal impact on the environment.

By examining each of the business' procedures the company can indicate the low and high efficient functions of its procedures, and analyse which ones are the most polluting and environmentally harmful points of the business. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 60–65.)

There are certain tools for strategic environmental management, such as eco-marketing as well as eco-control and strategic environmental management systems (EMS). Some main aspects of eco-marketing are environmental education, raising awareness on the consumers' consumption patterns and informing them how to act in a more environmentally responsible way. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 206–208.) In practice in an accommodation business it can be informing the guests about local environmental issues and guiding them for example by placing a note in the guest showers that reminds not to use too much water due to the common water shortages in the area. Other important factor for eco-marketing is to focus on reducing environmental pollution by making responsible choices, honoring products' lifecycles and recycling possibilities. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 208.) Eco-control is about environmental regulations, including eco-labels and certifications, as well as setting and controlling the standards for EMSs, for example for the ISO environmental performance series. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 294–295, 306.)

To achieve the set environmental goals, a company can use strategic eco-control to set and adjust needed procedures for a greater success. The strategy represents business' responsible attitude toward sustainable development, but the environmental values, goals and actions should also be in line and realistic. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 131, 178-179.)

The purpose of creating a sustainability plan is to commit to a new environmental policy, get clear about the business' aims and values and how to meet the desired goals and renewing the company culture by including stakeholders such as staff and guests in it. (ITP 2008, 5.) In brief, environmental management's main purpose is to bring sustainability values into action in daily procedures of the business in order to reduce the negative impacts on the environment. Environmental management is responsible and conscious way of managing, setting goals and creating strategies.

4.2 Environmental management in accommodation business

The World Tourism Organization states that the accommodation industry bears a great potential to influence the quality of life locally. The businesses' advantage is that they are physically present at the destination, and therefore, directly engaging with local communities for example by creating jobs which then can lead to strengthening the local economy. Even though competitiveness is still the main driver to companies of the industry, the core

business operations and activities, such as resource management, are developing towards a more sustainable direction. The most common corporate social responsible actions in the accommodation business industry are pollution reduction, including water, air and noise pollution as well as emission reduction and water usage, use of certifications or eco-labels, investment in energy-saving appliances and renewable energy sources, training staff as well as building new partnerships and campaigns locally. (UNWTO & UNEP 2017, 45-46.)

4.2.1 Environmental management systems EMSs

Environmental management systems are implementation strategies that, firstly help businesses to address the procedures which have the heaviest impact on the environment and secondly, adjust the company procedures by making the necessary changes so that the sustainability values would be met in all actions of the business. The aim of a sustainability strategy can be, for example, improving the state of the local environment, and the new policy plan is built around the chosen aim. The new plan is communicated to the staff and it includes new responsibilities as well as sustainability objectives and goals. Environmental management systems can be executed through an existing system such as eco-certification system, or it can be built upon the company's own interests and needs. (ITP 2008, 5.)

Sustainability is an emerging topic amongst the private sector enterprises, and environmental values are integrated into business actions even in cases when there are not outer push factors such as governmental regulations. A growing number of these non-governmental enterprises understand the means of today's emerging environmental issues, such as water scarcity and challenges faced with waste management and acknowledge the potential negative influences their business actions have on the environment. Sustainable development is seen as a necessity and value-creator in today's world, as many businesses are dependent on natural resources. (UNEP Frontiers 2016, 6–7.)

To fight these challenges, a concept of 'green hotels' has arisen. Green hotels concept became world known when Leadership in Energy Environmental Design introduced its LEED certifications for the hotel industry. LEED has a rating system for green building, certifying resource-efficient buildings that consume less energy and generate less greenhouse gas emissions than non-green buildings. (LEED 2019.) Green hotels focus on reducing water and produced waste, for example by choosing energy-efficient lighting. (Ogbeide 2012, 1–2.)

Environmental Management for Hotels: The Industry Guide to Sustainable Operation publication (ITP 2008, 1–2.) guides accommodation businesses to focus on specific environmental that are relevant to the business, and create a strategy specifically for that. This environmental programme is to be followed daily and the performance measured on a regular basis. In addition, the company culture should be adapted to the new sustainability plan by communicating with staff, guests and other important stakeholders. According to the ITP publication, having an environmental management programme benefits the business by creating profit as it can help reduce costs, as well as improving competitiveness. To involve staff members, training can be beneficial for learning new techniques and meeting. (ITP 2008, 1–2.)

All natural resources consuming and waste creating accommodation businesses affect the environment and therefore hold a responsibility to act in a more sustainable way. Accommodation businesses are also directly influencing local emissions and even pollution, if waste management is not well managed, and for example if the chemicals of used cleaning products are being released into the nature due to bad water treatment systems. (ITP 2008, 3.)

The sustainability plans of accommodation businesses should also focus on social responsibilities towards local communities, for example by educating guests, staff and the local community about environmental issues and ways to live more sustainably. If a business decides to invest in better waste management in an area with poor infrastructure, such as recycling, it can offer the business also an opportunity to strengthen the local community. (ITP 2008, 4.)

4.2.2 Eco programs and certifications

A certification generally refers to good quality and met required standards, regardless of the product or topic. Different certifications can, at best, bring credibility and transparency for products. Eco-labels and certifications imply that the product meets the environmental, social and economic standards required. However, without regular external assessment, certifications may allow greenwashing, a situation where companies use eco-certifications and programs for marketing and branding purposes without a genuine intention to meet the required standards and goals. If the same party is doing the assessment, marketing and issuing of certifications, the credibility decreases and so does the general reputation of all certifications and programs. (Aas & Haaland 2010, 375-376, 383.)

As sustainability is in growing demand, more and more different eco-labels, certifications and programs are launched. It is becoming difficult to separate and review them which

creates problems for both businesses and customers. The excessive amount of different certifications decreases the trust of customers. (Aas & Haaland 2010, 376.)

Certifications and eco-programs need systematic assessment, a clear criteria system and good communication towards market segments, employees and owners. Often the problem with certifications is their cost, especially small businesses might not have the possibility to invest in them. (Aas & Haaland 2010, 381-383.)

4.2.3 Creating a sustainability plan for an accommodation business

There is a growing and emerging tourism market that demands sustainable practices from accommodation businesses. Having an environmental management system can benefit the business by improving its reputation as well as maintaining the business' market position in the future. (ITP 2008, 3.)

When creating a sustainability plan the business should firstly identify the sources of the key environmental impacts. To find these out, the business can measure its inputs, which are the type of resources or products that the business uses, as well as their outputs which are the waste and emissions that the business creates when using these resources or products. (ITP 2008, 5.) To find out these inputs and outputs, a business can conduct a review of all of its procedures to find out which ones impact the environment the most. The review should consider all areas from the usage and management of water and energy resources, waste recycling, air quality, chemical disposal, environmental legislation, impacts on the local community as well as impacts on wildlife and landscape. (ITP 2008, 9.) After understanding and identifying the key impacts, the management of the business can set a new policy according to its aims and sustainability principles. (ITP 2008, 5.)

Typical inputs which create mostly emissions as outputs are electricity and fuel usage, as well as refrigeration systems including air conditioning. Water usage creates effluent, for example from laundry and kitchen, which in combination with poor water treatment systems can lead to grey and black water pollution locally. Contaminated water from for example cleaning products, could then be flowing to the nature and damaging the local ecosystem. Other waste and emissions are created by things such as electrical appliances, fittings for towels, bed linens, carpets, furniture usage, kitchen equipment as well as all used consumables from toilet paper to detergents and office products. Waste is also created, when a product has a package wrapping. Different sorts of waste include plastics, paper, aluminium and other metals, glass, fabrics, cleaning materials and non-biode-

gradable chemicals, fluorescent lamps and batteries, as well as for example food and beverages, such as organic waste. Sustainability plan focuses on tackling issues which are tangible and operable. (ITP 2008, 6–7.)

Depending on the water efficiency of an accommodation business, the cost for water usage in many hotels is even 10% of total costs. Water being such a scarce resource globally it is important to use it sustainably. If hotel companies were to reduce their water usage, it could not only help environmentally but also cut costs, especially when water management is included in sustainability plan. (ITP Green Hotelier 2013)

Unsustainable use of land, water and energy resources can lead to environmental degradation and even loss of biodiversity, and therefore managing resources in a sustainable way is vital. Sustainable development goes hand in hand with the local community's quality of life and, for example, in many urban areas it is important to develop a better waste management system including recycling systems. (UN 2015, 6–11.)

A part of the process of sustainability plan is to set realistic and clear short-term targets for the next upcoming year as well as so called long-term-objectives or milestones that are to be met in the next 1 to 5 years. After that, the business should choose a way to measure its performance in a chosen time frame. (ITP 2008, 10.) ITP has collected key issues of most common 100 procedure-specified issues to accommodation businesses. These issues are listed on ITP's Key Issue Review Table, a tool for accommodation businesses to rate their environmental performance by counting points of each procedure. The Key Issue Review Table can also help the accommodation business to find out which aspects are most important to take into consideration when setting new policies for sustainable development. (ITP 2008, 9, 16–19.)

Environmentally oriented business management should also focus on the perspectives of efficiency, sufficiency and consistency in all of its procedures. In accommodation business management efficient actions could be addressed as technical solutions for reducing environmental damage by decreasing material and energy usage and by improving the system for waste management. Sufficiency could look like focusing on new behaviour patterns more than material consumption, and for example providing reusable shopping bags for guests to use instead of them having to buy plastic ones from the grocery store. Sufficiency plays on having enough and sharing what we have got. It could as well be utilised in kitchen area, for example by having an open herb garden for the guests. Consistency in management focuses on valuing environment in technical solutions, for example changing to energy-efficient light bulbs. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 25–27.)

To foster sustainable development, accommodation businesses can include environmental values in their business policies, and choose to act in an environmentally responsible way in its daily and regular procedures. Businesses can include actions, such as sending an informative message to each arriving guest beforehand, in their strategy and through that share insights about the company's environmental policy. Companies could also give recommendations on what to bring instead of a plastic water bottle or a plastic bag when arriving to the hotel or hostel. If the business has a strict environmental policy, it can inform its guests about what is not allowed to bring when arriving to the hotel, and by that forbidding some of these products from the whole premises. At the business premises there could be signs on walls about how to make daily choices more sustainable, for example about drinkable tap water or recycling information in the kitchen area. Sustainable development should not just stay within the company policy, but also be acted out and used as a way to change attitudes and habits of guests and staff members. (Harding 26 April 2019.)

Accommodation businesses have a responsibility to foster sustainable tourism development, as they can directly influence the staff members and guests at the premises, as well as local community through hosting and coordinating events and activities that are open for locals. The change happens through environmental education, as then new knowledge, attitudes and values can spread to surrounding people. (Harding 26 April 2019.) For sustainability plan to work, it is important to encourage all staff members to participate by for example giving them a possibility to communicate their improvement ideas and suggestions to the management. It could be executed either by face-to-face open communication or, for example, by setting an open-for-all suggestion box. (ITP 2008, 8, 11.) Staff training could happen by taking the staff on a physical tour and educating along the way how all procedures affect the environment, and how to act in a more sustainable way. Also, having conversations about their individual perceptions on environmental issues can help in the involvement, as well as keeping them on track and communicating the achieved improvement, such as monthly water savings. (ITP 2008, 12.)

4.3 Triple bottom line

In 1994 John Elkington created a concept called Triple Bottom Line which encourages businesses to pay attention to their social and environmental impacts in addition to traditional financial performance when measuring success. (Savitz 2013, 4.)

The Triple Bottom Line consists of 3 Ps - People, Planet and Profit and emphasizes the importance of businesses paying attention to their impacts on the environment and people. Businesses should measure how sustainably they use natural resources and raw materials in order not to exploit the environment, how they treat the employees and support the surrounding communities without forgetting the obvious financial performance which pays a role in the economic system. (Business Strategy Hub 2019.)

The Profit refers to companies' financial health now and in the long run, the Planet stands for companies' obligation to minimize the harm and protect the environment by reducing the amount of used natural resources and the amount of waste generated in the production. People emphasizes the fair treatment of employees and local communities. (Williard 2012, 10.)

A sustainable business should have a positive triple bottom line meaning positive outcomes on the economic, environmental and social aspects including the ones of their shareholders and therefore an increase in the company's overall value. (Savitz 2013, 5.) In other words, triple bottom line management should lead to growth of eco-efficiency and socio-efficiency. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 339.)

Even though to some sustainability may sound expensive and problematic, it provides huge possibilities and advantages. These include reducing risks and expenses on hiring and manufacturing and increasing productivity, competitiveness and profit. (Williard 2012, 2.)

4.4 The Experience Pyramid

Experience Pyramid is an analytical model that helps to create the perfect experience product for a customer. The model analyses all product-oriented elements of an experience, in correlation with each level of a personal, customer's individual experience. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 112–113.)

When creating an experience product, certain elements should be present. These are called the brand or product elements, which include individuality, authenticity, story, multi-sensory perception, contrast and interaction. A successful product should have all its elements in line with the levels of experience. Customer's experience is in levels and it starts from the motivational level and interest. From there upwards it changes into physical level and sense of perception, then intellectual level and learning, emotional level and finally, the highest, mental level and transformation. The brand elements represent the product

elements, and each of these elements are separately analysed in comparison with the individual's level of experience. In a successful experience, all brand elements are aligned with the levels of consumer experience, supporting each other. An experience can at its best lead to an inner experience, a mental change even a transformation. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 100–104)

A successful experience product is individualised or tailored for the customer's needs and wants. It is credible and authentic, representing for example the local culture and habits. To foster the authenticity, telling a story about the product can engage the customer emotionally and intellectually, as through the story they can learn and feel more involved. The experience product should immerse the customer in it through multi-sensory perceptions, from harmonised visuals to sounds, tastes and smells, as well as physical sense of touch. Successful experience product also includes a perception of contrast, offering something totally different for the customer than what they are used to experience in their daily lives. There should also be an element of successful social interaction, as it can at its best bring along a sense of belonging and community. Successful interaction also fosters the feeling of individuality in the customer experience, giving attention and care to each customer and their own individual experiences. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 114–116.)

All the product elements should be present throughout each level of experience, supporting and harmonising the overall experience. To create an experience out of the product, all levels of customer experience should be taken into consideration, starting from the motivation of the customer, raising awareness and interest of the product. It's about creating a need or want, with the help of all the elements mentioned above, creating an image for the customer about an experience product and waking the senses and interest already before the actual experience product has taken place. This could be done for example through marketing. After bringing the product to the customer's awareness, comes the level of physical experience. It is important for the customer to feel at ease during the experience product, and therefore it is important to take customers' basic needs such as hunger, thirst, feeling of warmth, cold and safe into consideration. Contrast and interaction can be present by taking the customer physically to a new destination or place with a professional guide who introduces the customer to the local people and traditions. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 117–119.)

To engage a customer on the intellectual level there should be a possibility to learn new skills, gain new knowledge and insights. The experience product should feel credible and authentic, and it should make the customer believe in the story. Interaction with staff members is crucial as it can set the tone for, for example, a holiday experience. After the

intellectual level of thoughts and opinions, the actual feeling of experience can be perceived in an emotional level, in which a successful experience fosters positive emotions, happiness and sense of meaningfulness. This could rise from, for example, learning new skills. The highest level of customer experience is the mental level. In this level a customer is able to experience a mental transformation, a sense of change in within. A powerful experience can lead to this state of being, when a customer can reach a peak and find new perspectives and insights to his or her life and lifestyle. Mental level is all about finding ultimately who you are or can be, and transforming and growing as a person. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 117–119.)

A successful experience therefore leads a customer through all product elements into the actual experience, in all of its levels. It immerses the customer in new type of surroundings, offering valuable interaction and sense of belonging, forecasting and fulfilling the customer needs, telling a story and setting an authentic atmosphere around it, engaging all the senses, teaching new skills and knowledge, and reaching the emotional satisfaction-level and even the mental, life changing level. These together can create a meaningful and unforgettable experience product. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 112–119; Kaljund, Leppiman & Riivits-Arkonsuo 2014, 9–10.)

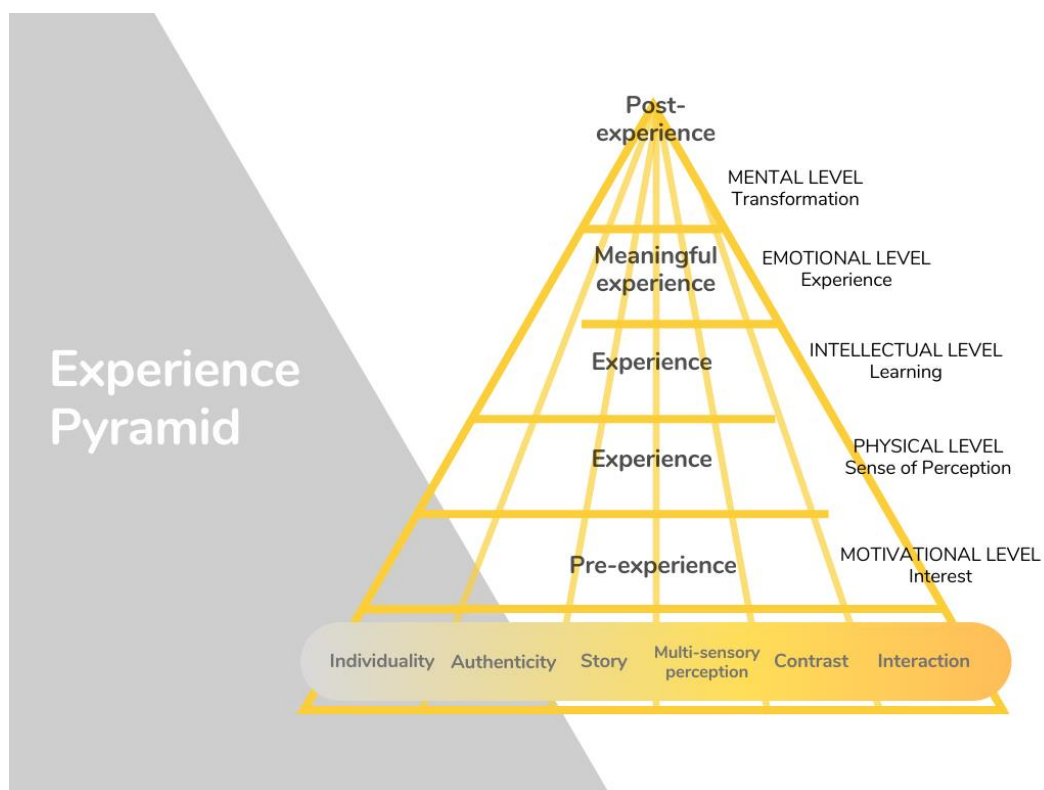


Figure 2. Experience Pyramid Model illustration (adapted from Kaljund, Leppiman & Riivits-Arkonsuo 2014, 10)

4.5 Guests' demand on sustainability

Personal values and the meaning people give to traveling is highly valuable information for tourism businesses. Values and the choices that travellers make are strongly connected. Values define behaviour in a relatively stable way and therefore predict the future choices as well. (Cavagnaro, Postma & Staffieri 2018,32.)

On Earth Day, 22nd of April, Booking.com has annually, since 2016, released a sustainability report about travellers' attitudes and concerns about sustainability. During these years, sustainability and green travel has become an important theme in traveling. In 2016, a survey with 10 000 respondents, revealed that people were missing information about ecological options and had a negative image of sustainable travel. For example, reasons not to book eco-friendly accommodation were that these options were expensive, less luxurious and unreliable. 39% had never heard of eco-friendly accommodations. (Booking.com 2016.) Therefore, educating guests is important. However, asking guests to reuse their towels is simply not a sufficient environmental act enough, but accommodation businesses could educate guests for example about environmental benefits of these actions. (Ogbeide 2012, 1–2.)

The report of 2017 revealed the will of a vast majority of travellers to contribute by choosing eco-friendly accommodation and adjusting their expectations on luxury. These adjustments included energy saving light bulbs, lesser use of air conditioning, less frequent change of towels and sheets, more pricey local food and use of low flow showerheads. According to travellers, the most important green practises to consider when choosing an accommodation were solar energy, water management, recycling and organic food. (Booking.com 2017.)

Based on the survey conducted in 2018, with 12 134 respondents across 12 markets, 87% of travellers expressed their desire to travel more sustainably.

The inspiration travellers got for green travel included both being impressed by the nature in the destinations as well as the opposite, seeing the impacts that tourism can have on destinations. Also, the positive feeling that travelling responsibly brings was widely mentioned as a motivator. (Booking.com 2018.)

Despite the fact that a majority of travellers wished to travel responsibly, less than half of respondents said they hardly manage to do it. A few of the barriers for sustainable travel were considered to be extra costs, lack of trustworthy certifications and sufficient information. However, more than half of the respondents were willing to pay at least 5% more in order to travel sustainably. Positively, 68% of respondents were planning to stay in an

eco-accommodation within a year, when in the previous year the percentage was 65. In 2019 the percentage had raised into 73%. (Booking.com 2018; Booking.com 2019.)

The survey of spring 2019, with 18 077 respondents, reveals a growth in the consumers' concern and contribution on environmental issues. For example, 70% of travellers would book an eco-friendly accommodation over an average option, and 68% wish to support the local communities with the money they spend in the destination. 56% would be interested in options to compensate on their environmental impact in the chosen accommodation. (Booking.com 2019.)

4.6 Customer segments: millennials

Millennials, also known as the generation Y, are often defined as people born between the years 1985 and 1994, or even up to 2000. (The Guardian 2016). As this generation grew up during the same period of time, they've been influenced by the same social and political environment and experiences and therefore can share similar attitudes and values that differ from previous generations. Especially events that occurred in the early age can create collective characteristics of a generation. (Benckendorff, Moscardo & Pendergast 2009,1-2.)

Millennials grew up with continuously evolving technology, economic instability, threat of terrorism and expanding globalization. They are also the most educated generation ever existed. (Benckendorff & al. 2019,3,10.) They are active, socially conscious and widely connected. (CREST 2018.) In 2018, Millennials formed about 20 percent of international travel, spending about USD 203 billion. They tend to travel more than the previous generations, about 4 times a year or more. They are looking for authentic and adventurous experiences, find hidden gems and live like a local. They are very important and fast-growing customer segment now and especially in the future. (OECD 2018, 67).

Authentic travel experiences are more important to Millennials than tangible material such as cars or houses and is even more important than paying off debts. Instead of traditional accommodation like hotels, Millennials book an Airbnb where one gets a peek into the local life and neighbourhoods. A study conducted by Gfk and Airbnb in 2016 shows that about 60 percent of all bookings done in Airbnb were made by Millennials. (Airbnb 2016.)

Social media and networking is a big part of Millennials' lives which is why they are greatly influenced by their networks. As they put a lot of value to their friends' opinions, social media plays an important role in inspiring travel decisions. (Future Foundation 2016,13.) Millennials are also talented at navigating through different booking sites and finding lots of

accurate information about destinations. Digital culture and access to relevant information makes generation Y a segment that rather chooses their trips independently, is aware of possibilities as well as sustainability issues, and demand transparency and indigenous experiences. Millennials are interested in personal growth and education and consider the world as their playground, as the possibilities for global engagement are endless. (Benckendorff & al. 2009,9)

Personal safety is extremely important to Millennials, even more than for the previous generations. (Expedia/Future Foundation 2016,14.) This generation grew up protected by laws that didn't exist for the previous generations, such as laws for simple things like wearing seatbelts. They are often dependent on their parents longer than the previous generations, especially financially. (Benckendorff & al. 2009,10,13.) Despite the desire for authentic experiences, Millennials are hesitant to travel by themselves and tend to avoid risks. They prefer to have company and make decisions based on their friends' and acquaintances' experiences in order to avoid unpleasant surprises. (Future Foundation 2016, 16.)

5 Sustainability Plan for The Lion Fish Hostel

According to UNWTO, all stakeholders hold a responsibility in developing tourism towards a sustainable direction. When it comes to environmental planning, not only can national government help by setting wider policies and planning more sustainable infrastructure as well as managing resources in a more environmentally-friendly way, but the private sector businesses play a significant role in supporting the development by engaging and implementing directly new sustainable policies and procedures locally. All tourism businesses are responsible for developing their businesses into more socially and environmentally sustainable direction. (UNWTO 2013, 19–20.)

The Lion Fish Hostel is located in Puerto Viejo, in Talamanca region, in the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. Even though Costa Rica is showing an example to the world with its government's grand sustainable development plans (Reuters 2019), and even though the Costa Rican Tourism Board officially cooperates with local governments, the country still lacks in tourism institutions that influence directly in local and regional areas. Therefore, on a local level, there is no tourism institutions to ensure the sustainable development to happen and regulations to be followed. (OECD 2018, 320.)

This emphasizes the responsibility of private accommodation businesses in Costa Rica, especially as the local government of Talamanca region is not doing much for the sake of the environment. Environmental issues such as illegal construction in coastal areas is happening more and more as tourism industry is emerging in the area. Locals and international private sector businesses are buying illegally the coastal properties, not necessarily knowing that the plot is illegally sold. Local people are then affected by tourism as they cannot afford to buy properties near the beach anymore and are forced to move towards the mountains or further away from the town. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

In Puerto Viejo, sustainable development should focus first and foremost on educating both locals and tourists about how to live in a more sustainable way. In Puerto Viejo the amount of trash is growing each week as the visitor numbers are growing, and there is a need for education about consumption and how to cut down the amount of trash that is created locally. In Puerto Viejo, the change has to start from the locals and their businesses. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

This sustainability plan is built upon the data we gathered from our interviews, as well as industry guides for environmental management programmes and sustainability plans. We

also base the sustainability plan on the different theories discussed before as well as literature and existing research.

This sustainability plan will give The Lion Fish Hostel the tools to reduce its negative impact on the environment and to foster the growth of sustainable development in the area, as well as to gain competitiveness in the market. Our goal is that by following the sustainability plan, the Lion Fish Hostel will have a positive triple bottom line. The environmental acts, reducing the amount of waste and plastics in the hostel, using environmentally friendly cleaning products and recycling, benefit the Planet part of the triple bottom line. Creating Beach Clean events that bring locals and tourists together for a good cause will make the town cleaner and this way benefit the local community as well as educate both tourists and locals. Cutting down water and energy bills by saving water and educating guests about environmental actions and using less energy for example by changing into energy saving light bulbs can create savings and therefore profit.

Even though many of the sustainability actions are not visible to the guests, it's beneficial to promote the initiatives that the hostel is taking for example with marketing. Guests are more and more acknowledging, and the commitment of the hostel will not be dismissed but will enhance the brand image. What comes to competitiveness, reduced water and energy bills and loyal customers will lead to bigger profit, that will strengthen their place in the market. (Smartvatten 2019.)

5.1 Guidelines

This sustainability plan is tailored for The Lion Fish Hostel's needs and purposes, and it is recommended to be implemented in daily business life, including all procedures and engagement with stakeholders. The business management is recommended to set clear targets on chosen fields firstly for the first year of the plan, and secondly as milestones of sustainable development for the upcoming five years. It is also recommended to give a new focus on staff training, especially as The Lion Fish Hostel is operated mainly by volunteers. It is important that all staff members understand and acknowledge the environmental values that the business policy relies on and support them. For increased motivation the staff should be included in business operations such as communication and environmental events, such as the Beach Clean.

The new sustainability plan's progress can be followed for example by using The Key Issues Review Table (ITP 2008, 16–23), in which it is easy to see all points of issue that are common amongst the accommodation industry businesses, or it can also be used as a

guidance for everyday practices or as a support when trying to achieve industry's environmental certifications or ecolabels.

It is very important to review all business actions first, to see how the business operations are impacting on the environment. The Lion Fish Hostel is situated in the middle of the town, so poor water treatment systems are difficult to affect, but the hostel can choose many smaller ways to act in a sustainable way.

5.2 Models for sustainability plan

This sustainability plan tailored for The Lion Fish Hostel follows the guidelines of Environmental Management for Hotels: The Industry Guide to Sustainable Operation. (ITP 2008, 1–23.) These guidelines are built for hotels and related organisations and are highly relevant to The Lion Fish Hostel. In this sustainability plan we have followed the steps of the International Tourism Partnership's Industry Guide and its Key Issue Review Table (ITP 2008, 16–23), which is available for further investigation also for the management of The Lion Fish Hostel, including easily approachable and usable system management table for key issues.

According to ITP's guide, an accommodation business should first and foremost prepare the actual new environmental policy to follow, and after that follows the potential partnerships, such as with Puerto Viejo's Planet Conservation organisation. In the beginning of the plan it is important to carry out a review of the business procedures, checking all of the actions and reviewing them using a comprehensive listing such as the Key Issue Review Table (ITP 2008, 16–23). After reviewing all business procedures, the company will have a comprehensive and updated knowledge of its environmental impacts, and low and high eco-efficient points of business procedures, upon which the company can rely on in the new action plan. The company should also set both short-term targets for the upcoming year and long-term objectives to meet within five years, which can then be audited, and the progress measured. When the business has set its new policy and implemented new strategy in its daily actions, it should also focus on training its staff members and involving guests and local community in its environmental actions, such as Beach Clean events.

This sustainability plan focuses on guiding The Lion Fish Hostel to conduct its environmental review, to set short- and long-term targets as well as inform how to motivate and include all stakeholders to the new implemented environmental programme. This plan addresses the most important issues of The Lion Fish Hostel business operation, according to the local issues on sustainable development, and guides the company towards a new

environmental management system by using small and simple steps to improve the daily procedures of the business.

This plan can be implemented at any time, with any time frame. We suggest The Lion Fish Hostel to start from choosing its short-term goals such as focusing on educating guests and staff about recycling or implementing new water efficiency policy for laundry and bathrooms. Then, the business can also set long term goals to be met in five years, including prohibiting single use plastic items from the hostel, for example.

5.3 Practical implementation of the plan

We gathered a comprehensive list of new sustainable procedure recommendations for The Lion Fish Hostel's new sustainability plan. The following ideas are collected from Global Stewards Sustainable Living Tips listing (Global Stewards 2019) as well as using ITP's Key Issues Review Table's 100 key issues as a guidance (ITP 2008, 16–23). We created a shortened version of the plan with practical guidelines with procedure examples as well as Golden Rules for The Lion Fish Hostel management, which both can be found in the appendices. (Appendices 1 & 2.)

The new value-driven environmental policy focuses on reducing resource usage and damage by changing daily business procedures into more sustainable ones, training and motivating staff, educating and engaging all stakeholders as well as creating new partnerships.

The implementation plan is divided into the following sections; Staff, Education, Water and energy, Recycling and waste, Maintenance, Food, Purchases, Guests and Guest rooms. (Global Stewards 2019.) The Key Issues Review Table can be used for reviewing all these aspects of business operation, but it mostly focuses on energy usage, water usage which includes quality and treatment, waste management, external and internal air quality, food safety, purchasing and supply chains as well as hazardous material usage such as cleaning products. (ITP 2008, 10, 16–19.)

5.3.1 Staff

There are many ways to engage staff members to the new environmental programme, such as through environmental education and procedure training, open communication and environmental events. Sustainably oriented accommodation business could also attract new staff members with similar values, which could lead to better company culture with motivated staff members. According to ITP's publication Environmental Management

for Hotels, training staff for sustainability practices and showing that the business truly cares for the environment can make the job feel more meaningful to the staff and contributing positively to local life can make them feel valued in their work. This all will then again influence the guest experience as when the motivation of the staff is high, so is the quality of the guest service. (ITP 2008, 4.) One idea is to reward each month's best suggestion giver with a small prize. (ITP 2008, 13.) At the Lion Fish Hostel this could be executed by giving out a free bicycle or surfboard rental, for example.

It is important to keep the communication open and encourage staff members to give suggestions on environmental subjects. Staff could also be included in projects with different business partners such as Planet Conservation, which could help the staff team to build and increase common enthusiasm and motivation. The staff should be trained on a regular basis by giving a physical tour around the hostel and teaching all environmental procedures according to the set policy. It is also possible to set up a green team who would be responsible for certain green actions. (ITP 2008, 11.)

5.3.2 Education

There are many actions that can be taken to support the plastic free Caribe Sur Libre de Plastico movement of the area. An accommodation business can for example educate its guests and staff about drinkable tap water and give out or sell reusable glass bottles for its guests and staff, or share cotton bags to use for the store, and educate guests about sustainable ingredients for cooking and provide organic fruit and vegetables for the guests. Cooperating with other onsite businesses would also enhance this development. For an accommodation business, sustainability actions can look like promoting eco-friendliness by building an effective separation system, combining with a local farm where to take all organic waste to and make a compost out of it. This type of actions would also help the growing garbage piles that Puerto Viejo has to deal with weekly. To reduce its water pollution, an accommodation business can switch its cleaning products to biodegradable ones, and also try to find alternatives for plastic cleaning equipment, such as sponges. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

Plastic pollution is a big issue to deal with in Puerto Viejo area, which has to start reducing the amount of consumed plastics. Beach Clean events are also important and necessary for the environmental education to spread, but it all starts with individuals and companies becoming aware of using and consuming plastics, after which steps can be taken towards downsizing the use of plastics. Plastics have a life cycle, and there are only a number of time that they can be recycled, and therefore, the change has to include reducing the use, instead of only choosing to recycle. (Harding 26 April 2019.)

There are both indirect and direct ways to educate stakeholders, such as staff, guests and business partners. The Lion Fish Hostel can educate its guests by nonverbal communication, for example by placing information about environmentally-friendly practices on walls to be read. In the kitchen, it could start buying sustainable ingredients, promoting drinkable tap water and educating about waste recycling. In the dorm rooms the signs could focus on saving energy, so switching lights and fans off when leaving the room. In the bathrooms, there could be signs suggesting to save water, as water shortages are common in the area. Verbal communication then again would focus on face to face communication, informing guests about the hostel's environmental values and practices whilst introducing the hostel's premises due check-in for example, and promoting and inviting the guests to join in the Beach Clean events.

The hostel staff members could be educated through regular staff training sessions where they could learn how all business procedures can work as sustainably as possible. Educating them about local environmental issues and local municipality's procedures, such as poor wastewater treatment and trash collection, and indicating that recycling truly matters in the area could motivate them to participate more passionately. It is also important to educate them about consumption patterns, especially when it comes to purchasing plastic products in the area. One way of educating staff is also by involving them in environmental events and sustainability projects.

5.3.3 Energy efficiency

There are many ways to affect water and energy resource usage and damage. The business should measure its eco-efficiency and see which are the low or high eco-efficient points of operations. Low eco-efficient points are the most environment damaging operations, and in order to become more sustainable in daily operations, a business should focus on the opportunities and options to change these procedures. Efficiency checks should be made, and corrective actions taken accordingly. (ITP 2008, 16–17.)

To foster the company's resource efficiency, it is important to change electricity and energy systems to energy-efficient ones and train staff and guests to energy-efficient practices, such as turning the lights off in unoccupied rooms. Energy usage can also be reduced by investing in new laundry equipment such as ozone laundry system, and by focusing on operating all machinery in a correct way. Private rooms should have a towel and bed linen reuse program and there should be instructional cards such as Green Suite's Project Planet Housekeeping cards. (Green Suites 2019; Global Stewards 2019; ITP 2008, 16–17.)

5.3.4 Recycling and waste

Waste reduction and recycling are important parts of sustainable operation, and there should be a review of how much the business produces waste as well as which type of waste, and after that accordingly set targets for reduction, re-use and recycling. There should be a recycling centre in the premises, as well as recycling bins in the public areas of the premises. It should also be taken into consideration how to treat hazardous waste, such as batteries and light bulbs. (ITP 2008, 16–17; Global Stewards 2019.)

Waste management is a big issue in Costa Rica, as there are no proper systems for it. There are recycling programs, but Costa Ricans are not educated properly about why or how to use them. In Puerto Viejo the waste management is quite poor, as there is only one truck that picks trash bins from the street, and the ones that don't fit in the truck anymore, will be left behind. Poor waste management goes hand in hand with non-sustainable development and is therefore an important issue. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

Therefore, it would be important for a local business to contribute in educating all stakeholders, including staff, guests and partners about recycling possibilities. When it comes to plastics, in Costa Rica the majority of plastics can't be recycled, but in general it is possible to recycle green and blue plastic bottles as well as hard plastics. This does not include sweet wrappers or plastic film, which would have to go to the landfill. It is important to share and involve also education about plastic consumption and how and which plastic to recycle, as plastic pollution is a growing issue in Puerto Viejo area. Local businesses have therefore a great responsibility in this. (Harding 26 April 2019.)

5.3.5 Water management

Puerto Viejo is a beautiful coastal town, with a lush green rainforest, rich wildlife and Caribbean Sea with turquoise water, but the area's environment is suffering from poor water treatment, causing highly damaging grey and black water pollution. The coastal areas are being damaged due to illegal construction and trees are being illegally cut down, and the corrupted local municipality is handing out permissions for these, which is contrary with the environmental law of Costa Rica. Puerto Viejo does not have any regulation plans for these actions, which in addition to the growing amount of Puerto Viejo's population, is leading to environmental issues such as polluted water that flows into the nature. (Haycke 22 April 2019)

In Puerto Viejo, also water shortages are common, and The Lion Fish Hostel's guests also have to suffer from it. To reduce their water usage, The Lion Fish Hostel could establish a

water management plan to measure its water consumption. In this way, it would be possible to find out where savings can be made, and to set realistic short-term and long-term goals. Training staff is also important with this, as well as educating guests about the importance of freshwater resources in the area. It is s responsibility of the business to provide opportunities to reduce water usage and education on how to use water in a more sustainable way.

Water efficiency and treatment can be managed through investing in new equipment, such as new water saving showerheads, as well as through regular maintenance checks for example with toilet leaks. The shower flow could be changed into 10 litres per minute, toilets to 6 litres per flush and taps for 6 litres per minute, and this way reduce the amount of used water. The housekeeping should be trained on how to reduce water use, for example by not using the flush when cleaning the toilets and not letting the taps run when cleaning. The laundry should only be operated with full load and the machine should be used correctly. (ITP Green Hotelier 2019.)

The wastewater should be treated properly and if it is not possible due to poor water treatment system, the used chemicals could be replaced with biodegradable ones to minimise local environmental pollution. Wastewater can also be treated, and grey water recycled. To minimise environmental harms there could also be grease traps to be installed in kitchen sinks. (ITP Green Hotelier 2019.)

It is important to educate guests about local water issues and ways to use water smartly, and the hostel should be showing an example on these matters. Environmentally friendly procedures can be informed to guests by placing signs on bathroom walls with information such as “Save 9 litres of water by closing the tap while brushing your teeth”. One way to get guests involved in environmental practices is to set up a charity possibility that focuses on water conservation efforts. When checking in the guests can be informed about a water conservation program and that they can help by reusing their towels and bed linen. (ITP 2008, 16–17; Global Stewards 2019) Innovations on the subject could also include rainwater harvesting and using that as an outdoor shower possibility for the guests to use when Puerto Viejo suffers from water outages.

5.3.6 Food

Food waste could be reduced by setting signs on kitchen walls about food waste and its proper disposal. For example, it could be possible to dispose and treat the kitchen's organic waste differently, such as handing it over to animal feeds or take it to a farm and recycle it by composting the matter. It is also important to educate guests and staff when it comes to sustainable food matters, for example to avoid buying over-harvested or endangered species or by providing a list of the area's organic restaurants. Also, creating an organic food garden to use, for example to the roof area next to the kitchen, could reduce the amount of packaging waste. (ITP 2008, 16–17; Global Stewards 2019)

5.3.7 Purchases

It is important to focus on products' life cycles and create a green purchasing policy for the company. For a green purchasing policy, a company should only choose the type of products that are recyclable, and with as long-life cycle time as possible, and that represent sustainability, are environmentally friendly and socially responsible. This could mean that the business agrees for example on purchasing only recycled furniture, eco-labelled products or to buy in bulk instead of small separate packaging. In cleaning and laundry, this could mean choosing non-toxic cleaning products, including consumables such as toilet paper. In the kitchen sector the business could choose to buy only organic and locally produced ingredients, or for example, only products with minimal plastic packaging. All guest amenities such as coffee and tea products are included in this. Also, to reduce the amount of plastic bags or bottles the guests consume, the business can offer reusable bags and bottles to use or to purchase. (ITP 2008, 16–17; Global Stewards 2019)

5.3.8 Guests and guests' rooms

Guests should also be taken into consideration when creating a sustainability plan. Environmentally friendly idea can be combined with guest friendly business, for example by creating a small library with book swap section with green guides, ecotourism guides, hiking and biking guides as well as information about local environment organisations such as Planet Conservation, and its projects. Guests could also be encouraged for green actions by providing them information about public transportation as well as maps for walking routes and bicycle routes for the area. (ITP 2008, 16-17; Global Stewards 2019.) One way to engage customers in sustainable actions is to provide them information about carbon offset possibilities such as Terrapass and encourage them to use this type of platforms for their trips (Terrapass 2019). It is also important to educate the guests about the local culture, how to respect their traditions and offer ways to help the local community,

such as through participating in Beach Clean events or through purchasing local artists' products. (ITP 2008, 16–17; Global Stewards 2019)

5.4 Partnerships with environmental organisations

The tourism businesses can choose to operate with sustainable partners, and it is the responsibility of the business to educate its stakeholders about environmental matters, and to show an example about sustainable actions as well as to engage all stakeholders in the sustainable plan. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

Partnerships with local environmental associations could be beneficial for both parties, as they would share the same values and goals on sustainable development. This type of cooperation could for example be initiated in staff training or alternatively in organising environmental-oriented events. Common company-goals of both parties include improved brand image and environmental organisation's goals include publicity and spreading awareness. Therefore, a cooperation for example through organising events with an environmental organisation could potentially help to meet existing business goals. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 131–132.)

Planet Conservation in Puerto Viejo organises Beach Clean events that have had a positive effect on the local community, fostering the sustainable development in the area. There is a change happening in Puerto Viejo area as plastic free actions have become more popular amongst the area's restaurants and accommodation businesses. If businesses choose not to participate in the actual events, it is also possible for them to support these types of campaigns, events or education programs held by local environmental organisations financially, and through that help the sustainable development to integrate. (Haycke 22 April 2019.)

5.5 Guest experience

The owner of The Lion Fish Hostel, Elias Brown, had an idea to start hosting Beach Clean events as part of the volunteer work programme for the hostel staff members (Elias Brown 28 April 2019). This type of work experience could improve the employees' personal experience, which then can lead to better guest service and overall satisfaction within guests. (ITP 2008, 4.) Activities, such as Beach Clean event, could also work as a team building opportunity, which then could have a positive effect on the company culture as it could make the work more enjoyable by increasing enthusiasm among the staff members. This then again, could reflect to the guests' experience. (ITP 2008, 12.)

When developing the volunteer experience, The Lion Fish Hostel can improve its guests' experience by engaging the guests in the hostel's environmental events such as the Beach Clean. To create an unforgettable and meaningful guest experience, we have used Kylänen and Tarssanen's Experience Pyramid theory, which guides the business to take all product elements and customer's levels of experience into consideration. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 99–121.) An experience product in The Lion Fish Hostel's case would be the implementation of the new sustainability plan, including hosting Beach Clean events for guests and staff members.

In a successful experience product, all elements should be in line and in harmony with the levels of customer's experience. This means that there are many opportunities for the business to influence the guest's personal experiences. The actual experience product should have all the brand or product elements, including individuality so making a guest feel like it is made for him or her. This comes from understanding the guests' wants and needs, and then tailoring the experience accordingly. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 100–104, 114–116.)

The guests should feel that the product is authentic and there should be a storyline told for the guests in order for them to immerse even more in the culture. The story could be told by a local, such as the owner of The Lion Fish Hostel, and the story could be about the local life, traditions and people. There should also be an element of environmental education in the story, for example by shortly explaining about the local environmental issues such as plastic pollution, and how it is greatly valued that the guests are participating in Beach Clean event. This way the story is shared in an authentic way and it engages the guests in both emotionally and intellectually, as they will learn new things and feel more involved and valued.

The product should include multi-sensory perception, for example by offering refreshments and local fruits for the participants to sense the experience product through their sense of taste. Other ways to awaken senses are for example by taking the participants to the seaside and beaches where they can see the landscape or the trash, feel the sand and warmth, hear the nature's sounds such as monkeys howling and to smell the sea, and through that they are fully immersed in the experience through all their senses.

Taking guests to a Beach Clean event away from the accommodation business and traveling life or life at home, offer the guests a contrast to something they are used to and familiar with. Finally, the last important product element is social interaction. Successful interaction, let it be with The Lion Fish Hostel owner or staff members or other locals, can

make the guests feel a sense of belonging and community, which is important for the overall experience. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 114–116.)

These product elements are then aligned with the levels of experience, starting from motivational level and interest. This level of customer experience takes place already before the actual event or happening, such as through The Lion Fish Hostel's marketing and social media. The hostel can awake interest in potential guests already online by marketing the business for ecotourists and volunteers who are interested in environmental events such as Beach Clean. The marketing efforts could focus on implementing the product elements such as authenticity in their strategies, marketing an unforgettable experience and a chance to support and help the local community and environment. Motivational level is all about raising awareness and interest, which then can lead to increased motivation, a want and need towards the experience product. Motivation could also be increased at the hostel before the event takes place, for example by having flyers at the premises as well as informing guests in an enthusiastic way about the Beach Clean event. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 117–119.)

After motivating the guests comes the physical level of experience, the actual Beach Clean event. At the event all basic physical needs should be taken into consideration, this means that the guests should be provided with refreshments including snacks and drinks, as well as bathrooms. The event should not take place at the hottest time of the day and transportation and guidance should be included so that the experience would feel as effortless and easy as possible, without any stress to the participants. To lift the customer experience to a new level, the intellectual level of experience, the guests should be engaged in learning new skills such as recycling, as well as gaining new knowledge and insights. These could be about the local environmental issues such as plastic pollution, and tips on how to change one's consuming patterns into a more sustainable direction. The person sharing this knowledge should be a professional and authentic, and include each guest individually to the experience. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 117–119.)

After the intellectual level and learning comes the emotional level, in which the ordinary experience changes into a meaningful one. Through environmental education at the hostel and the Beach Clean event, guests gain new insights and are offered an opportunity to change their behaviour into more sustainable way. This may foster the feeling of importance as it gives them the possibility to directly influence the wellbeing of the local community and the environment. The actual experience is then shifted into the emotional level, where guests can feel that their actions matter, and when product elements are in line, such as interaction with the locals and hostel staff, feeling of individuality and getting

to know the story, the guests can experience that they are a part of something bigger such as the hostel community. Successful emotional level of experience awakens positive emotions such as happiness and sense of meaningfulness. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 117–119.)

The highest level of the Experience Pyramid model is the mental level and transformation. This indicates that there has been a change in the perception and the guests' lifestyle or, for example, their style of traveling, so the influence of the experience product will mostly happen after the actual experience. This type of change in mental state can be perceived by an experience that has touched the guest in all levels of experience and through all of its elements, fulfilling the customer's needs and engaging the customer in a way that feels authentic with individual interaction fostering the sense of connection and community, offering a great contrast, engaging all the senses, teaching new skills leading to personal growth and finally, a mental transformation. After this type of an experience, a participant, the guest, might start sharing this knowledge and these skills onward, for example educating others about important environmental issues. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 112–119; Kaljund, Leppiman & Riivits-Arkonsuo 2014, 9–10.)

This method is the key for developing the overall guest stay at The Lion Fish Hostel, aiming to provide a meaningful experience by including the guest in for example Beach Clean events and reaching the intellectual level by educating and guiding guests towards sustainable actions. With this method, the guest experience could even reach the mental level, the transformational level. (Kylänen & Tarssanen 2007, 112–119; Kaljund, Leppiman & Riivits-Arkonsuo 2014, 9–10.)

6 Recommendations

Strategic environmental management helps to get potential profit out of faced environmental challenges, and through strategic planning business can gain competence in the market by coping smartly with the ongoing environmental changes. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 172–174.) Therefore, environmental management is not only necessary in today's world but also can be beneficial financial-wise. (ITP Green Hotelier 2013.) Also, guests are more and more demanding and acknowledging about environmental issues. Especially in a location like Puerto Viejo, the nature plays a huge role in attracting tourists and especially attracting eco-travellers who are interested in protecting it. Tourism businesses have a responsibility to preserve this pristine environment, adapt their company policies accordingly and educate all stakeholders to join the sustainable development.

6.1 Future scenarios

Tourism and sustainable development are both emerging trends globally. (United Nations 2019) Costa Rica is planning on pioneering carbon neutrality (Reuters 2019) and sustainable actions should be becoming the new norm in tourism industry. (UNWTO 2013, 17.) The environmental issues such as plastic pollution is becoming more and more highlighted and visitors more aware of the issues. (Harding 26 April 2019.) Therefore, it is important for tourism businesses to stay on track of the development, and create sustainability plans accordingly to maintain their market position. (ITP 2008, 1–2.)

The Lion Fish Hostel can follow its new sustainability plan and take a step by step approaching method, starting from small changes, setting short-term targets and slowly moving into a greener way of managing, valuing environment in all of its procedures. Future opportunities for The Lion Fish Hostel include new possibilities to foster sustainable development in Talamanca region, for example through Beach Clean events. The Lion Fish Hostel can also set long-term goals to meet in five years, such as becoming a plastic-free hostel, and take steps towards that goal. The hostel also has opportunities with eco programs and certifications.

6.2 Eco programs and certifications

The Lion Fish Hostel can also participate in different eco programs to support sustainable development. Some of the eco programs and certifications are expensive or require standards that The Lion Fish Hostel has no potential to reach due to the poor infrastructure of Puerto Viejo. However, there are a few programs that the management of The Lion Fish Hostel could take a look at and adapt according to their needs.

Travelife is an affordable certification scheme that helps hotels to develop their operations into more sustainable direction including environmental, social and economic aspects. When a hotel meets the required standards, is a member of the scheme and able to prove its sustainable performance, they are given a Travelife recognition that can attract guests and enhance the reputation of the accommodation business. Travelife certification scheme has different criteria for smaller businesses, that have less than 160 guests per night, and for bigger businesses. They provide checklists on their website for businesses to see where they stand with sustainability. (Travelife 2019.) The scheme operates in more than 50 countries and has over 1500 members. It is specifically designed scheme for the tourism industry. Once achieved, the Travelife Gold Certification has to be renewed with a new audit once in every two years. (Travelife Collection 2019.)

Another considerable eco program is called Make Holidays Greener. It is an annual campaign of ABTA and it is collaborated with Travelife for Accommodation. They promote sustainable tourism and companies can share their own sustainable actions and receive a pledge with different topics such as 'Respect animals', 'Switch off', 'Save water' or 'Go local, eat local, buy local' that can be put on site in the businesses. These infographics offer valuable information for guests while they can be used as a decoration for the hotel or hostel. (Make Holidays Greener 2019.)

The Certificate for Sustainable Tourism (CST) is the Costa Rican Tourism Board's (ICT) program that evaluates tourism companies according to their success in following the sustainability model regarding management of natural, cultural and social resource management. The CST consists of a scale of 5 levels (leaves). The aim is to prevent exploitation of natural, cultural or social resources, solve current risks and maintain balance in the tourism industry. The objective is to improve the quality of life of the locals as well as guarantee economic success within the tourism industry by making sustainability a practical necessity for the country's competitiveness. (ICT 2019.)

The CST benefits companies by improving competitiveness, adding possibilities for marketing and promotion globally as well as enhancing the quality of tourism products. It also improves the national tourism brand, and separates so called 'greenwashers' from those companies that actually commit to sustainable solutions and mind sets.

To be part of the program and achieve the certificate, a company must participate in technical workshops organized in different cities in Costa Rica and fill certain criteria. (ICT 2019.)

The CST is expensive and requires the kind of infrastructure that Puerto Viejo, at the moment, does not have. Therefore, The Lion Fish Hostel is unlikely to receive this certification, but could still take advice on their suggestions and procedures.

7 Discussion

The theory we gathered framing the sustainability plan is relevant, but the theories are very wide and not all completely adaptable for The Lion Fish Hostel. The triple bottom line frames the basic idea behind the sustainability plan with all of its dimensions. The environmental management refers to the environmental dimension that we took as our main aspect, discussing the possibilities of sustainable management strategies. Not all of these are valuable to The Lion Fish hostel, as it is a low budget accommodation business in a developing country, however, they give ideas and general understanding of the important matters. Experience Pyramid reflects the importance of guest experience in the hostel, and how sustainability can play a part in it.

The Lion Fish Hostel is a small accommodation business in a small Caribbean town. It is a low budget hostel with very basic amenities. Many of the main steps towards environmental sustainability recommended in the theories are not suitable for The Lion Fish Hostel regarding for example air conditioning and room temperature, waste management and investment in energy-efficient equipment. Even buying eco-friendly cleaning products can be a big challenge for the hostel as it would mean that they would need to raise their prices to make it worth it.

There are many social aspects of sustainability too that create a gap between the theory and what The Lion Fish Hostel can do, for example, what comes to the staff. Continuously changing staff and management creates challenges and ideas such as assigning green teams responsible for measuring sustainability become impossible. Also, the poor infrastructure of the town creates challenges that need to be taken into consideration. For example, the waste management is insufficient and the hands of business owners wishing to act more sustainably are tied.

The success of the sustainability plan relies a lot on the genuine will and initiative of the business owners. We believe that the sustainability plan for The Lion Fish Hostel is beneficial as Brown, the owner of the hostel, is committed and willing to develop the business towards more sustainable practises while acknowledging the challenges it has.

7.1 Ways to build sustainably oriented operations for The Lion Fish Hostel

In the following chapter, we will conclude some ideas, briefly answering all of our research questions. The main research question of our thesis is how can The Lion Fish Hostel operate in a more sustainable way?

The Lion Fish Hostel can develop its sustainable procedures through education, partnerships as well as making changes to the business operations for them to become as efficient as possible. Important steps in changing the business operations into more sustainable direction include pollution reduction, including water, air and noise pollution as well as emission reduction and water usage. It is good to also consider using certifications or eco-labels, investing in energy-saving appliances and renewable energy sources. An extremely important part is training staff as well as building new partnerships and campaigns locally. (UNWTO & UNEP 2017, 45-46.)

The second question asks why the sustainability plan is important. Due to current challenges with climate change and its effect on biodiversity and ecosystems, environmental management is the utmost important in order to prevent and reduce the damage on the environment. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 18–19.) Poor visitor management and inappropriate activities of accommodation businesses have a negative influence in all levels of sustainability and can lead to severe biodiversity damage for example due to resource overuse or poor waste management. (UNWTO 2013, 16–17.) Accommodation businesses are directly influencing local emissions and even pollution, if waste management is not well managed, and for example if cleaning products' chemicals are being released into the nature due to bad water treatment systems. (ITP 2008, 3.)

One of the biggest threats to all tourism businesses in Puerto Viejo is to lose the natural beauty and rich ecosystems of the area due to pollution that is caused by poor water and waste treatment, as well as illegal activities such as deforestation, as ecotourism is the main source of living for local businesses. The sustainability plan can not only improve the sustainability of The Lion Fish Hostel and attract visitors but also allow the hostel to operate as an example for other companies in Puerto Viejo.

The third question is about the guidelines for the sustainability plan and policy. The Lion Fish Hostel can follow ITP's guideline of Environmental Management for Hotels (2008), which guides the management to create a strategy upon the key issues of the business procedures, focusing directly on the negative impacts to the environment and changing inappropriate actions to more environmentally-friendly ones. The main aim for this guideline is choosing to improve the state of the environment, and then communicating it to all stakeholders and by that, adapting the new company culture according to the plan. It is also important to focus on social responsibilities such as educating guests, staff and local community about environmental issues and procedures. It is also possible to invest in local infrastructure development and therefore indirectly create social benefits. (ITP 2008.) A company can also follow different environmental management systems and for example

focus on measuring their overall performance in areas of efficiency, sufficiency and consistency. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 25–27.) The procedure guidelines can also be perceived through an eco-certification system, or as we did with The Lion Fish Hostel sustainability plan, according to business' individual needs. Focus should be on the specific issues which are relevant to the business and create a strategy specifically for that. This environmental programme is to be followed daily and the performance measured on a regular basis. In addition, the company culture should be adapted to the new sustainability plan by communicating with staff, guests and other important stakeholders. (ITP 2008, 3.) The sustainability plans of accommodation businesses should also focus on social responsibilities towards local communities, for example by educating guests, staff and the local community about environmental issues and ways to live more sustainably. (ITP 2008, 4.)

The fourth question asked about which practical actions should be taken. It is important to review the current situation of sustainability and find out what are the weak points of the business. It is important to set certain goals, both short- and long-term that are discussed with the management and staff. The performance should be measured regularly. Most important practical steps to take into consideration are energy usage and sourcing, water consumption and quality and water treatment as well as the possibilities of reusing and recycling water. What comes to chemicals, the use, storage and disposal are important matters. (ITP 2008, 9).

In accommodation businesses practical actions can include informing the guests about local environmental issues and guiding their behaviour for example by placing a note in the guest showers that reminds not to use too much water due to the common water shortages in the area. Other important factor for eco-marketing is to focus on reducing environmental pollution by making responsible choices, honouring products' life cycles and recycling possibilities. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 208.) Eco-control is about environmental regulations, including eco-labels and certifications, as well as setting and controlling the standards for EMSs, for example for the ISO environmental performance series. (Schaltegger & al. 2003, 294–295, 306.)

To foster sustainable development, accommodation businesses can include environmental values in their business policies and choose to act in an environmentally responsible way in its daily and regular procedures. Businesses can include actions such as sending an informative message to each arriving guest beforehand in their strategy, and through that share insights about the business' environmental policy as well as recommendations about what to bring instead of a plastic water bottle or a plastic bag when arriving to the

hostel. If the business has a strict environmental policy, it can inform its guests about what not to bring when arriving to the hostel, and by that forbidding some of the products from the whole hostel. At the hostel premises, there could be signs on walls about how to make daily choices more sustainable, for example about drinkable tap water or recycling info in the kitchen area. Sustainable development should not just stay within the company policy, but also be acted out and used as a way to change attitudes and habits of guests and staff members. (Harding 26 April 2019.)

Fifth question was about how the sustainability plan's actions and new environmentally oriented policy would develop the guest experience. When engaging the guests in the company environmental policies, whether it is through environmental education and teaching skills or through an event such as Beach Clean, it helps to create meaningful memories, create value and feeling of importance and belonging. Guests are more and more demanding what comes to sustainability and The Lion Fish Hostel has a great opportunity to attract environmentally oriented guests and volunteers because of the town's unique location. If the Beach Clean event is organised regularly as a part of the volunteer work it can affect positively the experience of both, volunteers and guests, which leads to better company culture, happier staff and better customer service. Education through different ways enhances the guest experience, following the Experience Pyramid theory. It allows the experience product elements and levels of experience to be in harmony, creating opportunities for guests to gain new skills and knowledge, to feel valued and meaningful during their stay, possibly leading to mental level of change, such as becoming passionate about conservation work.

Sixth question is about benefits that the company can receive through choosing to act in a more sustainable way. Having an environmental management programme benefits the business by creating profit as it can help reduce costs, as well as improving competitiveness. (ITP 2008, 1–2.) As sustainability is such a strong value nowadays, businesses can find new customer segments and attract more customers by choosing sustainable operations and management styles. What comes to cutting down costs, according to ITP's Green Hotelier article: Water Management and Responsibility in Hotels (ITP Green Hotelier 2013) the cost for water usage, including purchasing and disposing waste water, is in many hotels even 10 % of total costs. If hotel companies were to reduce their water usage, it could not only help environmentally but also could help cut costs, especially when water management is included in sustainability plan.

If a business decides to invest in better waste management in an area with poor infrastructure, such as recycling, it can offer the business also an opportunity to strengthen the

local community. (ITP 2008, 4.) In an ideal situation, the local community benefits from tourism as the economy grows, creating jobs and improving the infrastructure. Sustainable practises of businesses can protect the local nature and therefore the whole community.

7.2 Validity and reliability

When it comes to any research, its validity and reliability are the most important aspects. The findings need to be accurate and truthful and especially in qualitative research the researcher's bias cannot interfere with the study. For example, interview questions cannot be leading in a way that predicts a certain kind of an answer. As qualitative research does not focus on empirical calculations and statistics but has a more holistic point of view, the ways to measure validity are also different from quantitative research. (Brink 1993, 35.)

The validity of a research refers to the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Reliability means that the findings of a research are stable and repeatable, meaning that when using the same or similar research methods, the results are relatively similar. (Brink 1993, 35.)

There are several risks to validity and reliability in all research. These risks are usually related to either the researcher, the subjects of the research, the situation or research methods. The researcher may have unconscious bias, subjects may behave differently in different situations, they may want to give a better impression of themselves or of the studied topic, or they might behave in a way that is expected for gaining certain results. The methods of research can be risky as well, it's up to the researcher's judgement to choose for example the interviewees whose knowledge and credibility might form the base of the data. (Brink 1993, 35-37.)

There are certain limitations in our research. First of all, interview as a research method might not be the most reliable one. These interviews were conducted in Costa Rica with people from different backgrounds, one local business owner, one expatriate business owner and one expatriate who was quite new to the town. The number of interviewees was also very small, and informal interviews with people around the town was mostly used to create an overall image for ourselves of the sustainability situation in the town. The generic observation also gave us information, especially about the situation in The Lion Fish Hostel, but only from the parts that were visible for us.

New country and culture made us, as interviewers, less able to judge the interviewees' knowledge and credibility. Also, our position as temporary visitors might have affected the interviewees' attitudes towards the topic, some things might have been left out or simplified for us. Interviewees might have had also bias towards the topic, they might have

wanted to give better image of the situation than what it really is. Also, all interviews were conducted in English, which was not the native language of the two of our interviewees nor of us interviewers. Little details and tones might have been missed from both sides of the interviews because of the language.

7.3 Self-assessment

The thesis process was, all in all, a long journey as it already started in early spring 2019 in Costa Rica. The content of the thesis faced some changes due to external factors such as the new Costa Rican governmental funding for Puerto Viejo area's lifeguards, as we originally wanted to include the social aspect to the sustainability plan on a wider scale. The changes required us to quickly come up with new ideas and ways to solve the situation.

Researching about local issues and environmental movements and attitudes gave us many new insights upon which we trusted our thesis subject and the strong focus on environmental sustainability. The main drive came from the owner of the hostel, who feels very passionate about environmental actions and plastic free business management style, including recycling and working in a more sustainable way in everyday procedures. Therefore, we managed to find many practical and easy solutions for The Lion Fish Hostel owner's requests for the operational problems of the business. We managed to set up a collection of environmental and sustainably oriented steps, from small and easy steps such as placing a note in the showers about saving water to bigger steps that would require more effort, investment and attention to implement. Therefore, the overall plan that we put together is both easily achievable as well as challenging at times, giving the complete freedom for the management to decide on which path to take towards more sustainable operations.

Challenges we faced when writing this thesis were our physical locations and varying schedules. One of us moved to another country and started a full-time internship while working with the thesis. This required flexibility from both sides and smart delegation of tasks, as well as clear and smooth communication. It also required us to be effective enough to be able to set targets and milestones for the thesis work schedule. All in all, we did well with communication despite the physical challenge of different locations.

This thesis process taught us a lot about, not only sustainability and accommodation businesses' perspective and role in the worldwide sustainable development, but also about Costa Rica and Puerto Viejo area's communities and the importance of their environmen-

tal work, as well as the struggles local businesses can have when it comes to environmental matters and finally, the development of Costa Rica's tourism. Researching and writing about the subjects mentioned really opened our eyes about the major difficulties many developing countries face when it comes to, for example, corruption, environmental regulations and infrastructure issues such as water treatment and waste management systems. There are many things small accommodation businesses can do, in order to foster the local sustainable development, but there are also many issues regarding the factors the small companies cannot influence. The only way to make sustainable development spread is through education, teaching skills, raising awareness, and opening the conversation about the local issues and showing an example, as a company. It is important to value sustainability in all business procedures and in Puerto Viejo there are so many opportunities for the educational and attitude-changing development to happen, as The Lion Fish Hostel can for example start co-operating with Planet Conservation.

It was particularly interesting to do all the research and interviewing on a topic that was a great interest for both of us, as we had an opportunity to dig deep in sustainability matters, social and environmental issues in the world's pioneer ecotourism destination, finding out a good amount of insights about important topics as well as solutions that can help the area's tourism to develop into a more sustainable direction.

Working together for a common project was also interesting and it worked well. Even though we have worked together previously, committing to a big project like this thesis taught us about dividing the work, time management skills and critical thinking and discussion. Choosing to write the thesis together gave us an opportunity to research the subject on a wider level and to create a more effective and sufficient sustainability plan for The Lion Fish Hostel.

The skills we gained have not only to do with project planning and teamwork but also the knowledge for variety of sustainable practises and environmental management systems for accommodation businesses. This knowledge can help us in the future when working in any sector in the tourism industry. The issues we summed up in this thesis are not only issues of a small area in Costa Rica, but a part of the global tourism development, with all of its challenges and possibilities. Sustainability is a hot topic in many industries and all knowledge and passion for it will benefit not only the companies but the planet and people too.

References

Aas, Ø. & Haaland, H. 2010. Eco-tourism Certification – Does it Make a Difference? A Comparison of Systems from Australia, Costa Rica and Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 10, 3, pp. 375-385. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271900532_Eco-tourism_Certification_-_Does_it_Make_a_Difference_A_Comparison_of_Systems_from_Australia_Costa_Rica_and_Sweden. Accessed: 18 November 2019.

ABTA. 2018. ABTA reveals 12 Destinations to watch for 2019. URL: <https://www.abta.com/news/abta-reveals-12-destinations-watch-2019>. Accessed: 25 October 2019.

Airbnb 2016. Airbnb and the rise of Millennial Travel. URL: <https://www.airbnb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MillennialReport.pdf>. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

Benckendorff, P., Moscardo, G. & Pendergast, D., 2009. *Tourism and Generation Y*. CABI. Egham. URL: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/haaga/detail.action?docID=476508>. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

Bien, A. 2010. Forest-based ecotourism in Costa Rica as a driver for positive social and environmental development. *Unasylva*, 61, 236, pp. 49–52. URL: <http://www.fao.org/3/i1758e/i1758e12.pdf>. Accessed: 2 October 2019.

Booking.com 2016. Sustainable travel report. URL: <https://globalnews.booking.com/sustainable-travel-in-2016/>. Accessed: 8 November 2019.

Booking.com 2017. Sustainable travel report. URL: <https://news.booking.com/bookingcoms-2017-sustainable-travel-report/>. Accessed: 8 November 2019.

Booking.com 2018. Where Sustainable Travel is Headed in 2018. URL: <https://globalnews.booking.com/where-sustainable-travel-is-headed-in-2018/>. Accessed: 5 November 2019.

Booking.com 2019. Booking.com reveals key findings from its 2019 sustainable travel report. URL: <https://globalnews.booking.com/bookingcom-reveals-key-findings-from-its-2019-sustainable-travel-report>. Accessed: 8 November 2019.

Brink, H. 1993. Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis*, 16, 2, pp. 35-38. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/14824314_Validity_and_reliability_in_qualitative_research. Accessed: 20 November 2019.

Brown, E. 28 April 2019. Business owner. The Lion Fish Hostel. Interview. Puerto Viejo.

Business News Daily 2019. SWOT Analysis: What it is and How to use it. URL: <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4245-swot-analysis.html>. Accessed: 13 November 2019.

Business Strategy Hub 2019. What is Triple Bottom Line (TBL)?(Explained with Examples)- The Future Benchmark. URL: <https://bstrategyhub.com/what-is-triple-bottom-line-tbl-explained-with-examples-the-future-benchmark/>. Accessed: 4 September 2019.

Cavagnaro, E., Postma, A. & Staffieri, S. 2018. Understanding millennials' tourism experience: values and meaning to travel as a key for identifying target clusters for youth (sustainable) tourism. *Journal of tourism futures*, 4, 1, pp.31-42. URL: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JTF-12-2017-0058/full/pdf?title=understanding-millennials-tourism-experience-values-and-meaning-to-travel-as-a-key-for-identifying-target-clusters-for-youth-sustainable-tourism>. Accessed: 2 October 2019.

Center for Responsible Travel 2018. The case for responsible travel: Trends & Statistics 2018. URL: https://www.responsibletravel.org/docs/The_Case_for_Responsible_Travel_2018_FINAL_FOR_WEB.pdf. Accessed: 2 November 2019.

Condon P. M. & Honey, M. 2008. *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* Island Press. Washington. URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/haaga/reader.action?docID=3317530>. Accessed: 2 October 2019.

Future Foundation 2016. Expedia Millennial traveller report. URL: <https://www.foresight-factory.co/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Expedia-Millennial-Traveller-Report-Final.pdf>. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

Global Stewards - Sustainable Living Tips. 2019. Go Green Hotels: Green Ideas for Hotels and Resorts. URL: <http://www.globalstewards.org/green-hotel.htm>. Accessed: 12 September 2019.

Go Visit Costa Rica. 2019. Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program. URL: <https://www.govisitcostarica.com/travellInfo/government-programs/cst-program.asp>. Accessed: 4 September 2019.

Green Hotelier 2013. Water Management and Responsibility in Hotels. URL: <https://www.greenhotelier.org/know-how-guides/water-management-and-responsibility-in-hotels/>. Accessed: 22 September 2019.

Green Suites: Hotel Solutions 2019. Project Planet Program. URL: <https://www.greensuites.com/project-planet-program/>. Accessed: 2 November 2019.

Haycke, B. 22 April 2019. Founder. Planet Conservation. Interview. Puerto Viejo.

Harding, V. 26 April 2019. Event coordinator intern. Planet Conservation. Interview. Puerto Viejo.

ICT Instituto Costarricense De Turismo 2018. Metadatos de los Indicadores calculados por el ICT. URL: <https://www.ict.go.cr/en/documents/estad%C3%ADsticas/informes-estad%C3%ADsticos/anuarios/2005-2015/1349-2018-1/file.html>. Accessed: 2 September 2019.

ICT Instituto Costarricense De Turismo 2019. CST Tourism Sustainability. URL: <https://www.ict.go.cr/en/sustainability/cst.html#certification-for-sustainable-tourism>. Accessed: 24 September 2019.

International Tourism Partnership 2008. Environmental Management for Hotels. URL: <http://www.greenhotelier.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/EMH-1-Policy-Management-for-web-1-1.pdf>. Accessed: 1 November 2019.

Kaljud K., Leppiman, A. & Riivits-Arkonsuo, I. 2014. Consumer Journey from First Experience to Brand Evangelism. 6, 1, pp. 9-10. Figure 1.

Kaljud, K., Leppiman, A. & Riivits-Arkonsuo, I. 2014. Consumer Journey from First Experience to Brand Evangelism. 6, 1, pp. 9-10. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269689773_Consumer_Journey_from_First_Experience_to_Brand_Evangelism. Accessed 4 September 2019.

Kylänen, M. & Tarssanen, S. 2005. Entä jos elämyksiä tuotetaan? Elämyskolmio-malli elämyksellisyyden tunnistamisessa, arvioinnissa ja vahvistamisessa. OAMK Oulun Ammattikorkeakoulu. URL: http://www.oamk.fi/~eimammel/oppimateriaali/arkistossa/elamyksen_kolmio.pdf. Accessed: 4 September 2019.

LEED Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design 2019. U.S. Green Building Council. URL: <http://leed.usgbc.org/leed.html>. Accessed: 25 October 2019.

Make Holidays Greener 2019. Welcome to Make Holidays Greener. URL: <https://make-holidaysgreener.com/holidaymaker>. Accessed: 20 November 2019.

Mikulčić, H., Duić, N. & Dewil, R. 2017. Environmental management as a pillar for sustainable development. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 203, 3, pp. 867. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2017.09.040>. Accessed: 5 November 2019.

Ogbeide, G. 2012. Perception of Green hotels in the 21st Century. *The Journal of Tourism Insights*, 3, 1, 1, pp. 1-7. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280904756>. Accessed: 20 October 2019.

OECD 2018. *Tourism Trends and Policies 2018*. OECD Publishing. Paris. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1787/tour-2018-en>. Accessed: 3 September 2019.

Research-methodology 2019. Exploratory Research. URL: <https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/research-design/exploratory-research/>. Accessed: 11 November 2019.

Reuters 2019. Costa Rica launches 'unprecedented' push for zero emissions by 2050. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-costa-rica-climatechange-transportati/costa-rica-launches-unprecedented-push-for-zero-emissions-by-2050-idUSKCN1QE253>. Accessed: 15 October 2019.

Russel, H. 2006. *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham. URL: http://www.cycledoctoralfactec.com/uploads/7/9/0/7/7907144/%5Bh._russell_bernard%5D_research_methods_in_anthropol_bokos-z1__1_.pdf. Accessed: 11 November 2019.

Savitz, A. 2013. The Triple Bottom Line: How Today's Best-Run Companies Are Achieving Economic, Social and Environmental Success - And How You Can Too. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. San Francisco. URL: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/haaga/detail.action?docID=1495625>. Accessed: 4 September 2019.

Schaltegger, S., Burritt R. & Petersen H. 2003. An Introduction to Corporate Environmental Management: Striving for Sustainability. Greenleaf Publishing Limited. Sheffield. URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/haaga/reader.action?docID=3011590>. Accessed: 17 September 2019.

Simply Psychology 2019. What's the difference between qualitative and quantitative research? URL: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html>. Accessed: 11 November 2019.

Smartvatten 2019. The ultimate guide to sustainable hotel practices. URL: <https://smartvatten.com/resources/sustainable-hotel-practices/>. Accessed: 11 November 2019.

Terrapass 2019. The Journey to Balance Take Action!. URL: <https://www.terrapass.com/>. Accessed: 1 November 2019.

The Guardian 2016. Generation Y: A guide to a much maligned demographic. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/07/millennials-generation-y-guide-to-much-maligned-demographic>. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

TIES The International Ecotourism Society 2019. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES). URL: https://bsc.smebg.net/ecotourguide/best_practices/articles/files/TIES.pdf. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

The Tico Times 2019. Costa Rica will run on more than 98% renewable energy for fifth consecutive year, government says. URL: <https://ticotimes.net/2019/09/24/costa-rica-will-run-on-more-than-98-renewable-energy-for-fifth-consecutive-year-government-says>. Accessed: 24 October 2019.

The World Bank 2019. The World Bank in Costa Rica. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/costarica/overview>. Accessed: 25 October 2019.

Travelife 2019. What is travelife? URL: https://www.travelife.org/hotels/What_is_TL.asp?p=2. Accessed: 20 November 2019.

Travelife Collection 2019. About Travelife. URL: http://www.travelifecollection.com/about_travelife. Accessed: 20 November 2019.

United Nations Environment Programme & The World Tourism Organization 2005. Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide For Policy Makers. UNEP & WTO. Madrid. URL: <http://www.sustainablesids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UNEP-WTO-2005-Making-tourism-more-Sustainable-A-guide-for-policy-makers.pdf>. Accessed: 3 September 2019.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization 2019. What is CSR? URL: <https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/competitive-trade-capacities-and-corporate-responsibility/corporate-social-responsibility-market-integration/what-csr>. Accessed: 7 September 2019.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Partnerships Platform 2019. Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST). URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=1495>. Accessed: 24 September 2019.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform 2019. Sustainable Tourism. URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabletourism>. Accessed: 7 October 2019.

United Nations. 2015. Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development. URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>. Accessed: 23 October 2019.

UNEP United Nations Environmental Programme 2016. UNEP Frontiers 2016 Report - Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern. UNEP, Nairobi. URL: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7664/Frontiers_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed: 27 September 2019.

UNEP United Nations Environmental Programme 2017. Frontiers 2017 - Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern. UNEP, Nairobi. URL: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22255/Frontiers_2017_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

UNWTO World Tourism Organization 2013. Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook (2013). UNWTO. Madrid.

<http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/devcoengfinal.pdf>. Accessed: 5 September 2019.

UNWTO & UNDP 2017. Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030. UNWTO. Madrid. URL:

<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419401>. Accessed: 18 September 2019.

Visit Costa Rica 2019. About Costa Rica. URL:

<https://www.visitcostarica.com/en/costa-rica/general-information>. Accessed: 12 September 2019.

Visit Costa Rica 2019. Welcome to Costa Rica. URL: <https://www.visit-costarica.com/en/costa-rica>. Accessed: 2 September 2019.

Willard, B. 2012. The New Sustainability Advantage: Seven Business Case Benefits of a Triple Bottom Line. New Society Publishers. Gabriola Island.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/haaga/detail.action?docID=5180721&query=Willard%2C+B.+2012.+The+New+Sustainability+Advantage%3A+Seven+Business+Case+Benefits+of+a+Triple+Bottom+Line>. Accessed: 4 September 2019.

World population review 2019. Costa Rica population 2019. URL:

<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/costa-rica-population/>. Accessed: 12 September 2019.

WWF Worldwide Fund for Nature 2019. Confused about the difference between ecotourism and sustainable tourism? These definitions may help. URL:

https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/oceans/solutions/reducing_tourism_impact/difference_between_ecotourism_sustainable_tourism.cfm. Accessed: 3 October 2019.

Wikipedia 2019. Costa Rica map detail. URL: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Costa_Rica_map_detail.PNG

Appendices

Appendix 1. Golden Rules for the management of The Lion Fish Hostel

GOLDEN RULES
FOR THE LION FISH HOSTEL

HOW TO SET UP A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

- REVIEW IMPACTS & CREATE A NEW POLICY**

1 Conduct a review to find out the key environmental impacts and issues of the business, and indicate the procedures that are the causes of waste and emissions. When you know these inputs and outputs, it is possible to set a new policy and strategy around them.
- ENGAGE, EDUCATE, COMMUNICATE & ADAPT**

2 Change the company culture by engaging staff and guests in the sustainability plan through environmental education, procedure training, open communication and environmental events, such as Beach Cleans.
- EFFICIENCY, SUFFICIENCY AND CONSISTENCY**

3 Choose only technically efficient appliances. Consume all materials with sufficiency-oriented "having enough" or "sharing what we have" mind. Value environmentally-friendly procedures through consistent actions, such as replacing a chemical product with biodegradable one.
- REDUCE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT**

4 Find help from industry guidelines with practical advice on how to reduce negative impact on the environment, and change the business' daily procedures into more sustainable ones.
- MEASURE AND SET GOALS**

5 Follow the plan daily, set short-term goals for this year and long-term goals to be met in five years. Measure this performance on a regular basis. Make corrections to the plan and procedures accordingly.

(Global Stewards 2019; ITP 2008, 1-23; Schaltegger & al. 2003, 25-27.)

Appendix 2. Sustainability Plan practical guidelines for The Lion Fish Hostel

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN PRACTICAL GUIDELINES THE LION FISH HOSTEL

Here are represented the practical advice for appropriate procedures when conducting a sustainability plan.

The following ideas are collected from Global Stewards Sustainable Living Tips listing, ITP's Environmental Management For Hotels: The Industry Guide For Sustainable Operations (Global Stewards 2019; ITP 2008, 1-23) as well as two of the conducted interviews (Haycke 22 April 2019; Harding 26 April 2019.)

ENERGY

- Choose renewable energy and energy-efficient systems (including LEDs and occupancy sensors in lights, Energy Star machinery)
- Have regular checks on electrical equipment for faults
- Switch off all electronic equipment when not in use
- Place instruction cards on walls for guests about how to energy

WASTE

- Build an effective trash separation system, including recycling options for non-biodegradable chemicals, organic waste as well as plastics
- Place instruction cards on walls for guests about recycling rules
- Inform guests before arrival to downsize their plastic usage for example by choosing cotton bags and glass bottles instead of plastic ones

WATER

- Install low-flow showerheads and toilets
- Have regular checks for leaks in toilets
- Conduct a reuse program for linen and towels in private rooms
- Train staff to minimise waste of water when cleaning (laundry, bathrooms)
- Choose biodegradable cleaning products to minimise water pollution
- Place signs on walls for guests about how to save water

KITCHEN & FOOD

- Place instruction cards on walls for guests to educate them about sustainable ingredients and choices when cooking
- Provide organic fruit or a herb garden for the guests
- Reduce the amount of food waste by forwarding it either for animal feed or to local farms for compost material

PURCHASES

Create a green purchasing policy for consumables:

- Choose to support locals
- Choose ecolabels, Fair Trade products, non-toxic products and minimal plastic packaging
- Replace all environment harming chemicals with environmentally-friendly options

STAFF

- Train all staff members to the new company policy
- Recognise and reward sustainability efforts to encourage everyone to join
- Set up a Green Team
- Staff training: Give a physical tour and educate about environmental procedures
- Place a suggestion box to the public area for guests and staff members

ENGAGE & EDUCATE

- Motivate staff members and guests to engage in green practices
- Place info signs in the business premises about environmental actions (drinkable tap water, water usage in showers, suggestions to turn lights off...)
- Give out reusable cotton bags and glass bottles for guests and staff to borrow
- Create sustainability-oriented partnerships with local associations and engage all stakeholders in for example environmental events, such as Beach Cleans
- Educate guests about local environmental issues and movements
- Provide ecotourism guidebooks, walking maps and bicycle maps for guests

Appendix 3. Interview with Elias Brown

The first interview was conducted with Elias Brown, the owner of The Lion Fish Hostel. The interview was a semi-structured, with open questions. Here are the structured questions we used in the interview.

- 1 Can you introduce yourself, tell about your background and about The Lion Fish Hostel?
- 2 How important is sustainability for yourself personally?
- 3 What is your knowledge of the sustainability situation in Puerto Viejo and the in the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica considering both environmental and social aspects?
- 4 What could The Lion Fish Hostel do in order to improve the situation?
- 5 How is the sustainability situation currently in the hostel?
- 6 What are the main improvement points in the hostel regarding sustainability?
- 7 What opportunities do you see for the hostel regarding both environmental and social dimensions of sustainability?
- 8 How would you describe the future scenario of the hostel?
- 9 What are your hopes and wishes for the hostel in the future?

Appendix 4. Interview with Victoria Harding

The interview with Victoria Harding was a semi-structured interview with open questions. Here are the structured questions we used in the interview.

1. Can you introduce yourself, your job title and your job description?
2. Can you tell us about the Beach Clean? What is it and where is it organised?
3. What happens in the Beach Clean in practise? Who is taking action and how is it managed?
4. Why is the Beach Clean organised and why is it important?
5. Is there a need for it in Puerto Viejo? What about in the future?
6. How often is it organised and how often should it be organised?
7. Who do you cooperate with?
8. What is the real impact of the Beach Clean on the environment? What about on the community from a social perspective?
9. Is the Beach Clean organized anywhere else in Costa Rica or the Caribbean coast?
10. What is the impact of tourism in Puerto Viejo regarding littering?

Appendix 5. Interview with Beate Haycke

The interview with Beate Haycke was also a semi-structured interview with open questions. Here are the structured questions we used in the interview.

1. Can you introduce yourself, your job title and job description?
2. What education do you have?
3. What are the biggest issues regarding sustainability at the moment? How is the current situation like?
4. What are the biggest issues locally here in Puerto Viejo?
5. What are the biggest issues regarding sustainability in accommodation businesses?
6. What about the impact of tourists and locals? What seem to be their attitudes and actions?
7. Who are the ones working for sustainability in Puerto Viejo?
8. What kind of actions are needed from the local accommodation businesses?
9. What kind of actions are needed from locals and what about tourists?
10. What is a good way to start as a business? Where do you get advice for sustainability issues?
11. What are the responsibilities of the local municipality? Are there any laws, regulations or control over sustainability?
12. What are the responsibilities of local accommodation businesses?
13. What are the responsibilities of tourists in Puerto Viejo?
14. How do you see the future regarding sustainability? What changes should happen and why is it necessary?
15. Can you give some recommendations for The Lion Fish Hostel, what concrete actions should we take to become more sustainable?
16. What steps are the most important?
17. What would be the impact of The Lion Fish Hostel if we became more sustainable? What would be the impact if all local accommodation businesses did the same?
18. What opportunities do you see for Puerto Viejo in the future? What about The Lion Fish Hostel, regarding sustainability?
19. What are the major challenges for sustainability in Puerto Viejo and in The Lion Fish Hostel?