



Sustainability: 5 steps hotels can take to get started and set the right direction.



By Maribel Esparcia Pérez

Let's identify where your company stands.

1. What is your approach to your sustainable strategy?

- Sustainability is addressed exclusively for compliance.
- Sustainability only for corporate image. You have a certification for consumer awareness.
- Sustainability is an inspiration but is not in alignment with the company goals.
- Sustainability is essential for hotel success and is integrated with its objectives.
- Sustainability and regenerative practices are the basis for innovation, continuous improvement and performance.



Often, hotel managers and operators are guided, when choosing sustainable strategies and investments, by their direct impact on operations in their constant search for efficiency. That is the top of the iceberg, but we should consider further exploration of what sustainability and regeneration means for hotels.



2. What means sustainability? Understand concepts and intention.

- Is CSR an outdated concept? As long as CSR stays fundamentally altruistic in its motivation, it is unlikely to be considered core to the business. Thus, it is unlikely to scale or provide lasting solutions to social and environmental critical challenges.
- To effectively track and report their social and environmental impacts, hospitality companies still struggle to put the mechanisms in place.
- We must not forget the social and the governance side of sustainability. These two elements are fundamental to any practice that aims to be sustainable and regenerative.





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"Hotels with certification aren't
always sustainable, and hotels
without certification aren't always
unsustainable".



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Taking care of biodiversity conservation, for instance, in areas where hotels operate, requires consideration of social factors and human rights due diligence.

Materiality areas

What is being measured?

What measures are chosen and why?

Materiality helps to identify and prioritize issues that are relevant for stakeholders and for the business strategy to tackle them.

Disclosure of material issues in hotel groups must not be limited to a narrow group of stakeholders in their reports.

Hotel groups should avoid using surveys that limit the ability of stakeholders to bring up relevant issues and concerns to them.

For that report to reflect all issues of importance to key stakeholder groups, we will need an open dialogue.

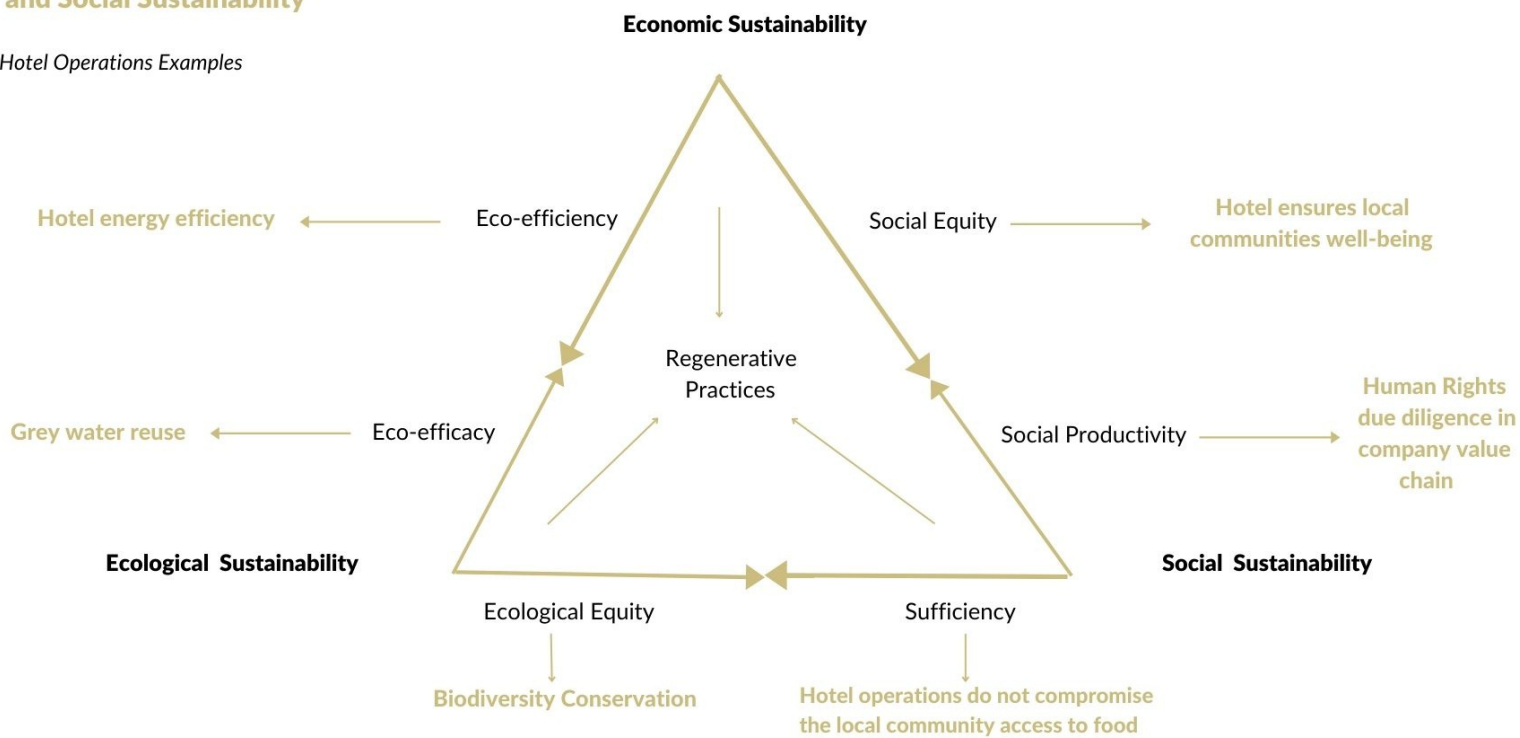




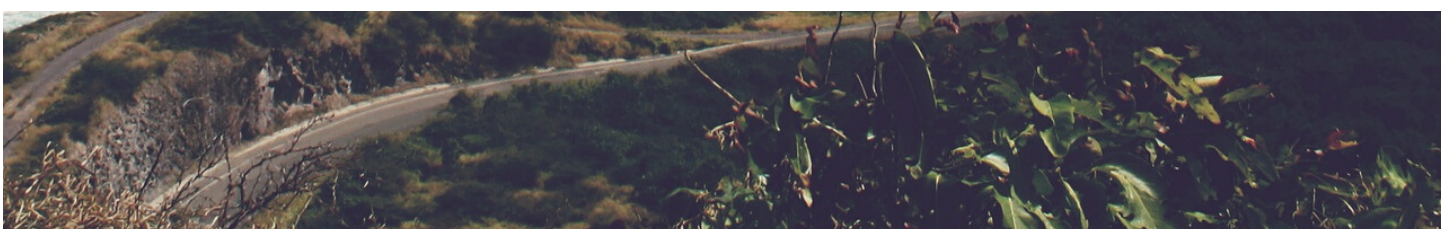
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Economic, Ecological and Social Sustainability

Hotel Operations Examples



Source: Own elaboration, 2022. (Based on Dyllick, Thomas & Hockerts, 2002)





3. Integrate Sustainability Strategy

Embed sustainability strategies in departmental tasks, SOPs, and checklists.

Define systems, strategic plans, and KPIs.

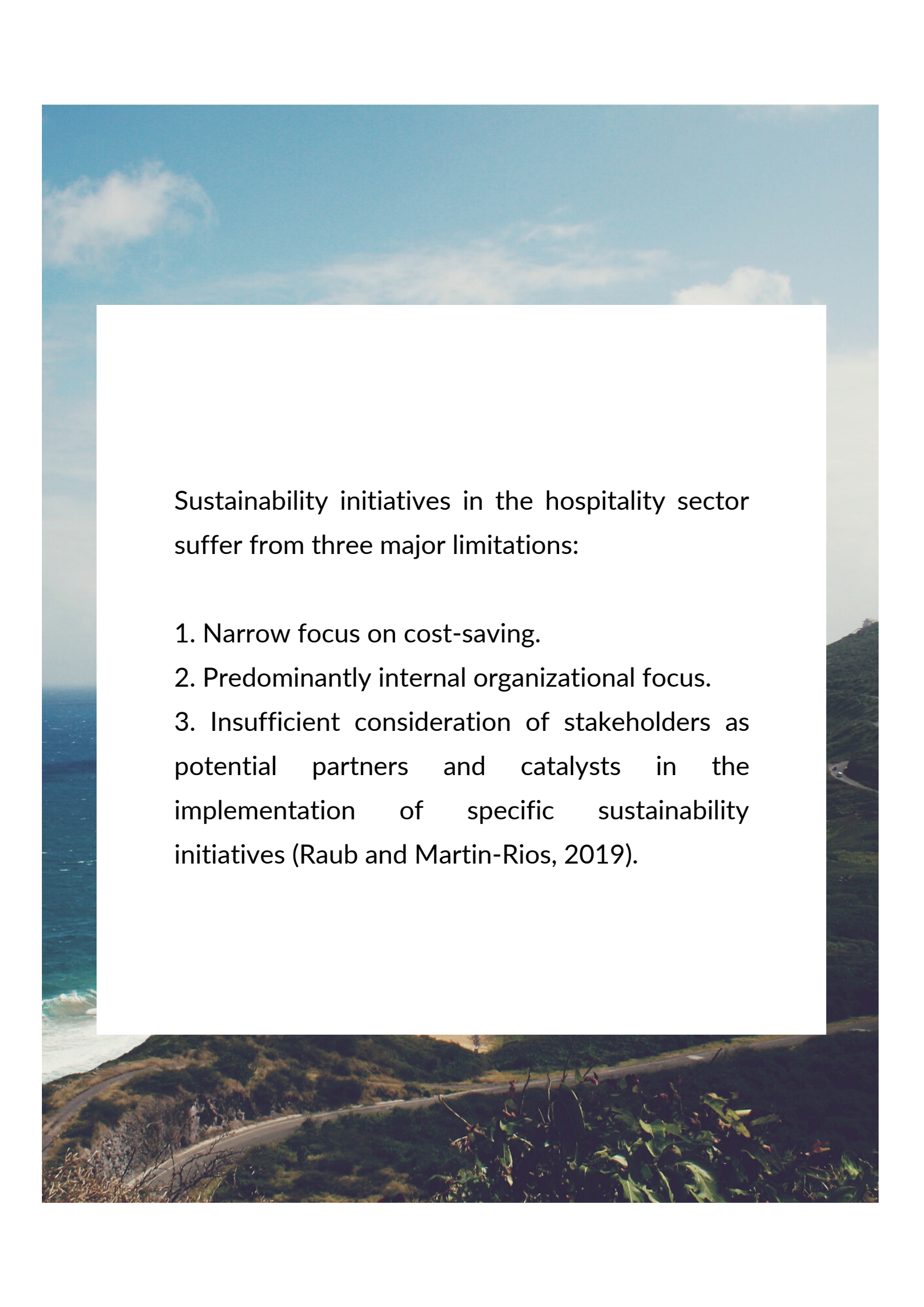
Evaluate sustainability-related risks and opportunities.

Commit to an internal and external stakeholder engagement and communication.

4. Education is the basis for a successful implementation and to drive innovation.

5. Do not try to do this alone!

Alliances and collaboration are the key factors for sustainability success and continued improvement.



Sustainability initiatives in the hospitality sector suffer from three major limitations:

1. Narrow focus on cost-saving.
2. Predominantly internal organizational focus.
3. Insufficient consideration of stakeholders as potential partners and catalysts in the implementation of specific sustainability initiatives (Raub and Martin-Rios, 2019).



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TOP TIPS

- Use technology for a data-driven approach as we need data in real-time.
- Use a science-based targets approach
- Incorporate reporting and measure performance for each department
- Report on outcomes and progress.
- Foster company culture to overcome resistance and bring the strategy to life.
- Make it fun and accessible to employees at all levels.
- Create internal systems to allow teams to learn from each other and access a tech resource to share ideas.
- Ask your CFO and leadership team, what is the cost of not taking action?