



## 2.3 LTU Touristik: Technical Assistance to Contracted Hotels

### Description of Good Practice

In summer 2000, LTU Touristik, a German tour operator that specialises in package tours to all continents, launched a campaign to help contracted hotels improve their environmental performance. A small manual, *Das umweltfreundliche Ferienhotel* (The Environmentally Friendly Holiday Hotel), was produced to give technical assistance to contracted hotels (those that are not directly operated by LTU Touristik).

The manual was developed because experience with contracted hotels had shown that most hoteliers felt a general sense of responsibility for the environment, but needed suggestions for how they could implement good environmental practices. The manual is also intended to open a long-term dialogue with contracted hoteliers.

Topics addressed in the manual include drinking water, outside areas, energy, purchasing, waste and communication. Each section includes a general description of the problem and concise suggestions about how to solve it, presented in simple language and a user-friendly layout (see Box 1). Great importance is attached to explaining why actions should be carried out in the way described and symbols show how much time an action will take (a clock showing different amounts of time) and the investment required (a money bag filled to different levels). Many examples are given of how actions to improve the environment can save money.

The manual was developed by the company's Environmental Manager, with the assistance of a consultant, based on the results of a questionnaire distributed to contracted hotels. LTU Touristik's Environmental Department also held personal meetings with hotel managers in a number of destinations, allowing them to learn firsthand about the contracted hotels' environmental practices and environmental impacts. The first edition of the manual took four months to write and produce.

### Implementation

The manual, which targets hotel managers and other staff members responsible for hotel operation, was launched in all destinations worldwide where LTU Touristik does business. Now in its 3rd edition, the 20-page manual is published in German, Greek, English, French, Italian and Spanish. In 2002, about 15,000 manuals were distributed, and several large hotel companies ordered the manual to use for staff training or reprinted it on their own.

Where possible, the manual was distributed personally to hotel managers. Tour guides, buyers and the head of the destination agency delivered the manuals during routine visits, explained LTU Touristik's objectives and offered initial suggestions for environmental practices. These representatives then reported



back on the first reactions of the hotel managers to LTU Touristik's Environmental Manager. Along with the manual, hotel managers received a personally addressed letter and a one-page questionnaire about whether they were able to use some of the practices in the manual, whether they needed further information and which environmental protection measures they already implemented. Nearly 20 percent of all contracted hoteliers have offered feedback to the company.

If hoteliers need further assistance beyond these first contacts, LTU Touristik provides it through its Environmental Department's two-person technical assistance team, thus guaranteeing a continuous dialogue with hotels that want to improve their environmental performance.

Training is offered to buyers, heads of destination agencies and tour guides, and the Environmental Manager personally updates them on the campaign. Information is also provided on what type of technical assistance is expected from them and how to make an informal evaluation of the visited facilities. The company's web site provides all interested employees with more detailed information.



LTU'S HOTEL MANUAL IN 5 LANGUAGES

### Benefits

The benefits of the environmental manual are an improvement in the environmental performance of the contracted hotels and a long-term dialogue with the contracted hoteliers on environmental matters.

### Comments

Ensuring that the manual is an effective tool for change requires offering solutions that are concrete and realistic, and that will lead to a decreasing consumption of water, energy and other resources. However, relying solely on manuals has its limitations – there is no enforcement of the voluntary practices nor incentive for their implementation. LTU Touristik's long-term goal is to be able to prove the benefits of environmental action and to establish environmental standards for holiday hotels. As a second step, LTU Touristik plans to collect all information about environmental action introduced by the hotels and report its findings to other hotels and eventually to its clients. This programme will be introduced in approximately 50 hotels and one ship operated by LTU Touristik, including the Calimera, Primasol and LTI International Hotels. Many hoteliers confirmed that they feel encouraged to improve their environmental activities because of the company's awareness of their efforts.

#### Box 1: Extract from Hotel Manual: A tip for Dripping Taps and Leaking Toilets

Fix dripping taps and toilets immediately. One leaking toilet flush can easily lose 200 litres of drinking water a day – the equivalent of 73,000 litres a year. This measure is cheap and quick. More investment is needed to install a rain or wastewater system for flushing toilets, for example, which could replace approximately 50 litres of drinking water each day per hotel guest.