

The State of Art of Implementation of Environmental Standards of Accommodations in Can Tho, Vietnam

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Abstract— The objective of the article is to describe the current status of the application of environmental standards in accommodations. Data were collected by directly interviewing 134 senior managers of 134 accommodations out of a total of 285 existing accommodations in Can Tho (according to statistical data in 2020). Descriptive statistic is the main research method of this article. The research results show that: (1) Two mandatory standards that star rated and above 50 room accommodation facilities need to be met (TCVN4391:2015 and Decree 40/2019/ND-CP respectively) are very well implemented by accommodations. In addition, 4-6 accommodations that are not required to apply these mandatory regulations have also been implemented them and (2) The existing accommodations in Can Tho City, Vietnam are quite aware of environmental issues so that they have implemented their own policies with respect to the environment related activities. Specifically, there are 70 accommodations that apply their own environmental policies, accounting for 52.2%.

Keywords— Environmental regulations, environmental certificates, green certificates, environmental standards, accommodations, hotels.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Oliveira et al. (2016), recently tourists have a shift in choosing hotels from paying attention to enjoyment without regard to environmental impacts to paying more attention about environmental impacts. Due to such social pressure, accommodation businesses will have to change their behavior to catch up with the new development trend in the customer market.

There are many factors affecting the implementation of responsible tourism at enterprises, from external factors to internal factors. The direction and extent of development of responsible tourism in a country and a region determines the prevalence of information, knowledge, tools and models of responsible tourism. Legal constraints, customer and community requirements related to responsible tourism are also factors that directly affect businesses. Meanwhile, the scale, field of activity, experience as well as capacity to implement responsible tourism directly influence the awareness and implementation of responsible tourism at enterprises (Hoang, 2016).

Therefore, this paper is conducted with the aim of assessing the current status of the application of environmental standards in accommodations in Can Tho, Vietnam.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Study design and sampling method

Can Tho is one of 5 big cities in Vietnam. Can Tho is the most modern and developed city in the Mekong Delta. It is also

the 4th largest city in Vietnam based on population size and 5th largest in terms of economic size

Can Tho has 9 administrative units including 5 urban districts (Ninh Kieu, Binh Thuy, Cai Rang, O Mon, Thot Not) and 4 rural districts (Vinh Thanh, Co Do, Thoi Lai, Phong Dien) with 85 communes, wards and towns. In which, Ninh Kieu district is considered the center of Can Tho City; Cai Rang, Binh Thuy, Thot Not, and O Mon are other major districts in the city.

TABLE 1. Statistics on classification of accommodations in Can Tho City in 2019 and 2020

Classification of accommodations	Number of accommodations in 2019 ^a	Number of accommodations in 2020 ^b	Number of accommodations surveyed	
			Frequency	Percent
Unrated	111	113	29	21.6
1 star	79	68	27	20.1
2 stars	35	34	30	22.4
3 stars	11	10	11	8.2
4 stars	8	8	6	4.5
5 stars	2	3	3	2.2
Guest houses, tourist motels	19	19	20	14.9
Homestay	37	27	5	3.7
Others	3	3	3	2.2
Total	305	285	134	100

Note:

a According to statistics of Can Tho Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism in 2020

b According to the TPCT Tourism Personnel Survey Report (Huy et al, 2020), there are more than 10 hotels (mainly 1-star hotels) that have stopped operating due to repair or conversion to other business types such as: restaurant, space for rent, some hotels change registration ratings.

Source: Survey 2021

Ninh Kieu district is the central district and concentrates the majority of Can Tho's accommodations, most of 3- and 5-star hotels in Can Tho City are also located here. The number of accommodations distributed in the remaining districts is not much, there are mainly accommodations from 2 stars or less and other types of accommodations in other districts of Can Tho City.

TABLE 2. Statistics of the accommodations by locations.

Location	Frequency	Percent
Ninh Kieu	116	86.6
Cai Rang	10	7.5
Binh Thuy	5	3.7
Phong Dien	3	2.2
Total	134	100.0

Source: Survey 2021

In this study, the author tried to reach almost all districts and districts in Can Tho city. The author has access to the respondents in Ninh Kieu district the most with 116 respondents (corresponding to 86.6%) and the least in Phong Dien district with 3 respondents (corresponding to 2.2%). Accordingly, Ninh Kieu district is considered the center of Can Tho city, which has a dense population density and is also a place where many tourists come to Can Tho, so most of accommodations in Can Tho city locates in Ninh Kieu district. In addition, the author has tried to reach respondents in other districts in Can Tho city, to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

2.2 Analysis methods

Descriptive statistics were used in the article to summarize the application of environmental standards in the sample of 134 accommodations in Can Tho, Vietnam.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview of environmental standards being applied at accommodation facilities in Can Tho, Vietnam

3.1.1 Asean Green Certificates

The ASEAN Green Certificate includes 11 groups of criteria: (1) Environmental policy and operation of the hotel, (2) Use of green products, (3) Cooperation with communities and organizations in the region. local authorities, (4) Human resource development, (5) Solid waste management, (6) Efficient energy use, (7) Efficient water use and water quality, (8) Water management Air management (indoor and outdoor), (9) Noise control, (10) Wastewater management and treatment, (11) Chemical and hazardous waste management

3.1.2. Bong Sen Xanh Certificate (Green Lotus Certificate)

Certificate of the Green Lotus Sustainable Tourism (hereinafter referred to as the Green Lotus) is granted to tourism accommodations that have met the standards of environmental protection and sustainable development. This certificate was established in 2012 on the basis of literature review and international experience (Eco-labels of some European and Asian countries and Global Sustainable Tourism Certificate-GSTC), field survey and in-depth interview of national and international organizations and experts. The accommodation facilities granted the Green Lotus Certificate protect the environment, make efficient use of natural resources and energy, and contribute to heritage conservation, economic, cultural and social development. local associations while pursuing sustainable tourism development policies.

3.1.3 ISO 14001 Certificate/ ISO21401 Certificate

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) publishes the ISO 14000 family which addresses various aspects of environmental management. It provides practical tools for companies and organizations that want to identify and control their environmental impact and continuously improve their environmental performance. ISO 14001:2004 and ISO 14004:2004 focus on environmental management systems. Other standards in the group focus on specific environmental aspects such as life cycle analysis, communication and assessment (ISO, 2014). In the hospitality sector the current effective version is ISO21401, first issued in 2018, which addresses three issues: (1) detailed environmental requirements

for establishing sustainable accommodation sustainability, (2) detailed social requirements for establishment of sustainable accommodation and (3) detailed economic requirements for establishment of sustainable accommodation.

3.1.4 Vietnamese standards TCVN 4391:2015 (or Vietnamese standards TCVN 4391:2009) and Decree 40/2019/ND-CP (29/2011/ND-CP, 35/2014/ND-CP, 18/2015/ND-CP)

Regarding hotel rating standards, this standard can also be referred to when designing new construction, renovation and upgrading of hotels, TCVN 4391:2015 compiled by Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism proposed, the General Department of Standards, Metrology and Quality appraised, the Ministry of Science and Technology announced. For environmental protection TCVN 4391:2015 addresses seven areas: sustainable locations, efficient use of water, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, innovation in design and regional priorities. For hotels with 50 rooms or less that want to go into operation, they must have a commitment to environmental protection according to Decree 29/2011/ND-CP (Only for hotels with stars).

3.2 Application of environmental standards in the accommodation sector in Can Tho

TABLE 3. Statistics on the application of environmental standards

Standard	Applied	Known but not applied	Don't know yet	Total
Asean green label Certificate	4	27	103	134
Green Lotus Certificate	5	28	101	134
ISO 14001 Certificate/ ISO21401 Certificate	11	33	90	134
3.1.4 Vietnamese standards TCVN 4391:2015 (or Vietnamese standards TCVN 4391:2009)	81	33	20	134
Decree 40/2019/ND-CP (29/2011/ND-CP, 35/2014/ND-CP, 18/2015/ND-CP)	27	71	36	134

There are 5 environmental standards currently being applied by accommodations in Can Tho. In which, two standards TCVN 4391:2015 are mandatory for star hotels and Decree 40/2019/ND-CP (29/2011/ND-CP, 35/2014/ND-CP, 18/2015/ND-CP) for accommodations with 50 rooms or more. The remaining 3 standards: Asean Green Certificate, Green Lotus Certificate and ISO 14001 Certificate/ ISO21401 Certificate are the standards that are recommended to apply but not required for accommodations.

(1) Regarding Asean green label Certificate: there are 4 accommodations that apply, 27 accommodations that are known but not yet applied and 103 accommodations that do not know this standard.

(2) Regarding Green Lotus Certificate: there are 5 accommodations that apply, 28 accommodations that are

known but not yet applied and 101 accommodations that do not know this standard.

(3) Regarding the ISO 14001 Certificate/ ISO21401 Certificate: there are 11 applicable accommodations, 33 known but not applied accommodations and 90 unknown accommodations.

(4) Regarding TCVN 4391:2015 (or TCVN4391:2009) standard: there are 81 accommodations (of which 77 accommodations belong to the group of 1 to 5 star hotels and 4 accommodations outside of the rated group) applying this standard, 33 accommodations state that they knew this standard but have not applied yet, and 20 accommodations claim that they do not know this standard.

(5) Decree 40/2019/ND-CP (29/2011/ND-CP, 35/2014/ND-CP, 18/2015/ND-CP): There are 27 accommodations (of which There are 21 accommodations with 50 rooms or more and 6 accommodations with less than 50 rooms) applying this standard. 71 accommodations states that they know but have not applied this standard yet and 36 accommodations claim that they do not know this standard.

TABLE 4. Statistics on the application of environmental Certificate by type of accommodation establishment

Type of accommodation	Apply environmental Certificate or not	
	Do not apply any certificates/standard	Apply at least one certificate/standard
Unrated	26	3
1 star	0	27
2 stars	0	30
3 stars	0	11
4 stars	0	6
5 stars	0	3
Guest houses, tourist motels	18	2
Homestay	4	1
Others	2	1
Total	50	84

Based on the statistics in Table 3, it can be seen that the application of environmental Certificates/regulations/standards in the group of unrated hotels, guest houses, tourist motels, homestays and other groups of accommodations is very low. In fact, only 1-3 accommodations in these groups claim that they have applied at least one standard. In contrary, hotels in groups that have 3 stars or more have tendency to apply at least one environmental standards. This is completely understandable because the regulations and requirements of the market for this group of hotels are somewhat stricter.

TABLE 5. Specific environmental policies of the accommodations

Specific environmental policy	Frequency	Percent
Do not have any policy	64	47.8
Have at least one specific environmental policies	70	52.2
Total	134	100.0

Up to 52.2% of accommodations surveyed said that they have their own environmental policies. The most common environmental policy adopted by accommodations is garbage segregation. Some accommodation facilities use solar electricity. There are also a few properties that have separate environmental policies. For example, Lux Home, this property sells products from recycled materials, organizes craft classes

to create gifts for tourists to stay. Home travel Mekong organizes a free riverside garbage collection tour for foreign tourists to row and collect trash from 4:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every Thursday. TTC Can Tho restricts the use of plastic, uses bio-plastic bags, grows trees in the hotel premises, uses paper straws, etc.

IV. CONCLUSION

Research results show that TCVN4391:2015 and Decree 40/2019 are well applied within the accommodation groups that they are considered mandatory (e.g. star hotels and accommodations above 50 rooms). Some accommodations that are not required these standards also apply them, and such accommodations might be preparing for a plan to apply for a star rating or expand the size of the accommodation in the future.

Besides, in addition to the 5 official certificates, the accommodations these days are quite aware of environmental issues and they have implemented their own policies with specific activities aimed at the environment. Specifically, there are 70 accommodations that apply their own environmental policies, accounting for 52.2%

It can be seen that the legal factor is a very important factor affecting the application of environmental standards. However, the way accommodations maintain and implement the content of these standards or decisions to apply or implement green adaptation strategies could be explored further by future research.

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