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The Rooms Division

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Learning goals

After studying this chapter, readers will have the ability to:

- 1 Define Rooms Division (RD) and describe its impact on profit, people and planet;
- 2 Describe the main sustainability challenges faced by the RD department regarding the impact of water, energy, waste and wellbeing on both guests and employees;
- 3 Provide examples of ways to address some of these challenges;
- 4 Identify good practices in sustainable RD.

Introduction

Depending on the organisational structure of the hotel, the Rooms Division department may or may not include reception, the laundry room, or even the guest service desk, as well as the housekeeping staff. For the sake of this chapter, we will focus on the hotel room itself, the choices that management can take to add value to the triple bottom line, and the behaviour of guests and employees in the physical hotel room.

According to Baloglu and Jones (2015: 237), *“the industry’s great challenge in energy conservation is the balance between maintaining gracious service and controlling costs”*. This statement can actually be applied to any kind of conservation efforts, be it in energy, water, waste or anything else. A balance needs to be struck between providing guests with the comfort they seek in a hotel, and reducing the negative impact on the environment due to the hotel’s operations. The Rooms Division department has some typical sustainability challenges, which will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

We can broadly split the factors that drive the number of resources consumed in a hotel into two categories, namely operations-centred factors and guest behaviour-centred factors (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Both offer opportunities and challenges for any