

Summary

OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reduce wastage both in cost and environmental impact resulting from the hotel’s disposal of 50,000 newspapers and 18,000 plastic pens each year ▪ To create a locally-relevant, sustainable social initiative in line with Accor’s PLANET 21 programme to better the environment for the people and the planet ▪ Encourage simple approaches starting from within the hotel to the guest, e.g. responsible purchases, disposal
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend the life cycle of old newspapers by using them for production of environmentally-friendly hotel pens; reducing the plastic consumption and paper disposal as well as overall carbon footprint ▪ Contribute to regional communities in need by turning the production of the Eco-Pen into income opportunities ▪ Quick facts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 18 months to roll out initial launch in 2013 ✓ Estimated project cost of S\$10,000
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ibis Bencoolen established its reputation as the first hotel to implement Accor’s PLANET 21 programme to create liveable cities in Singapore ▪ ↓ Wastage of newspapers (reused ~1790Kg of newspaper thus far); ↓ carbon footprint ▪ Improved the livelihood of 25 families in Indonesia by providing them job opportunities ▪ ↑ Employee engagement & guest satisfaction and awareness of hotel’s effort to better the environment

OPPORTUNITY

A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ibis Bencoolen has always been committed to investing in communities. Since 2001, it has been a part of the *A Tree for A Child* programme which finances reforestation projects and provides sustainable income for families living in impoverished cities. As the first hotel in Singapore to commit to Accor’s PLANET 21 pledge to operate responsibly, Ibis Bencoolen has further solidified its commitment to championing sustainable development.*

Ibis Bencoolen challenges itself to develop initiatives that not only resonate with employees and guests but also address pertinent social issues that meet PLANET 21 objectives.

A dedicated team comprising Marketing & Social Media Executive Alison, Housekeeping Manager Steven, Executive Assistant Manager Jade, along with Accor’s sustainable committee constantly analyses and evaluates the hotel’s operational challenges and opportunities, and regularly brainstorms innovative new ways to implement locally-relevant and impactful initiatives.

**Note: PLANET 21 refers to Agenda 21, the action plan adopted by 173 Heads of State at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It echoes the urgent need to focus efforts in the 21st century to change our production and consumption patterns with the goal of protecting our planet, its people and their environment.*

During process evaluation, Housekeeping Manager Steven Ding was struck by one key insight – over 50,000 newspapers and 18,000 plastic pens are thrown out each year by Ibis Bencoolen. He recognised that there was an immense opportunity to address the collective environmental impact of these everyday, bulk inventory items.

Following months of evaluation and brainstorming, Steven and his team conceptualised the Eco-Pen. The environmentally friendly Eco-Pen is made using recycled newspaper, hence, extending the life of these used editions and effectively reduces the number of plastic used in the hotel and the amount of newspaper that goes to landfills.

More importantly, the Eco-Pen has a strong social component, providing supplemental income opportunities for a Jakarta community under the *A Tree for a Child* (AFTAC) programme. Ibis Bencoolen helps improve the standard of living of these families by employing 25 mothers, who earn nearly 8% more per hour by being involved in the production of Eco-Pens. This supplementary income enables the women to improve their families' financial security and helps their children continue their education.

“The Eco-Pen is an important milestone for the hotel and it is a powerful starting point for us to bring our environmental efforts to the next level. By exposing employees and guests to the long-term benefits of this initiative, we’re also empowering and inspiring them to make positive changes to their environment.”

-- Mr. Pierre-Etienne Demontgrand
General Manager
Ibis Bencoolen

Key Steps

- **Ideating local approaches to address social issues:** The hotel team recognised the need to develop a locally relevant approach so that the programme resonates with employees and guests, with considerations such as being realistic and starting from within the company level that will be visible to guests. After multiple brainstorm sessions, the Housekeeping team brought to everyone's attention that the hotel is throwing out more than 18,000 plastic pens and 50,000 copies of newspapers each year. Steven Ding, Housekeeping Manager at Ibis Bencoolen, proposed the Eco-Pen idea which aims to reduce wastage and carbon footprint.
- **Obtaining management and employee buy-in:** Once the Housekeeping department presented their idea, management and employees within each department saw the potential value and agreed that the idea was in line with the PLANET 21 objective to enhance the community. The hotel GM has been active in sharing the meaning and purpose behind the project to obtain employee buy-in.
- **Developing toolkits for implementation:** To kick-start the programme, the Sustainable department developed training materials and toolkits to educate employees about the objectives of the Eco-Pen initiative as well as the manufacturing process.

Key Success Factors

- **Active employee engagement and guest support:** The central driver of the success of the Eco-Pen is the support from employees and guests who embraced this effort and gave positive feedback. It is also used as a corporate gift.
- **Integrated communication and education:** To gain recognition as well and thorough understanding of the project from both internal and external customers, the key would be to have an existing platform of communication both throughout the hotel as well as on social media, company's Intranet, review sites and more. Examples: Publicity on Greenhotelier.com article regarding the Eco-Pen.
- **Clear and progressive evaluation methods:** To effectively track the progress and the success of the new initiative, the Sustainable department set up an evaluation tracker to measure the outcomes of the initiative.
- **Integration of Eco-Pen initiative with A Tree for a Child programme to support Indonesian families in need:** To further extend the sustainable impact of the Eco-Pen, Ibis Bencoolen also integrated this initiative with the *A Tree for a Child* programme, which has been supported by Accor hotels in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia for years.

Project period: Ibis Bencoolen joined Accor's Planet 21 initiative in 2012 and the Eco-Pen project was rolled out in 2013 after **18 months of ideation, planning and execution.**

Estimated cost: As of Jul 2014, Ibis Bencoolen **spent a total of S\$10,000** to kick-start this project.

RESULTS

A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE

The introduction of the Eco-Pen initiative had several immediate and long-term benefits for the hotel, its staff and the community. Since 2013, Ibis Bencoolen and its sister hotels has ordered more than 158,000 Eco-Pens and it aims to be the catalyst of change and an exemplary role model.

- **Repository of socially innovative ideas that will be rolled out in different phases:** After the early success of Eco-Pen, brainstorm sessions at the hotel culminated in a repository of innovative ideas to be rolled out in different phases to address different parts of PLANET 21.
- **Increase in savings while minimising environmental impact and supporting families:** The Eco-Pen programme has seen great success in reducing the hotel's carbon footprint and increased cost savings by 30%. The programme alleviates the environmental effects while at the same time, creating jobs for families in impoverished nations, which in turn, increases their household income by a significant 8%.
- **A sustainable initiative that involves employees and guests:** As part of the hotel's larger involvement with ATFAC, the team made a trip down to ATFAC in Jakarta, Indonesia in February and June 2013. The hotel team brought over 3,000 children books with the help of Accor Singapore hotels for the new library at ATFAC. Overall, such corporate social responsibility activities have bonded employees with the hotel by giving them a greater sense of purpose with Accor beyond just working as a hotel employee. Guests have also responded well to the initiative, sharing positive feedback.