



Case Study

From Bayerisches Umweltsiegel and QuB to EMAS



Background

Hotel Hirsch is a hotel on the outskirts of the cities of Ulm and Neu-Ulm (Hotel-Landgasthof Hirsch, Familie Johann Britsch, Dorfstraße 4, 89233 Neu-Ulm / Finningen) in the village of Finningen. The 4-star hotel offers 70 rooms and 8 meeting rooms for seminars. The hotel is family-run, in the 5th generation. Examples of environmental measures that have been taken include waste separation; motion detectors in hallways and toilets; the training of staff on an effective use of resources and a conscious use of raw materials; the installation of two combined heat and power units; the use of natural gas; and the installation of a rainwater harvesting system for irrigation of green areas. The Bayerisches Umweltsiegel has been implemented as a pre-step to ISO 14001 and EMAS in 2001 and served as a test run and rehearsal.



Reasons for EMAS Registration

The main reason why Hotel Hirsch wanted to register with EMAS was the fact that the hotel should evolve, not only in quantity and quality, but also with 'inner quality'. Landgasthof Hirsch was passionate about the idea to implement ISO 14001 and EMAS. QuB has additionally been implemented as a stepping stone to prepare the EMAS registration. QuB served as a test run to check the quality of the environmental management and to define what was still missing on the way to the revalidation of EMAS. The certification under QuB, as well as the revalidation to EMAS, has been received in 2007.

The Implementation Process

Different representatives of the company, as well as an external consultant, have been involved in the implementation of EMAS at the Hotel Hirsch. Originally the hotel had decided to set itself a time frame of a year until the registration with EMAS. This proved to be unrealistic; although the EMAS team met every two weeks and the external consultant held monthly internal meetings, the real implementation process took around twice that time. It proved most complicated to actually prove the veracity of consumption data.

The implementation process of Bayerisches Umweltsiegel had been the first step to the EMAS registration and the QuB certification served as a verification of the EMS for revalidation. Due to this special situation, no transition phase occurred and no difficulties of stepping up from either of the two systems can be reported.

Major challenges in the implementation of EMAS lay in the fact that the hotel and restaurant industries and EMAS are two different worlds that were colliding with each other. The hotel and restaurant industry is relatively practically oriented and demands a high degree of flexibility. The EMAS implementation process forced the company to understand legal standards and to break down administrative operations, to analyse data and to improve the level of knowledge of the operations of the company in order to ultimately provide all necessary data. Additionally relatively high costs occurred during the first implementation of EMAS. Difficulties were overcome by hard work, the analysis of data down to the smallest detail, and the implementation of a continuous improvement process.

Benefits of an EMAS Registration

The main challenge to implementation turned into the main benefit. Hotel Hirsch now knows its operations a lot better than before and is able to use this knowledge to improve its operations continuously.

Additional benefits include the fact that EMAS can be used as a marketing tool. The logo is part of the corporate design and leads to very positive responses from the business community. One positive surprise was the fact that when investing in upgrading the hotel, banks rated the hotel in a more positive way and facilitated access to credit due to the ISO 14001 and EMAS certification. Since the application of EMAS is not very common in the hotel and restaurant industry, it seemed complicated to assess to what extent benefits are transferable to other companies in the industry.

Advice for other Organisations

Although the implementation of EMAS has been very costly and work-intensive for Hotel Hirsch, they confirmed that they would go the same way again. However, they recommend working with an experienced external expert who can support the implementation, especially regarding technical areas that normally cannot be covered by a company from the hotel and restaurant industry itself.