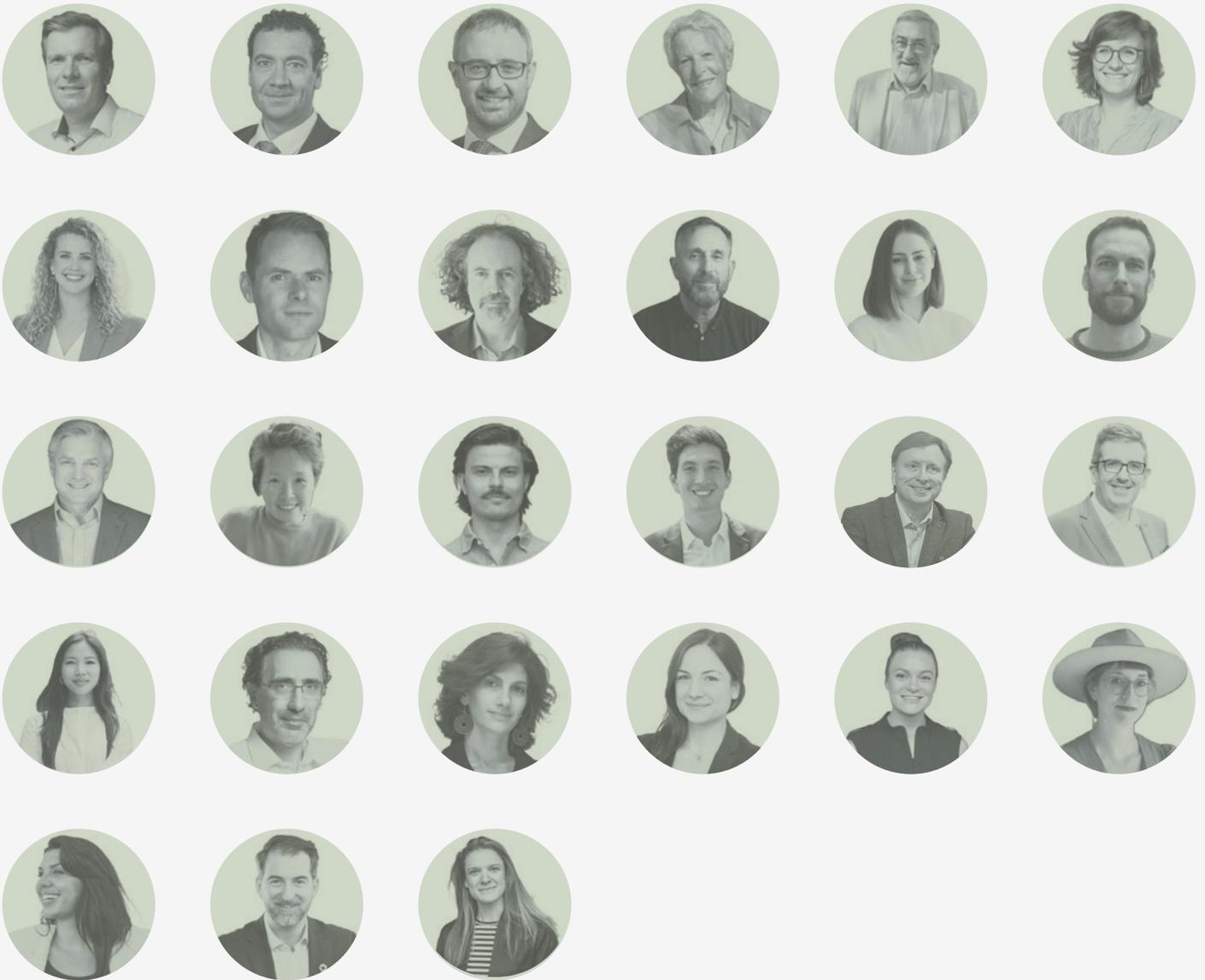


# HYB26

## Sustainability Edition

The Regenerative Question - What Hospitality Must Become



**The Hotel Yearbook**

Foresight and innovation in the global hotel industry



HY8



# **From Harm Reduction to Healing: Why True Hospitality Must Become Regenerative**

Sustainability leadership

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*Glenn Mandziuk argues that hospitality must evolve from “doing less harm” to actively regenerating the ecosystems and communities it depends on. Building on the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance’s Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality and shared data platforms like Vera-FY, he calls for accountable, place-based leadership and cross-industry collaboration that leaves destinations measurably better than we found them.*

For over three decades, my career has taken me from the front desks of local hotels to the boardrooms of global brands and the policy tables of regional alliances. This journey has given me a profound appreciation for our industry’s recent sustainability revolution. We have moved measurement from the margins to the core, embracing science-based targets and rigorous ESG reporting under the watchful eyes of regulators, investors, and guests. This progress, driven by the understanding that 83% of travellers now see sustainable travel as essential, is real and commendable.

Yet, from this vantage point, I also sense a collective unease. Despite better data and sharper targets, the systems we depend on—our climate, biodiversity, and local communities—remain under profound strain. We have become adept at measuring our footprint, but we must now ask a more courageous question: Is reducing harm *enough*?

This is not a rejection of sustainability but a call to deepen its promise. It is the foundational thinking behind our Alliance’s **Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality**, a framework that guides hotels from simple actions to meaningful, restorative impact. The next chapter must be regenerative.

## REGENERATION: THE AMBITION TO LEAVE PLACES BETTER THAN WE FOUND THEM

Regeneration moves beyond the vital but limited goal of “doing less harm.” It asks how our industry can actively heal and restore. It shifts the paradigm from efficiency to renewal

- **A sustainable hotel** reduces its water consumption.
- **A regenerative hotel** improves the health of the local watershed it shares with its community.
- **A sustainable hotel** sources food locally.
- **A regenerative hotel** invests in regenerative agriculture that rebuilds soil fertility and supports farmer resilience.

This is not theoretical. We see it in destination-level collaborations that protect biodiversity while creating more profound guest experiences, and in properties co-designed with communities to ensure cultural heritage is honoured and economic benefits circulate locally. These are practical, scalable models of a new relationship between hospitality and place.

## THE NON-NEGOTIABLE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP

However, ambition without accountability is merely aspiration. If our sustainability journey has taught us one indispensable lesson, it is that trust is built on transparency and measurable progress. Regeneration cannot become a vague buzzword; it must be rooted in the same rigour.

This means building on universal sustainable metrics, such as those launched by the Alliance through the newly established **Vera-FY Data Management Platform**—our industry’s crucial common data collection and distribution point—with more nuanced, place-based indicators. We must learn to value qualitative stories of community resilience alongside quantitative data on carbon reduction. This demands a new kind of leadership: one that owns outcomes publicly, empowers teams with real authority, and creates cultures where accountability is a shared commitment, not a top-down pressure.

## THE CALL TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

Ultimately, no single hotel or brand can regenerate an ecosystem or revitalise a community on its own. This journey demands unprecedented collaboration across value chains, with local stakeholders, and even with competitors, for the health of a shared destination. It requires long-term thinking in a world often driven by short-term returns.

As leaders, we are the stewards of this transition. We must be the ones to model integrity, demonstrate that people and profit are mutually reinforcing, and make decisions that prioritise legacy over quarterly gains. The World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance is committed to providing the tools, knowledge, and collective platform to make this transition practical.

The path to regeneration is our industry’s greatest opportunity to redefine its role in the world. It is a commitment to move beyond being the best in the world, to becoming the best for the world. I invite every leader, every brand, and every stakeholder to join us in this essential work. Let us build not just better hotels, but a more resilient and flourishing future for all.



“Show me only chemical-free,  
bed bug-safe hotels.”



What becomes searchable  
becomes bookable.

