



# Net Positive Hospitality Podcast transcript

## Net Positive Goals for 2025: Nature Fluency and Decarbonising Hotel Food Systems

10<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**Becca (Podcast host) 00:00**

Becca, hello and welcome to the net positive hospitality Podcast. I'm Becca Smith from The World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, and in this episode, we're taking a view on the big opportunities and challenges the industry is facing. This year, we'll look at our industry's greatest asset, nature, and find out why we should all be nature fluent.

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 00:32**

Nature is our biggest insurance when it comes to climate change.

**Becca (Podcast host) 00:36**

We'll discover how the industry can tackle food waste, hearing all about a new report that sets to make tangible change.

**Erika Harms (Iberostar Group) 00:43**

Try to drive the client through food choices that you bring by making them attractive and exciting. No lobsters all year round. So we're not serving lobsters when there is a restriction.

**Becca (Podcast host) 00:56**

And we're continuing our series hearing a voice of the future. But first to kick off, 2025 we hear from an important organization that is driving change, not just within the hospitality industry, but within the entire private sector. The Sustainable Markets Initiative was launched by His Majesty King Charles III, then the Prince of Wales, in 2020 the Sustainable Markets Initiatives, mandate, better known as the Terra Carta, has a mission to build a coordinated global effort to enable the private sector to accelerate the achievement of global climate, biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goal targets. The initiative is working closely with the Alliance to drive net positive hospitality. The Alliance's CEO, Glenn Mandziuk And I sat down with its Chief Countries Officer to discuss everything from travel and tourism's role at COP 29 to why the industry needs to be nature fluent and the key to cross industry collaboration.

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 01:53**

My name is Xenia Hohenlohe, and I am the Chief Country Officer at the Sustainable Markets Initiative. So as a country officer, I'm in charge of our engagement that we have with governments and bringing private sector together with governments in helping the governments in various regions achieve their nationally declared contribution. So their climate goals effectively are given that, His Majesty, our

founder is also the head of the Commonwealth countries. Obviously, our mandate is very much focused around Commonwealth countries. But we have a big China Council, which is very active. We have an Africa Council covering various work streams, from energy infrastructure, putting nature onto the balance sheet and investing into Africa. And I am now in charge of our outreach when it comes to Latin America, with just putting together Brazil chapter, and then all the other countries in Latin America we'll be working with on Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, and then we've got the North America hub going, which is going to be Canada, and the US India is being resurrected, and Australia and the small island development states is coming out of a visit that His Majesty just had in Australia and Samoa. And so, yeah, as we, as I said, we sort of look at the NDCs, we look at the key industries that need to be part of that transition, and then bring those CEOs and private sector around the table to help achieve those goals.

**Becca (Podcast host) 03:26**

And the SMI has been working closely with the Alliance. And Glen tell me a bit about that relationship and the goals you have.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 03:34**

You know, when I started in this job at the Alliance, I was given a list of people I needed to connect with, and Xenia was the top of the list, and we really hit it off in terms of the initiatives that we needed to do and align with. And one of those programs and projects that we thought of as is this partnership with the SMI I think it's really imperative that we as orga, as industry, don't just talk to ourselves and drink our own Kool Aid. We had to get outside of ourselves and have to have broader conversations with other economic sectors. And the SMI was the perfect platform because of His Majesty's role in establishing the alliance in the first place, back in 1992 coming out of the Rio Conference. It was a natural progression of the conversation, and we had some very positive meetings early on in establishing a formal Task Force and leveraging the work that the alliance was already engaged with, and bringing that into the sustainable markets initiative. And what that really does is it amplifies the work of the hospitality industry and its contribution to sustainability with the other again, leading economic sectors at the table at the CEO level, but also to build initiatives within the task force that will then ultimately have lasting impact. We as an industry can actually contribute to the conversation as an industry. We're very engaged, obviously, within the supply chain and the larger value chain as a sector, and we can influence that. And I think the actual value chain that sits at the table, the within the SMI have to hear from us as well. So there's two ways that this happens and and we've been really excited about being involved with that. We've just seen Tourism Day at COP 29 Shall we reflect a bit about how far the industry has come being at the table this year. You know, I think tourism has been in the conversation at side events and but, you know, made some bold statements in COP 26 in Glasgow, with the Glasgow Declaration, but has always been sort of on the outside looking in and to see the industry evolve to be from the outside to directly on its own physical day at the major table with the cop presidency and UNEP and, of course, the Ministers from around the world for the very first time to talk about impact. Was extraordinary. I think it was a very proud day for all the industry players that were there. But overall, I think you know, when we presented the the opportunity to our wider membership, this was happening, the level of excitement and support for that was extraordinary. You could see that

there's a strong feeling of commitment. And you know, a lot of this has to do with the fact that Baku and Azerbaijan Tourism Authority really took a leadership role in terms of making the pitch to as a host nation, but also un tourism, really jumping on the opportunity and ensuring that we established that day and and, you know, we, there was the back loop Baku Declaration on climate action, and we, as an industry, I think, had a lot to say, in terms of our contribution by the establishment of universal KPIs, when it comes to sustainability on particular environmental we as an industry need to come together and express our measuring of sustainability in the same way so that we can actually show progress and benchmark solutions. And that was the big announcement, I think, you know, and that was really gave some meat to the back load declaration itself as a hospitality sector and its overall contribution. But it was at a very exciting day overall. And I think, you know, it was interesting to see it picked up by, you know, even media outlets like Reuters and that taking it globally, the message of our sector's progress, we have as a sector, a real opportunity to affect change and contribute to the solution of climate change, and if we do this in a consorted and collaborative way, then, you know, we can be a very big contributor to the solution.

**Becca (Podcast host) 08:27**

Xenia, you've been working in the hospitality industry for some time. Can you reflect on how far the industry has come in terms of sustainability?

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 08:35**

Yeah, I mean, I think actually, to sort of tag on to what Glenn was just saying about cop 29 I think the fact that at COP 16 on biodiversity, right? And Glenn came out of COP 15 in Montreal declaring, making that declaration for the sustainable Hospitality Alliance, then to say we're going to be nature positive, right? To the fact that this year at the COP 16 on biodiversity, we had a representative in the figure of Gloria Fluxa, sitting on the main stage in the main hall at COP 16, talking about tourism and tourism contribution as well to nature positivity is another sign that, you know, we are being taken seriously and that the industry is has come a long way. I think the fact that there's been the universal criteria declared that the different players have come together, is actually a major, major step, because having worked in this industry for such a long time, and the just the problem of understanding your footprint if you don't have unified criteria and unified data is, is a huge challenge. So that, I think, is a big, big step, I think again, the ability for tourism to understand the impact they can have on nature, that we can be guardians of natural assets. Because a natural asset is a tourism asset, and sound like a broken. Because I keep repeating this, but I'm a huge believer that we could play an even bigger part in that. You know, whether it's protecting mangroves because their tourism asset or peat lands here, or forestry or any of those pieces of nature are where you go on holiday. So how do we step that up even more? I think maybe biost credits can come into that now, and that's an interesting new development that we can watch. And I think the last bit that's also being picked up, and again, under leadership like people of Gloria or even sono is, is a bit around ocean and ocean conservation in the blue economy. We've got the UN Oceans conference happening next summer in nice again. I'm expecting them, hoping that the SMI will be convening and that we can bring some of the hospitality players into this. So you know, the areas of impact, as Glenn said, are huge. The fact that, and I know we'll be talking about a little bit now in a minute, the food waste, being able to tackle that is going to be really impactful. And

just the fact that, you know, you've got so many powerful Chief Sustainability Officers actually sitting inside those Hotel Groups gives me, you know, a lot of hope, and I think it's a real proof that the industry and the CEOs have understood the importance of the topic.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 11:19**

There's no question significant progress has been made the hospitality sector when it comes to climate action and their contribution to it at biodiversity as well. Since the pandemic, there's no question that there's been more progress from the sector. Do we have a long way to go yet? Absolutely. There are a number of companies that are really at the pointy end of the spear that are jumping ahead. Just a couple of those companies that that Xenia you just referenced right now are in that leadership group that are influencing and inspiring other companies to start to move the progress along. But, you know, I think just again to pick up on what zenya said about nature. And you know, we live in a society right now where the value of a dead tree is actually more valuable than a live tree financially. And obviously that needs to change significantly. And tourism is a big inspiration to put economic value to nature in ways that currently, I don't think are being fully exploited. And I think we, as we talk about nature positive and the thinking of that, we have to live in a society where it's got to be the other way around. The value of that tree live is what makes the world go around and and that's where tourism can really play a big role. And that's the exciting things that come out of COP 15 and cop 16 is where we were a few years ago with COP 26 and Glasgow, where we had the industry, for the first time, make a declaration of effort. We were on the outside of the conversation. We were doing the side event. It wasn't the main stage. You could see three cops later. It's now. We're on the main stage as a sector, being able to contribute to the conversation cop 15 of biodiversity. Again, we were making the announcement, the declaration for nature tourism. Again, there was a reinforcement of that effort and the progress the sector has made this past year in Cali, Colombia, by the time the next biodiversity summit takes place, we want to be on that main stage showing that contribution to those Protected Area strategies, showing the value proposition this industry can play, and being really at the table of the investment contribution that the industry can make and again, protecting as well as contributing to the overall global strategy of sustainability. Can we talk a bit about nature fluency? Sonia, you said that phrase before to me, and I'm interested to understand what it means, and potentially what the challenges are in the hospitality industry, in people becoming nature fluent. You know, nobody learns about sustainability in Hotel School. Unfortunately, they still don't even include that in today's education, or maybe just on the sidelines. So none of the hotel CEOs or leaders within our industry ever learned about sustainability. So they had to sort of come to the table and really upskill in knowledge around climate change, and what does net zero mean, and what does sustainability mean as a whole? And you know, that's a really big pill to swallow for somebody who has not had the education in this. So now we're moving.

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 15:00**

On to nature and and people like what I've only just learned about climate change. I've only just learned about net zero. What does this all mean now, without understanding that they are so closely linked that we should have never had a separate conversation in the first place, right? But unfortunately, that's the way it's happened. That will that's what came out of the Rio Declaration. That's why we have three

COPs? We have a cop on climate, we have a cop on biodiversity, and we have a cop on desertification. It's too much for any business leader to get their head around that. And then on top of that, then out of Paris, it was all the focus on net zero and reducing our carbon. And so people have only just come around to that. So 10 years later, literally, more or less. You know, we've now got global metrics for this industry. So now pivot, and we're suddenly talking about nature positivity, which basically means, as Glenn says, nature assets are tourism assets. So we shouldn't have had to learn to talk about that anyway. And the other issue is that nature is our biggest insurance when it comes to climate change, and that's the link that we need to make people understand. That it's not a separate issue, is, if we don't look after nature, then we don't have it's like not having an insurance we're building. So I think it's it's sort of just being able to make those connections without making it fiendishly difficult, and also without it becoming a political issue, like climate has right and nature is something that can that everybody emotionally can actually connect to, because everybody will have a tree in front of their door, everybody will have a favorite park or a favorite beach or something. It's not as abstract as carbon and climate. So I think we've got a huge opportunity there. We've just got to bring it down to a simpler language, and it is something that we can engage across the political spectrum as well, and we can and again in all generations. So I think it's an easier path. We just need to be clever about not telling people off.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 16:50**

And that's really critical, and that's where the universal criteria really play a big role. Is about it's not just the methodology, which obviously is central to this, but it's the common language. And you always think about who's actually delivering on this in their industry. And if we make it so complicated and so misaligned in terms of the words we say in New York versus saying it in Nairobi, Kenya, it all has to say the same thing, otherwise, you can never keep people on the same page, and they actually have to see how this all connects to their business, because right now, they're really focused on turning beds. And you know, this is a part of, you know, serving a customer at a high level, ensuring that they have a great experience. And now we're injecting this element in the conversation, and it needs to show how it all interconnects in a meaningful way, in a transparent way, so that it sees, well, this is how it's going to help your business. And that's why we took on net positive hospitality, which is giving back to the destination more than we take because it's it's very focused on where we want to conserve our concentrate our energy as an industry is we have the privilege to operate these hotels in these communities focused on giving back that includes nature, that includes the social side of our industry, and really being a contributor. And people can understand that that's a that's a much more clear and transparent way. Can you contribute to the global strategy of biodiversity and climate action? Absolutely. And that's how an alliance and partnerships between the sustainable markets initiative and world sustainable Hospitality Alliance really come into play. Because we could have a much more broader conversation at the table between multiple companies, so that we are saying the same thing in these different parts of the world. the

**Becca (Podcast host) 18:50**

And at the SMI you bring together the private sector across industries. How important are cross industry learnings? And what can the hospitality industry learn?

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 19:00**

Gosh, I think they're hugely important. It's it's learning, and it's also the collaborations that actually accelerate action, right? So from the learnings, the obvious overlaps, or the obvious sort of sectors that talk to each other, our buildings, task force that we have, and I know that Glenn has also engaged, one of our key members there in the world Hospitality Alliance. So those are the kind of very fruitful cross pollinations that happen, given that, you know, hotels cannot move anywhere without the building owners wanting to do that. So I think those are just, that's just one example. I think the things that are happening that the hospitality sector can hopefully be benefiting from is definitely the whole financial sector moving into how do we finance nature? And as Glenn just said, right, a tree should be worth more alive than it is dead. So again, how do we invest into ecosystems? So, services, how do biodiversity credits work, and again, I think biodiversity credits is something that the hospitality and tourism sector can be hugely instrumental in making them a success. They are just currently being defined. We've got new frameworks coming out, but because they're rather than carbon credits, which, again, you can argue whether they work or not, but carbon credits are traded internationally. Biodiversity credits are not going to be able to trade internationally, right? Because you've got your ecosystems that in the place that you want to be keeping alive. So that's again, where hospitality and tourism businesses can come in and say, okay, we are looking after that area so that can give us biodiversity credits. So I think that there's that that's going to be conversations within the SMI happening with the finance sectors, with the companies in those areas as another example. And then insurance, and I know Glenn has had various conversations on that front too, like, what are we doing about insurance in, you know, coastal regions where tourism plays a huge role, whether you know, beaches, mangroves, coral reefs, all of those things how do and yet they suffer from floods, they suffer from hurricanes or tornadoes or whatever you have as extreme other situations. And that affects tourism businesses that are operating in those areas, coastal areas. So what are the conversations we need to be having with the insurance sector around that, and how can we deploy new insurance tools and offerings to those areas faster, as well as working on coastal resilience issues? So I think that's another SMI conversation that we've we've triggered. And again, there's other things around supply chains like sustainable aviation fuel again, that can come out of food waste again. And I we've already tried to make the first connections. I think we were a bit too early, but it is going to be happening where you say, Can the food waste of hotels be taken to create sustainable aviation fuel that can then be used in planes, and then that tourism loop closes again, right? It's those sort of conversations that we can have in the SMI that will allow, I think, the tourism and hospitality sector to then be part of those global solutions as well.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 22:15**

But I think, you know, it's realizing that the Sustainable Markets Initiative, this is like 6/700 CEOs from different sectors at the table, really concerted. That's where it really has to start. You know, the CEO has to get in behind it. That's why it's really important and imperative. And the convening power of the SMI with, of course, district the really important support of His Majesty King Charles the third who has really been an inspiration to many in terms of sustainability and its leadership, and it ensures the right people are at the table to have this conversation. I couldn't agree more with what zenya just said. You know, finance, obviously, our industry is looking to expand. We have hotel companies in our

membership that are opening a new hotel every single day. In fact, the latest number I heard two hotels every single day for the next two years. So if that is occurring, where is the finance coming from? Where is the new investment that's going to support that? The right people are at the table at the SMI because of the fact that I think it's top 10 financial companies in the world are actually part of the the SMI, and including to that, of course, the banks and those players absolutely right. When it comes to insurance, you may be able to get money for your hotel to build it, but if you can't insure your property, you really aren't in business. So it's really important that the insurance companies are engaged with the industry in particularly areas that, like small island states that are facing the real crunch in the Global South. That's an important element. But it's also interesting. I had the opportunity at the SMI table, that the healthcare industry is at the table, and, you know, we're looking to establish a common partner power agreement for the sector. Well, that's already had been established in the healthcare industry, in a key market, which, you know, kind of paves the way for this kind of conversation. And I always say it's interesting that the running a hospital is very similar to running a hotel. They're dealing with the exact same issues. The only thing difference is, you know how the customer got to the front door, but the overall principle is the same. There's a lot of learnings that can happen between sectors like that when you least expect it, and absolutely aviation needs to be in the conversation. When we're thinking about hospitality, you have to get to our front door. And you know the airline industry is obviously central to that, and we have to be a contributor to support the airline industry. To become, you know, more efficient and more sustainable, because it's in the hospitality's interest to see that happen because of as an overall sector, we want to ensure that we're positioned in a very favorable light to do the overall action. And we've mentioned food waste, a report issued last month, co authored by the Alliance the Vera star and the SMI issued a call to action. How confident are we that these types of reports will be heeded by the industry? How much action can we take? One of the things that we out of the SMI Task Force, when we convened all the leading CEOs at the table, one common element they all said, all across the board, is one area we want to tackle is food waste. So let's just be clear that the task force itself stated at the CEO level, this is and that's across the board, no matter where they were around the world on this, because there is a feeling that this is an area we can control, and we can make a difference, not just obviously to the climate, which is obviously central, but to their bottom line as well, by making better choices and being more efficient in our approach. And it's exciting to see that the industry came together and said, hey, let's create a decarbonization of the hotel industry through our food systems and to actually produce a CO produced report that actually showcases some some ways to get there, is a key part of that?

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 26:41**

Yeah, I think it, as Glenn said, Everybody's keen to do something about food waste. It helps with your bottom line, but I think it also just makes people feel bad. I think people have understood that throwing away food is not good on any fronts, right, and the fact that we are delivering them with a very easy roadmap, and that report will hopefully give people guidelines. I mean, I know that we worked around that topic at considerate years ago here with with rap in the UK, and they did a lot of workshops, and there was a real push in that time here in the UK. And I think they got a long way. But then, you know, again, you then understand that you need to drill a bit deeper. You need to look also look at how you're purchasing things. You need to look at how is your back of house organized. You need to look at

a lot of practical things. And I think this report does that, and the discussion we had in New York around that was really fruitful. So I think, I hope it's just the first step in a few more that will follow, and just give people a very easy way to implement these. And you know what? Nobody realizes that if food waste goes on to into landfill, then you know, you have methane. And we don't need any more methane emissions because they're obviously even more harmful than CO two emissions. So it's you know you're doing. Gone on good on so many fronts when you're just tackling one issue at the end of the day. So I think this is very welcome.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 28:06**

And you know, when you think about it, the report outlines that, you know, as an industry, we produce more carbonoutput from food waste than the entire UAE combined for its entire and I would say that that's a significant number, and we can, we have to reduce that, and there's some commitments there, and focus on, you know, if we could even take 30% of that food waste out of the mix, that is going to make a big difference. And you could use technology to make that happen. But one of the things that also surprised me in the process, I actually thought a lot of the food waste occurred in the buffets, you know, I thought that, you know, because it's very visible, and that's certainly a big part of the food waste that occurs. And there's, there's really strategic ways to help reduce that, using even plate sizes and and just, you know, being very more, much more conscious of the kind of products you put out on the table that go faster than others and so, and there's so, there's a very unique and strategic ways that hotel companies are being much more exploitive of technology And and, and just being more conscious of the the buffet, but what is understood that it's over 80% of the food waste actually occurs back of house, and the preparation, and how it's how food is managed, and how it's cooked, and and are the is, are the companies actually, or The chefs, quite frankly, using all the elements of the of the food they get. That's a that's a that's an educational shift that needs to happen in order to to make that big change. And that's that's where we're going to see a lot of impact. And reports like this a push shines a light on the issue and where the. The issues are like for me, I learned all about the fact that it's not happening completely on on the on the buffet table and and where we can concentrate our efforts as an alliance and as an as a sustainable markets Initiative, where we should be really concentrated to make the biggest impact. And that clearly is back of house and and so that's one of the big areas that we're focused on, is building training modules within the academies of both the alliance and smi that will really a shine a light on it, but also providing practical, concrete ways to make the reduction effort happen. So we will expect that happening right away, actually, because it's we've got the framework for this to happen now. So this is not just a report that comes out and we don't talk about it again. There's a whole bunch of things now that will roll out over the course of 2025 and one of those is around education.

**Becca (Podcast host) 31:00**

Leading nicely to my final question, food waste is going to be a lot of activity in 2025 from the SMI and the Alliance. What are you looking forward to this year in terms of the industry and maybe steps it will take? What about cop 30?

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe (Sustainable Markets Initiative) 31:16**

Yeah, so COP 30 is, I think, a huge opportunity. Again. We're hoping that, obviously, the UN will repeat what they did at COP 29 and give us a day. With me and my country hat on, I'm doing a huge outreach to Brazil at the moment. I think the opportunity in Brazil are going to be huge, because the Brazilian government is very keen to have nature at the table of the cop 30 discussions whether we'll get an, you know, an alignment between biodiversity cop and climate cop. I doubt, but everybody's pushing for it. So I think in that, in that case, but still, there'll be a lot more talk about nature than the previous climate COPs. Let's put it that way, and we're in the middle of the rainforest, so that's the other way. We can't escape that conversation. So yes, I think there'll be huge opportunities for, again, the tourism sector to come together on that, to talk about our role in Nature Conservancy, in nature positive tourism. And we will certainly be focusing a lot of that effort and our work on to putting pulling an interesting COP 30 private sector representation together, and hopefully we will be represented by our founder in Brazil itself too. So there's a great opportunity.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 32:35**

And it's no question, and I'm very pleased to say I had, you know, also, some very good meetings with the Minister for Brazil, both from an environmental perspective, and tourism minister, they've made a commitment that they're going to be making the pitch to have another Tourism Day, which really, I Think, showcased because the cop Secretariat saw it firsthand. They you the lineup to get into the room was enormous. There was absolute interest in this issue. They saw that firsthand. I think that's going to really bode well for the pitch that needs to happen, as zenya points out, to ultimately to the United Nations to make sure that that we can see that happen again. And I'm excited about it because, you know, we announced, obviously, our first wave of key sustainability measures on the environment this year will all be about updating the tools that go with that to support the measures of carbon, water and waste together in a digitized way, so that it can be distributed around the world. And that's really exciting, because the industry right now is meeting on this topic when everybody's collecting the same data, and it's all going into a same kind of a platform that you can then showcase and benchmark progress, we will have something very meaningful to talk about when it comes to COP 30 in Brazil.

**Becca (Podcast host) 34:17**

We heard there about the problem the industry has with food waste, in the autumn of last year, the Alliance co-wrote an ambitious report which urged the global hospitality industry to collectively reduce its food related emissions by 30% by 2030. The Decarbonising Hotel Food Systems white paper recommends a pathway for the industry to cut up to 70 million tons of CO2. Annually produced by the Alliance, Iberostar Hotels and Resorts, the Sustainable Markets Initiative and Systemiq, the paper outlines that hotels can influence the global food system by leveraging their procurement power and optimizing energy use. With the hospitality industry representing 1% of all food production in emissions and generating 3% of global food waste, the industry has an important role to play in transforming food systems for the better. A webinar outlining the paper was held, and we're going to hear now part of the Q and A. The full report is available on the Alliance's website, and we will be hosting more webinars on this topic this year. If you'd like to get involved, please email [info@sustainablehospitalityalliance.org](mailto:info@sustainablehospitalityalliance.org), there we are.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 35:25**

So in the Q and A chat box, please put fire your questions in there and and we'll follow up with that...

**Becca (Podcast host) 35:31**

In this Q and A, you'll hear from the Alliance's CEO, Glenn Mandziuk, Iberostar's Global Sustainability Director - Innovation Research and Destinations - Erika Harms, and Rupert Simons, who lead Systemiqs, Nature Food Team in Europe.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 35:45**

That we have is for Glenn, and they want to know if you can provide some examples of how it is that the sector as a whole can work towards the vision that's presented in this paper.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 35:55**

Well, the real important thing is engage, you know, as it mentioned in the in the slide there about engage and collaborate, we have to learn from each other. So the only way we can really move it in a quicker way is each of the companies are doing some very unique things in this conversation. We need to bring those best practices together so that we can share with each other and and learn from each other, otherwise, it's a very daunting task, we all know that, and people a lot of the industry, of course, are very time deprived on this effort. So we need to learn from each other so we can catalyze that change. So we will provide that framework within our as I mentioned, our impact committees and through our through our various initiatives like this paper, which is designed to not only inspire our work as an alliance, but to inspire our partners to look at and take on, take on the cause. You know, look at what this is, because this is probably one of the most significant things we can do as an industry to tackle and reduce our carbon emissions. And so if we really tackle this in a very significant way, I think Rupert referenced it very well. You know, if you compared our emissions to, you know, a country like the UAE, then that that says that we have a lot of work to do to make that, make that transition happen. So this is where a powerful opportunity, that's why an alliance like this has been created, is to really get that collaborative energy together.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 37:35**

Terrific. Thank you. This next question here we have for Erica, which is for hotels that are maybe a little bit more advanced in their sustainability journey. Do you have any recommendations for them as it pertains to decarbonizing food systems? Maybe this hotels are already meeting targets. Do you have any recommendations for maybe some advanced type of work that they can begin doing?

**Erika Harms (Iberostar Group) 37:57**

Well, it's hard to say how advanced they are, so I think the I we assume you have your quick wins that I've already talked about. So this is where you go into investments on one end, and the other one is engagement with the community. So what we found is, when we hit the limit of what can we do that is an easy fix, we set up a program that's called destination stewardship, and that is working with the communities or the destinations or the governments on how we reach the targets, because they're not solely dependent on us. So we're looking at, for example, we've done everything to get value out of

waste. So what's the next step? So how do we address waste to energy? So that waste to energy is something that is not more polluting or has a higher footprint than if we send it to landfill, so doing that analysis and working with the destination in some areas, we just don't, simply don't have infrastructure. So how do we go out and partner with other companies in order to create the infrastructure to deal with waste or who buys the case where waste management is very difficult? So how do we work with the government and other hotels to identify options that can deal with organics or recycling, so that that would be my suggestion is reach out to others and find ways that we can collaborate in order to reach that next step that that is beyond the capabilities that we have Really great. So this next question that we have is for ruper specifically highlighting if there anything surprising during the development process for the white paper, and we also have some questions on some of the data collection process in terms of establishing baseline. So maybe you could talk a little bit about that and how that was established during the development process.

**Rupert Simons (Systemiq) 40:03**

Thank you. Nicholas, so So on the on the baseline. So we've drawn principally on two reports for the sizing of the emissions as the first is a piece that our team did a few years ago called Better Travel and Tourism better world. And I can share a link to that where we went through the total emissions of the hotel sector, which has provided some of the baseline information that we then use to do this deep dive into food, because the sourcing is such a significant part of the footprint. We then went into more depth on the type of food that is being served in hotels, and the emissions footprint associated with that, as well as the waste footprint associated with that, we got some useful data from the team at winnow that has been working with Iberostar and many other hotel groups on the reduction of food waste in food service settings, and we've also drawn heavily on the research of poor and NEMA check at Oxford University, which, which, which you can find amongst others on the our world in data page, and I can share a link to that as well. One of the one, one of the other questions that, that I wanted to address was also on how to educate the customer, and there's some interesting research that we drew on from the World Resources Institute on how to structure food choices in food service settings so that people are pushed towards making choices that are both healthier for them and healthier for the planet, without getting into the space of lecturing them and trying to avoid restricting choice too much. And the and I will post a link to that to that work as well. It's called the food service playbook, and it comes from the cool food initiative at the World Resources Institute. They haven't got a chapter specifically on hotel food, but a lot of what they say on food service, more broadly, we think is applicable to the hotel food question. And then you can, of course, do more on behavior change once you start going down the the education route. But I think the challenge that educating people while they're on holiday is always going to be harder than than than promoting a base level of education before people people go on holiday. And one question that I sometimes wonder is whether booking platforms could do more to incorporate the carbon footprints of different properties or different into their booking choices in the same way that they already do the footprint of of air travel, for example. And technically, I think that should be entirely, entirely feasible, whether there's really demand for it. I guess is a separate question.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 43:00**

Really great. And I think that's a great transition into one of the next questions that we have, which, for Glenn or Erika, I think would be great is, what's the single most important issue that we need to educate consumers about to help the transition to more sustainable tourism?

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 43:16**

Well, that's an interesting one. A single greatest that's a I yeah, I think it's just making better choices. And I think one of the things that that you know, Rupert talked about is, you know, we as an industry can provide that, that springboard of thinking for the consumer to look at, and it is making, but want of a better word, some of the more healthier choices, or the more plant based choices, and to stick with this conversation, more sexier on the menu, you know, it's like, it's, it's, it's really educating your teams to bring that to light, that you know, these are really important. The chef is, you know, is focused on this type of delivery and and you want to make it more exciting for the consumer, because the consumer is very interested in learning more about the local environment, the local community. That's why they're traveling into those places. They want to immerse themselves into the local stories. We know that as an industry. So how do we layer that into the actual conversation when it comes to delivery of sustainable products for for the consumer? So I think it's a really important for our industry to just to make those nudges for making those more sustainable choices by not lecturing as as Rupert explained, but actually showing the value proposition for the consumer to make those choices and and I think that's when we'll start to see the change necessary from the consumer side, because there's a real opportunity for hospitality to be sort of incubator of ideas for the consumer to take back home with them and practice those sustainable practices back at home. So this is where, this is the opportunity, particularly on the food side.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 45:17**

I appreciate that.

**Erika Harms (Iberostar Group) 45:21**

I think one of the things that we have tried to do from Iberostar is not only the communication, which we do with with the seafood side of things, but actually show options to the client and provide examples by by just setting up the food in a different way. So the food is there, it looks nice, and they and they taste it, they see it, so it doesn't require that much of a talking about it, but rather taste it, and you'll find that it it looks good. And one very neat example that we had actually in one of our sustainability conferences in Mexico was that somebody from the bar decided to make a drink and was telling the story of how they were using the leftovers from the pineapple in order to make this particular drink and transforming that and it becomes now a story to the client, a you're drinking this which represents that we're saving this much in pineapple ways so fun ways in which, as Glenn said, fun ways in which you put that together so the consumer can see it without it being in your face.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 46:40**

That's really great. Thanks so much, Erika and Glenn. Erica, this next question is directed to you, asking if you could elaborate a little bit more on how AI specifically Winnow inside the kitchens is helping to decrease the amount of food waste within the operations of the hotel.

**Erika Harms (Iberostar Group) 46:58**

Yeah, I think there's two components to how we take action that are very important. One is setting baselines, and the other one is understanding, actually what we're talking about. So it's easy to say is we're wasting food, but until you start to measure how much food you're measuring, you're you're wasting, and what type of food you're wasting. It is only just the assumptions that we're making. Once it goes into AI, you're understanding not only the volume of waste, but the type of waste. So is it tomatoes? Is it tomatoes coming from the buffet, or is it tomatoes coming from the kitchen, and once you can align where the waste is coming from, then you can start taking actions, be it, do we need to change our menus? Because our menus are offering items that people are throwing away? Hence, let's just not serve that or we have problems in the way prepping is conducting in our kitchens. But AI comes into this equation by allowing us in a very effective way, rather than having a person which we used to have limited measurements through through people and skills, but now through AI, we're able to do that in a much more effective and quicker way.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 48:21**

Really great. Thanks so much, Erica. And then just another quick follow up that we just received from somebody. How complex is the regulatory framework to achieve a farm to table to farm circularity in making sure that you achieve that type of circularity within the food system?

**Rupert Simons (Systemiq) 48:39**

Shall I answer that, or attempt to answer that. So I think it's, it works. It works a lot more easily for feeding animals than for feeding people. So it's, it's legally possible and encouraged in most countries to feed food waste to animals, and then for that food to then re enter the human supply chain. What you typically can't do, and there are very good legal reasons for this, is that you can't, you can't put without very extensive cleaning and and de pathogenization, put, put human waste, or indeed animal waste in into into food that is then going to go straight to people. So there are legal restrictions on that for good reasons. That's also to stop the accumulation of toxins and and hormones sometimes used in some kinds of food production, into the into the supply chain. So the way that we recommend people to think about circularity is to design out waste from the beginning so to eat and and prioritize through food choices, the kinds of food that are associated with less waste to start with and to far more efficiently through through using precision agriculture techniques, for example, so that you don't need as much mineral fertilizer in the first place, and then so doing, you're reducing the fossil footprint of of of that food as well as reducing reducing waste. So there are certainly opportunities for making better use of organic cycling, of composting, for example, that's particularly relevant in environments where there's there's no organic waste collection organized by municipalities, and then hotels can organize the composting for themselves. But the biggest lever, in our view, is still to design waste out of the system in the first place.

**Nicholas Komisarjevsky (Iberostar Group) 50:47**

Really great. And we have time for one more question, which be directed towards Erika or Glenn, which is asking, what are some simple steps that a hotel, a hotel can do just starting off in terms of decarbonizing food waste.

**Erika Harms (Iberostar Group) 51:02**

There's different areas where where you can start for as I mentioned during the presentation, one is just labeling, labeling places where you have energy waste, and by taking actions or reminding people of things like the door is open, the oven needs to be at this temperature. The oven needs to be on from this time to this time off, from this time to this time that helps a lot. The measuring is another one. Whether you do it through AI or start just measuring yourself with with basic scales, it is another component to do, and the third one that I also was talking about is try to drive the client through food choices that you bring by making them attractive and exciting. This doesn't require you to change or their minds, but a piece of weed versus a really nicely presented something is good. One issue that we had, for example, is when we said, well, no lobsters all year round, so we're not serving lobsters when, when there is a restriction, and kitchen said, that's not possible, but we found alternatives that were closer to lobster, and presented them in a way that was attractive to the consumer, so no complaints on that side at this time. I won't say it happened. It didn't happen at the beginning, but as we move forward now, there's literally no no complaints on on that. So those are easy actions that you can take that don't require higher investments and and obviously training that you can do to the staff for better understanding.

**Glenn Mandziuk (the Alliance) 52:53**

And then just picking up on that. You know, as Rupert pointed out, and is that the report that is live, and you can go to the [World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance.org](http://WorldSustainableHospitalityAlliance.org), website and and obtain a copy of that, and in there we'll have some directions that the industry is taking. But I think more importantly, from from our end, is the on that website also is our Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality, and it shows a four step approach, starting with the basics all the way going into more advanced and really encourage you to take a look at those processes and projects and initiatives outlined in that pathway.

**Becca (Podcast host) 53:40**

And finally, we'll hear the latest voice of the future. Heber is a graduate of the Alliance's employability program in Egypt and is embarking on her career in the industry.

**Heba (Egypt Employability Programme graduate) 53:50**

Hello, my name is Heba. I graduated from the Technology Institute in Egypt and have worked in various fields throughout my career. However, I have always dreamed of joining the hospitality industry and building a career within it. Despite my passion, I struggled to find a way in. I applied to multiple hotels as a trainee, but I was not accepted due to my educational background, which was unrelated to hospitality. Things changed when I came across the employability program announced by Etijah. The program gave me hope and a chance to pursue my dream. I applied, went through the interview process, and was thrilled to be accepted. The journey began with a 15-day soft skills training, which



proved to be a crucial first step in achieving my dream. During this training, I learned the true meaning of hospitality and gained detailed insights into the operations of various hotel departments. The sessions were incredibly beneficial and equipped me with the foundational skills I needed to succeed in the field. Following the training, I started my practical experience in the kitchen department at JW Marriott Hotel. Over the course of two months, I worked closely with the chefs, who were exceptionally supportive, helpful, and kind. They provided invaluable guidance and taught me a great deal about the profession. Unfortunately, I was not offered a permanent position at the JW Marriott due to budget constraints. However, the project team and Etijah team continued to support me. Through their efforts, I secured an employment opportunity in the kitchen department at Sheraton Soma Bay. Currently, I am working there, where I learn something new and gain valuable experience every single day. My ultimate dream is to become an international chef, and this program has given me the tools and confidence to believe that I can achieve it.

**Becca (Podcast host)** [55:45](#)

For more in the Alliance, it's work and to discover how the hospitality industry can achieve net positive, go to our website [www.sustainablehospitalityalliance.org](http://www.sustainablehospitalityalliance.org).