The Line That Is Not a Cost

GUIDING QUESTION *Take ten minutes and write down the three pieces of equipment that consume the most energy in your building. Beside each one, write the year it was installed and who chose it. If you cannot name the year, or if the person who chose it no longer works there, then most of what you will spend on energy over the next decade was decided by somebody you cannot ask, on a day nobody recorded.*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the five parts with the people who own the process. The text in the left-hand columns comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what is commonly believed, what actually holds, and your property

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	In our property
«Energy is an operating cost, so we review it annually.»	Most of next year's consumption was fixed when equipment was installed. The annual review governs a band, not the number.	
«Where energy is cheap, energy management matters less.»	Cheap energy removes the feedback that would reveal a bad decision. The decision costs the same; nobody notices it.	
«An emergency replacement is a maintenance matter.»	It is the largest category of energy decision a hotel takes, and it is taken under time pressure by whoever is available.	
«Our approval thresholds cover this.»	Thresholds are set by invoice size. A moderate invoice can carry a twenty-year commitment; a large one often carries none.	
«We have run four energy initiatives, so we are managing energy.»	Four initiatives inside the operating band can be entirely correct and still recover a fraction of one bad acquisition.	
«We will address this at the next refurbishment.»	The next refurbishment is a decision window. If nobody has written down when each window falls, it will pass like the last one.	

2. What the standard requires, and what demonstrates it

From Table 1.1.a. The third column of the book (what is method, not requirement) is left out here: write what your property actually holds as evidence.

What is required	What demonstrates it in a hotel	In our property
Objectives compatible with strategic direction	An energy objective that appears in the same document as the capital plan	
System integrated into business processes	Energy performance named as a criterion in the approval form for asset purchases	
Resources determined and provided	A budget line that exists before a failure, not after one	
Energy performance considered in design	The specification for a replacement, written before the supplier is asked	
Suppliers informed of energy evaluation	The line in the request for quotation that says so	
Purchasing specifications for energy defined	A written specification for the supply contract, not only a price comparison	
Demonstrable improvement in performance	A consumption series long enough to show what decisions did to it	

3. The instrument: Table 1.1.b, The decision window register

The instrument of this subchapter. One page, ten to fifteen lines, reviewed once a year.

Asset	Installed	Next decision expected	Who will decide it as things stand
Heat generation or supply interface	Year	Year of expected replacement	Maintenance and a contractor
Chiller or cooling plant	Year	Year	Maintenance and a contractor
Air handling, conference and public areas	Year	Year	Whoever is on duty when it fails
Domestic hot water generation and storage	Year	Year	Maintenance
Kitchen line	Year	Year	Executive chef and a supplier
Laundry equipment, if on site	Year	Year	Housekeeping and a supplier
Lifts	Year	Year	The lift service contract
Spa and pool plant	Year	Year	The concession, if there is one
Building management system	Year	Year	An integrator, at refurbishment
Envelope: windows, roof, insulation	Year	Year of next major works	An architect

The rows above are the book's; the empty rows are for lines your property needs to add.

4. Common mistakes: self-check

Common mistake	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)	Where we see it
Reviewing energy as an operating cost and never as a capital commitment.		
Letting approval thresholds based on invoice size govern twenty-year decisions.		
Treating an emergency replacement as a maintenance event rather than an energy decision.		
Measuring initiatives against last year instead of against what the asset could deliver.		
Assuming that cheap energy makes energy decisions less consequential.		
Waiting for the next refurbishment without knowing when the next refurbishment is.		

5. Action plan

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Build the register: every significant asset, its year of installation, and the year its replacement falls due.			
Mark which decision windows fall inside the next three years, and prepare those specifications now.			
Write a standing specification for the assets most likely to fail without warning.			
Route every purchase affecting a significant energy use to the owner, regardless of invoice size.			

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Plot ten years of consumption in one line, and look for steps rather than trends.			
Ask the contractor what the alternative would have consumed, before the order, not after.			
Put the energy criterion into the request for quotation, in writing, where suppliers can see it.			
Review the register once a year, in the same meeting as the capital plan.			

In brief

Energy is bought twice, and only the first purchase is reviewed annually. The second (the machine, the envelope, the system) is bought rarely, often under pressure, frequently by whoever is available, and it sets the ceiling under which every subsequent effort takes place. An owner who understands this stops asking what the property spends and starts asking when the property can next change what it spends.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 4a: The Helm, subchapter 1.1. This sheet does not reproduce the text of the standard; work with your own copy of ISO 50001:2018 from an authorised source.