Improvement, and the Result You Have to Hold

GUIDING QUESTION *If your property closes, or empties, for part of the year, find out what it draws during that period and compare it with what it drew during the same period two years ago. If the figure has risen while the building was doing nothing, then every improvement made during your open months has been financing a deterioration that occurs while nobody is there; and no amount of further improvement will outrun it.*

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
«Continual improvement means improving every year.»	Continual implies occurrence over time with intervals of interruption. The expectation is periodic improvement, not uninterrupted improvement.	
«The pace is set by the standard.»	The rate, extent and timeframe are determined by the organisation, in light of its context and economic factors.	
«We improved every season and still went backwards.»	You measured gains in the open season and took your losses in the closed one. The reference point was wrong, not the work.	
«Nothing happens when the property is closed.»	Nothing observable happens. It is where the base load is quietly reset, and where the next season starts from.	
«Holding a position is not improvement.»	Where a decline is expected, delaying or reducing it through proper management can itself demonstrate improvement.	
«Energy work does not deliver in this property.»	A reasonable conclusion from a measurement that was answering a different question from the one everybody thought.	

2. What the standard requires, and what demonstrates it

From Table 2.15.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
Continual improvement of the system	Something in the system working better than last year	
Demonstrable continual improvement of performance	A normalised series over several years, not a single comparison	
Improvement occurring periodically over time	A year of consolidation declared as such, between years of gain	
Rate and timeframe determined by the organisation	A stated pace, set against this property's context	
Demonstrated by normalised consumption or by target progress	Either one, chosen because it fits the building	
Achieved on the basis of the organisation's priorities	A decision to do one thing well rather than three badly	
Delaying a decline may demonstrate improvement	A base load held flat while plant ages	

3. The instrument: Table 2.15.b, Six ways a hotel can demonstrate improvement

The instrument of this subchapter. More than one will apply, and none of them has to be every year.

How improvement is shown	What it looks like in a hotel	When it is the right one
Normalised consumption falls	The headline figure, adjusted for weather and occupancy	A stable building with a stable operation
Progress towards an energy target	A stated target with measurable movement towards it	When a specific use is being worked on
Better management of a significant use	A use brought under control that was not before	When the gain is structural rather than numeric
A decline delayed or slowed	A base load held flat while plant ages	From the fourth or fifth year of any system
The base load at rest reduced	What the building draws empty, falling year on year	Any property with dead periods or closed floors
The system itself working better	A criterion now followed that was not before	Always, and it is a separate requirement

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
Building a system that accumulates gains and has no mechanism for retaining them.		
Measuring only when the property is trading, and not when it is empty.		
Performing a closure sequence from practice rather than from a document, twice a year, with different people.		
Restoring something at reopening and never re-isolating it at the next closure.		
Reading continual as continuous, and adopting an annual target that will eventually be missed.		
Treating a held position as nothing having happened.		

5. Action plan

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Measure the property when it is empty, and keep that figure as an indicator.			
Compare season starts, not season totals.			
Pair every closure with its reopening in one document.			
Hand over the closure sequence as a document, not as a practice.			
Declare a consolidation year in advance when that is what you need.			
Claim retention as a result where the alternative was a decline.			
Set the pace deliberately and write it down, before it becomes an implied annual target.			

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Protect the closure as a piece of work: a named person, half a day, before the season ends.			
Recalculate past improvements against the corrected reference point.			

In brief

Continual is not continuous, and the guidance says so: improvement occurs over a period of time with intervals of interruption, and the expectation is that it occurs periodically rather than without pause. The rate, the extent and the timeframe are the organisation’s to determine in light of its context and its economic circumstances. A property that declares a consolidation year is complying with this standard; one that quietly misses a self-imposed annual target is complying too, and looks as though it is not.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 4a: The Helm, subchapter 2.15. This sheet does not reproduce the text of the standard; work with your own copy of ISO 50001:2018 from an authorised source.