WORKSHEET 1.1

The Asset That Is Not on the Balance Sheet

Subchapter 1.1 · case in the book: Lisbon

Write down, from memory, how many copies of guests' identity documents your property holds today, on paper and in files, and where the oldest one is kept. If you cannot answer to within a factor of ten, the most valuable thing in your building is also the one nobody has counted.

This worksheet turns the tools of the subchapter into a form you can fill in. The texts come from the book; the empty columns are for your own property. Adapt it before use: an unadapted checklist is exactly what the book warns against.

Practical application: what to do in your property

Step (from the book)	Done?	What we found / owner
Build the information register: category, location, owner, retention period and reason, and who outside the hotel would value it.		
Search for the system that was replaced but never switched off, and give it a date.		
Look in every departmental mailbox for payment details and identity documents received by email.		
Decide whether the property needs copies of identity documents at all, after reading the rule that actually applies.		
Set a rule for the notes field in guest profiles: what may be written, what may not, and for how long it stays.		
Assign each category of information an owner in the business, not in IT.		
Schedule deletion, carry it out, and record it.		
Review the register once a year, in the same meeting as the property's other assets.		

These steps are the book’s method, not requirements of ISO/IEC 27001. Evidence can take whatever form suits the property; a separate document is needed only where an applicable requirement, or the property’s own system, makes it necessary.

Verification Pact: what is believed, tested against the standard

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«The standard requires an asset register of our hardware.»	It asks for an inventory of information and of the assets associated with it, with owners. The hardware belongs on it; the information is the point of it.	
«Our IT provider owns the data.»	The provider operates the systems. Decisions about what is kept, why and for how long are the hotel's, and so is the responsibility for them.	

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«The authorities require us to keep copies of passports.»	Guest registration rules differ by country. Many require certain details to be recorded or transmitted; far fewer require a copy of the document to be kept, and fewer still for years. Read the rule that applies to your property before relying on it.	
«More data means more value.»	Only data that is used has value to the business. The rest has value only to someone else.	
«Deleting is risky; keeping everything is safe.»	Keeping is a decision with a cost. The standard expects information to be deleted when it is no longer required, and the privacy regulation expects the same of personal data.	

Common mistakes: a self-check

Mistake (from the book)	Present here?	Action / owner
Presenting the equipment list as the inventory of information.		
Assuming the IT provider decides what is kept and for how long.		
Keeping copies of identity documents because it has always been done, without reading the rule.		
Accepting card details by email and never cleaning the mailbox.		
Migrating to a new system and leaving the old one running with the data inside.		
Treating the notes field in guest profiles as free text with no rule.		
Setting retention periods without writing down the reason for each.		

Operative synthesis

- **Information is the one asset in a hotel that appears on no balance sheet, grows every year without anybody deciding it should, and is often worth more to an outsider than to the owner. The first discipline the standard imposes is to know what is held, where, by whose decision and for how long, and the first control it makes available is the one that costs least: not holding what the business does not need.**
- **The instrument is a page. Twelve to fifteen categories of information, where each lives, who owns it, how long it is kept and why, and who outside the hotel would pay to have it. Its value is that it turns a decade of accumulation into something an owner can read once a year.**

- **Protection still matters, and the rest of this volume is about it. But protection applied to information nobody decided to keep is expensive and never finished. Deciding comes first, and deciding belongs to the owner.**
- **In Lisbon nothing had been done badly. A receptionist found a quicker way to do a job, a migration left a report running on an old server, reservations staff accepted guarantees the way guests offered them, and kind people remembered what guests had told them. Every decision was sensible on the day it was taken. None of them was taken by anyone who would have to answer for the total, and the total was only discovered when somebody from outside asked to see it.**
- **Which raises the question the next subchapter takes up. Where the information physically lives, which country's law reaches it, and what the weather can do to the room where the server stands are conditions under which all of this is decided, and a property chooses few of them. What an owner must understand about that context, and what happens when nobody has asked where the hotel's systems would be on the morning after a storm, is the case that follows.**

Action plan for our property

Action	Owner	Due	How we will know it worked

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 5a «The Helm», subchapter 1.1. Edizioni Effedore, 2026. Clause references are paraphrased; this sheet does not reproduce the text of ISO/IEC 27001. It is not legal advice: data protection and information security law is that of the place where the property operates.