

## Management spotlight: Inge Huijbrechts, Rezidor Hotel Group

Posted by [Steven Wilding](#) [1] on Jan 15, 2013

Better resource use for efficient business

*Inge Huijbrechts is vice-president, Responsible Business, for the Rezidor Hotel Group. Rezidor's Responsible Business programme is based on three main pillars: Think People - health and safety for guests and employees; Think Together - respect for social and ethical issues within the company; and Think Planet - a reduced negative impact on the environment. Huijbrechts spoke with Ethical Corporation's Steven Wilding. Additional reporting by Giles Crosse.*

**Ethical Corporation:** Tell us, in two sentences, what it is you do.

**Inge Huijbrechts:** I am responsible for setting the strategy and managing the implementation of our Responsible Business programme. This covers three elements: Think Planet, minimising our environmental footprint; Think People, focusing on health and safety; and Think Together, looking at communities and ethics.

**Ethical Corporation:** What are the big issues to watch in 2013?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** Energy and water savings and their impact on carbon and climate change, and the associated scarcity risks related to both. Water is moving up on the agenda; previously it's always been energy, energy, energy. Some organisations are now looking more closely at the link between water and water rights too.

The right to safe drinking water has come fully into focus. If you look at growing economies, such as in China and also in places such as sub-Saharan Africa, energy and water combined are key.

**Ethical Corporation:** In your role as vice-president, Responsible Business, what are your priorities for 2013?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** Continuing our Think Planet energy savings initiative, we are reducing another 5% from our energy consumption. We are partway through a five year project to reduce energy consumption by 25% by 2016. It's also very much about integrating and estimating water and energy risks alongside our business development.

**Ethical Corporation:** In terms of developing corporate responsibility, which areas of innovation would you pick out to watch, and why?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** Microgeneration is very exciting. We follow everything to do with on site generation of renewable energy, innovations in photovoltaics and wind turbines. I like these photovoltaic "trees" which are coming on the market now.

Food is important, specifically fisheries and seafood, and sustainable fishing. Something else is paper: the processes in creating paper products touch closely on challenges such as biodiversity, deforestation and chemical use.

There is increased consumer awareness about the effects of product choices and the implications of these on biodiversity loss and human suffering.

**Ethical Corporation:** Climate change – mitigation or adaptation?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** Mitigation clearly.

**Ethical Corporation:** A government to watch on sustainability?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** The UK has done and is still doing a great job, with clear government policies on sustainability.

I'd also highlight sub-Saharan Africa. These countries are growing spectacularly fast and they have growth which other countries can only dream of. South Africa and other countries such as Gabon, which was listed as number one in the Yale University Environmental Performance Index, spring to mind.

There are other interesting examples. We have hotels in Mozambique with very advanced energy and water technologies – in different places there are challenges that require unique solutions. And this is all related to human and community development.

**Ethical Corporation:** Corporation tax – higher or lower?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** I would say rather that we need to seek more stimuli for environmental investment, more tax relief and incentives for environmentally friendly investment.

In the UK and in France, you can get income tax relief for investments that are related to energy saving. Governments, if they want to incentivise industry to move fast, need to do develop better stimuli, or lower taxes with a more defined purpose.

**Ethical Corporation:** CR impact – Obama or Xi Jinping?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** China for sure.

**Ethical Corporation:** “Shared value’ or “sustainability”?

**Inge Huijbrechts:** Shared value.

*Inge Huijbrechts will be speaking at this year's [12th Annual Responsible Business Summit](#) [2]. She will be part of a roundtable session looking at how to create and implement a business model to reflect water, food and energy shortages.*

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/users/steven-wilding>

[2] <http://events.ethicalcorp.com/rbs/index.php>