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Ecolabelling for tourism enterprises

What, why and how



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PROWAD LINK
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EUROPEAN UNION

 **NTNU**
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Science and Technology

Report

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Title abstract

This report has been produced as part of the Interreg VB project PROWAD LINK, Protect and Prosper: Benefits through linking sustainable growth with nature protection. PROWAD LINK aims to unlock the potential of natural heritage areas as a driver for sustainable development and job growth. The project partners are striving to engage with Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in nature conservation, to develop nature as a brand and create mutual benefits for both SMEs and the environment.

Partners in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands (The Wadden sea World Heritage site), Norway (Geiranger area, northern part of World Heritage site West Norwegian Fjords) and the United Kingdom (The Wash and North Norfolk Coast) are working together to develop sustainable products and services.

This report on ecolabels for tourism enterprises is a desk study directed towards SMEs within, or connected to, the aforementioned Natural Heritage Sites. Our hope is that this report will also be of value to others interested in ecolabelling and working within the field of sustainability. A draft of the report has been published and circulated among the project partners before a finalised report was developed.

While finalizing this report the corona virus situation has evolved and the consequences have profoundly altered the situation for tourism businesses. The content should still be of use and we hope the reader is able to ignore potential inconsistencies in the text due to this sudden change of context.

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List of content

LIST OF CONTENT	1
FOREWORD	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	5
WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP?	5
WHY BECOME A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ENTERPRISE?	6
WHAT ARE ECOLABELS?	6
PROS AND CONS OF ECOLABELLING AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)	7
AN OVERVIEW OF ECOLABELS COVERING TOURISM BUSINESSES	7
INTRODUCTION	10
WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?	11
UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)	11
SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP	12
SUSTAINABILITY IN WORLD HERITAGE SITES AND PROTECTED AREAS	13
WHY BECOME A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ENTERPRISE?	18
<i>Living within the limits of our planet</i>	19
WHAT ARE ECOLABELS?	21
ECOLABELS VS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	21
DIFFERENT SUSTAINABILITY TOOLS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES	21
<i>Tools for sustainable production</i>	21
<i>Business model approaches</i>	22
<i>Green Marketing Alternatives to Ecolabelling</i>	24
PROS AND CONS OF ECOLABELLING AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)	25
ASSESSING THE PROS AND CONS	25
<i>Business arguments for</i>	25
<i>Business arguments against</i>	28
<i>Sustainability arguments for</i>	28
<i>Sustainability arguments against</i>	31
AN OVERVIEW OF ECOLABELS COVERING TOURISM BUSINESSES	34
KEY INFORMATION	34
TOURISM ECOLABELS	38
<i>Biosphere Responsible Tourism</i>	41
<i>Dehoga Umweltcheck</i>	43
<i>Earthcheck</i>	44
<i>Eco-lighthouse</i>	45
<i>Ecotourism Norway</i>	46
<i>EU Ecolabel</i>	47
<i>European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme</i>	48
<i>Green Globe</i>	49
<i>Green Key</i>	50
<i>Green Sign</i>	51
<i>Green Table</i>	52
<i>Green Tourism</i>	53
<i>GSTC</i>	54

<i>National Park Partnership Programme</i>	56
<i>Nordic Swan</i>	58
<i>TourCert</i>	59
<i>Travelife</i>	60
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	61
REFERENCES	63

Foreword

This report has been produced as part of the Interreg VB project PROWAD LINK, Protect and Prosper: Benefits through linking sustainable growth with nature protection. PROWAD LINK aims to unlock the potential of natural heritage areas as a driver for sustainable development and job growth. The project partners are striving to engage with Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in nature conservation, to develop nature as a brand and create mutual benefits for both SMEs and the environment.

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While finalizing this report the corona virus situation has evolved and the consequences have profoundly altered the situation for tourism businesses. The content should still be of use and we hope the reader is able to ignore potential inconsistencies in the text due to this sudden change of context. We would like to recognise the support of the PROWAD LINK project partners for their assistance with producing this report, their insight has been invaluable.

- [Common Wadden Sea Secretariat](#) (CWSS; DE/DK/NL) *Lead Beneficiary*
- [Landesbetrieb für Küstenschutz, Nationalpark und Meeresschutz Schleswig-Holstein / Nationalparkverwaltung](#) (The Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defence, National Park and Marine Conservation / National Park Authority; DE)
- [Nationalparkverwaltung Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer](#) (Wadden Sea National Park Authority of Lower Saxony; DE)
- [Nationalpark Vadehavet](#) (Danish Wadden Sea National Park; DK)
- [Business Region Esbjerg](#) (Business Region Esbjerg; DK)
- [Miljø- og Fødevareministeriet, Miljøstyrelsen](#) (Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, Environmental Protection Agency; DK)
- [World Wide Fund for Nature - Deutschland](#) (World Wide Fund for Nature; DE)
- [Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet](#) (Norwegian University of Science and Technology; NO)
- [Norfolk County Council](#) (Norfolk County Council; UK)
- [Rijksuniversiteit Groningen/Campus Fryslân](#) (University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân; NL)
- [Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit](#) (Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; NL)
- [Waddenacademie](#) (Wadden Academy; NL)
- [Provinsje Fryslân](#) (Province of Friesland; NL)
- [Gemeente Ameland](#) (Municipality of Ameland; NL)

Our thanks are also extended to all of the ecolabelling bodies who provided key input for the report.

The project team of Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway:

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May, 2020

PROWAD LINK
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Executive Summary

An introductory comment: This report has been written in the early part of 2020 and has therefore coincided with the beginning of the corona virus spread across Europe. The health risks associated with Covid 19 have meant that industries reliant on social interaction are suffering. Tourism has been and is expected to be badly affected by this virus, as highlighted by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (<https://www.unwto.org/tourism-covid-19-coronavirus>). Tourism is set to change, at least in the short term, towards a local, regional and national focus rather than global. The prognosis for the spread of the virus also indicates that this situation will last for some time and might influence people's travel habits well into the future. New questions will thus arise for tourism businesses concerned with sustainability and ecolabelling: How do the changes affect future markets, and which ecolabel fits these new markets best? How does the situation influence customer awareness of sustainability and ecolabels? What elements of sustainability will be important to communicate in the future? And in general, how is the stride towards sustainability affected by the general global health situation? This report provides knowledge about sustainability and the ecolabels and can contribute to answering the questions - even though the content is mostly written in a pre-corona situation.

Introduction

The starting point of this report is the Interreg project PROWAD LINK, Protect and Prosper. The project is directed towards sustainable development in the World Heritage sites of Wadden Sea, Geiranger (West Norwegian Fjords) and the Wash and North Norfolk Coast. The project has special emphasis on sustainable entrepreneurship.

Transition to a more sustainable future is high on the political agenda. Individual enterprises are looking for pathways to contribute to as sustainable development and to prosper in a greener economy. One potential tool for sustainable development within the tourism industry is ecolabelling.

The aim of this report is to give an overview of the what, why and how of ecolabelling and thereby to give small enterprises with limited time and resources the possibility to identify the right ecolabels for their enterprise.

Finding time to read a whole report is often difficult even if the interest is there. We have therefore structured the report in such a way that information related to different questions should be easy to access.

- **What is sustainability? Go to page 11**
- **Why become a sustainable business? Go to page 18**
- **What is an ecolabel? Go to page 21**
- **What are the pros and cons of ecolabelling? Go to page 25**
- **What ecolabels are most suitable for my business? Go to page 34**

Following are some short excerpts.

What is sustainable development and sustainable entrepreneurship?

Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Abzari, Safari Shad, Sharbiyani, & Morad, 2013; United Nations, 1987). Balancing social needs, economic development and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services on all levels are the key elements of sustainable development. In order to understand the actions that we need to take in to achieve

sustainability, the UN adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more than 100 sub-goals in 2015. The SDGs cover a wide range of social, economic and environmental concerns.

Sustainable entrepreneurship involves entrepreneurial behaviour that balances the three elements of sustainable development: economic health (prosperity), social equity (people) and environmental resilience (planet) (Greco & de Jong, 2017).

The PROWAD LINK project covers two natural World Heritage sites and one protected area. Each area has its own basis of protection, but generally there are three main arguments for protection of natural areas: 1. Life forms' intrinsic value and right to live. 2. Ecological values: Functions in nature and ecosystems. 3. Applied values, for instance outdoor experiences, tourism and health. Sustainable development and sustainable businesses in and around such areas of special value would include taking care of the respective landscape, ecosystems and species.

Why become a sustainable tourism enterprise?

The evidence of global environmental challenges is overwhelming. A group of leading academics from a range of disciplines all over the world have conceptualised what they call nine planetary boundaries - limits that should not be crossed in order to provide a safe space for humanity to thrive (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). The researchers identify that four of these boundaries have now been crossed as a direct result of human activities, these are climate change, biogeochemical flows, land-system change and biosphere integrity.

Until the corona crisis struck, tourism has been one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. It contributed to about one tenth of the global GDP and employment (UNWTO & UNDP, 2017). Tourism enterprises are thereby part of a sector that can contribute substantially to sustainable development both locally and globally.

What are Ecolabels?

Ecolabels, which are also described as environmental labels/declarations and eco-certification, are tools which "provide information about a product or service in terms of its' overall environmental character, a specific environmental aspect, or any number of aspects" (ISO, 2000). The goal of ecolabels as described in ISO 14020 is in addition to:

"... encourage the demand for and supply of those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement" (ISO, 2000).

Whilst ecolabels tend to focus on the overall environmental (often social and economic as well) performance of a product, service or enterprise, environmental management systems (EMS) are generally focussed on the organisational processes.

Pros and cons of ecolabelling and Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

The table below gives an overview of findings from recent literature pertaining to advantages and challenges of ecolabelling and EMS. There are exceptions to this general picture.

Summary table. Arguments for and against business Ecolabelling and support in literature for the arguments.

Arguments for and against Business Ecolabelling (or EMS)	Support in literature (Low, Some, High)
Business arguments for	
Cost reduction	High
Marketing advantages	Some
Communicates environmental credentials	Some
Higher prices	Low
Business arguments against	
Costs of certification, recertification and yearly fee	Some
Sustainability reasons for	
Process advantages	High
Tourists develop positive attitudes to sustainability	Some
Openness of processes and impacts	High
Sustainability reasons against	
Omits transport	High
Favours big enterprises	High
Ecolabel schemes are distractors to sustainability	Some
Greenwashing of products and businesses	Some

Two key conclusions related to business advantages are worth mentioning: 1. The process of ecolabelling seems to contribute to lower the operational costs, especially related to energy use. 2. Expectations about how ecolabelling can contribute to higher prices or more customers should generally be moderate. For ecolabelling to have such an effect it needs to be part of a holistic plan for communication, branding and marketing.

An overview of ecolabels covering tourism businesses

This report gives an overview of a substantial proportion of relevant ecolabels for tourism enterprises – especially pertaining to the PROWAD LINK project countries. The aim of the overview is to make it easier for small tourism businesses to choose which ecolabel suits their purpose. The ecolabels in the overview were chosen out of over 400 ecolabels from the Ecolabel Index¹ and Destinet² websites as well as ecolabels identified by partner organisations within the PROWAD LINK project.

The best ecolabel to choose depends on business traits and goals, marketing strategies and more generally what the business is looking for. Ecolabels vary substantially in how they are developed,

¹ Ecolabel Index (<http://www.ecolabelindex.com/>) is the largest database of ecolabels covering over 400 ecolabels across the globe.

² Destinet (<https://destinet.eu/>) is an EU funded Sustainable Tourism knowledge hub, which includes a database of tourism ecolabels.

managed, the criteria they assess, their emphasis, costs and more. Certain ecolabel characteristics, however, can be used to compare and contrast them. Some key questions are listed below:

- What are the environmental and social focus of the ecolabel, and are these in line with what should be in focus of the enterprises' work toward sustainability?
- What types of business can the ecolabel certify?
- What is the geographical scope of the ecolabel?
- What are the monetary and human resource costs of certification and recertification?
- How trustworthy is the ecolabel, was it developed by a well-known body?
- How recognisable is the ecolabel for the business' main market?
- How many products/services does the ecolabel have?
- How does the ecolabel fit into the business image?

For an overview of ecolabels suited for different lines of tourism businesses see the summary tables and more information on particular ecolabels is given in the chapter “An overview of ecolabels covering tourism businesses” from page 34.

Summary table of main characteristics of Tourism Ecolabels. [Gov. = Government, FP = For Profit, NP = Not for Profit, NI = No Information, Var = Variable, * = excluding auditing costs, + = ISO plus GSTC and EMAS, a = Can be 3rd or 2nd party certified, b = 2nd party certified.]

	Scope		Cost		Other Characteristics			Areas of Tourism Covered													
	Europe/Global	Limited	Minimum 3 Year Cost (Euros)	Months to achieve	Based on:	Awarding Body	3 rd Party Verified	Businesses Certified	Accommodation	Activities	Attractions	Events	Food & Drink	Marinas	Other Tourism ^{Plus}	Supply Chain	Tour Operators	Tourism Offices	Tourism Shops	Transport	
EMAS	Eur		Var.	12	ISO	Gov.	Yes	3694	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ISO 14001:2015	Glob		Var.	NI	ISO	NP	Yes	300000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Earthcheck	Glob		5100*	6-12	GSTC	FP	Yes	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Biosphere	Eur		600*	1	GSTC	NP	Yes	216	x	x	x	x	x			x			x	x	x
Green Globe	Glob		1950*	3-6	ISO	FP	Yes	132	x	x	x	x	x		x				x	x	x
National Park Partnership Programme		DE	150*	3-6	Other	Gov.	Yes ^a	1400	x	x	x		x		x			x			x
Green Tourism		UK	591*	Var.	NI	NP	Yes	2415	x	x	x	x						x	x		
Ecotourism Norway		NO	585*	3-12	Other	Gov.	No ^b	15	x	x	x		x		x						
Eco-Lighthouse		NO	828*	2-3	NI	NP	Yes	5300	x	x		x	x								x
The Green Key	Glob		1500*	Var.	GSTC	NP	Yes	3100	x		x	x	x		x						
Nordic Swan		NO, DK	9000	3-6	ISO	Gov.	Yes	25000	x			x	x		x	x					
Tourcert	Glob		6800	8	ISO+	FP	Yes	340	x						x		x				
Certified Green Hotel		DE	7500*	1	NI	FP	Yes	107	x			x									
Dehoga		DE	715*	NI	NI	FP	Yes	120	x				x								
Global Sustainable Tourism Council	Glob		Var.	NI	GSTC	NP	Yes	>5000	x								x				
NEPCon	Glob		6640	4-6	GSTC	NP	Yes	90	x								x				
EU Ecolabel	Eur		1400*	2	ISO	Gov.	Yes	77358	x												
Green Sign		DE, NE	2370*	1.5	ISO+	FP	Yes	225	x												
Travelife	Glob		960*	1	GSTC	FP	Yes	975	x												
Green Table		DE	240	0.5	NI	NP	Yes	90					x								

The essence of sustainability

“The essence of the term sustainable is simple enough: That which can be maintained over time. By implication, this means that any society, or any aspect of a society, that is unsustainable cannot be maintained for long and will cease to function at some point.”
(Heinberg, 2010)

Eco-labelling and enterprises

- Are you running a tourism enterprise?
- Or working in one?
- Do you want your enterprise to become more sustainable?
- Do you want to use an ecolabel to promote your tourism enterprise?

This report is designed to help answer the questions that might arise in the process.

Introduction

Transition to a more sustainable future is high on the political agenda. Governments, industry organisations, as well as customers, are focusing on how the industry can contribute to fighting the rapid increase in CO₂ emission (Paris Agreement) and meeting the UN sustainable development goals. Among industries, there has been a specific focus on the tourism sector which relies on transporting people long distances in order to explore unique natural, or cultural sites.

So far globalisation with better and cheaper communication and transport has opened up remote areas for people from all over the world. The high number of tourists attracted to protected areas may pose a threat to the uniqueness due to pollution and crowding. Local, regional, national and international organisations are launching initiatives in order to enhance the focus on sustainability. The goal is to balance social, economic and environmental aspects, and to give firms which comply with sustainability standards competitive advantages. Ecolabelling is one such initiative.

This report is written to guide small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism sector to get an overview over the what, why and how of ecolabels. The report also gives a brief introduction to Environmental Management Systems (EMS), which are closely related to ecolabels.

The starting point of this report is the Interreg project PROWAD LINK, Protect and prosper. The project is directed towards sustainable development in the World Heritage sites of Wadden Sea, Geiranger (West Norwegian Fjords) and the Wash and North Norfolk Coast. The project has special emphasis on sustainable entrepreneurship.

We know that people running a business are busy. Finding time to read a whole report is often difficult even if the interest is there. We have therefore structured the report in such a way that important questions of interest are easy to access:

- **What is sustainability? Go to page 11**
- **Why become a sustainable business? Go to page 18**
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- **What ecolabels are most suitable for my business? Go to page 34**

While this report has been in process, the corona virus has almost wiped out tourism in the short run. What tourism will look like in the future is still “in the blue”. The trends right now (May 2020) is that tourism is becoming more local, regional and national and thus less global. The choice of ecolabel will also be influenced by potential developments of the tourism sector. What will be important for sustainable praxis in the future? Which ecolabel gives the right signals to potential new markets? This report gives valuable knowledge to such choices, even though the content is mostly written in a pre-corona situation.

What is sustainability?

Sustainable development is about keeping human activity, both social and economic, at a level that nature can tolerate; without causing irreversible climate change, polluting water, air or soil, disrupting essential ecosystem services (e.g. clean drinking water, fish stocks etc.) or biodiversity. There is an abundance of definitions of sustainable development. No doubt, the most referred to is still the one from the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development report; “Our common future” (The Brundtland report). In the report sustainable development is defined as:

“.. development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations, 1987, p. 37)

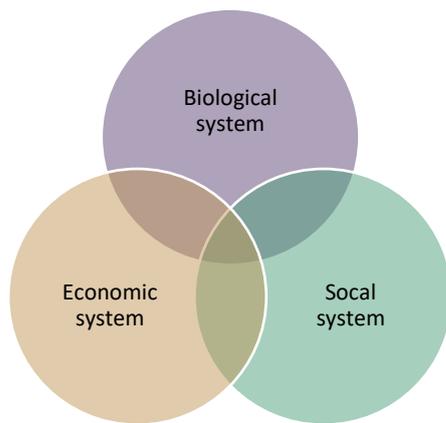


Figure 1: A much used illustration of sustainable development based on the Brundtland report and following documents from the UN Agenda 21.

In line with the Brundtland report and documents from the UN Agenda 21, three dimensions are generally perceived to be the main elements of sustainable development – society, environment and economy. Often sustainable development is illustrated as in Figure 1: Social, economic and environmental systems are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life. The three elements are intertwined. For example, a prosperous society and business relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water and clean air for its’ employees and citizens.

Often the term sustainability and sustainable development are used interchangeably. The two terms have different histories but for our purpose we adhere to UNESCO’s definitions, which describes the difference between the two terms as the difference between the endpoint and the road to it. Sustainable development thus refers to the processes and pathways to achieve sustainability (UNESCO, 2020); developing sustainable enterprises is one such pathway.

UN Sustainable Development goals (SDGs)

In 2015 the Sustainable development goals (SDGs) were adopted in the UN General assembly (UN General Assembly, 2015) to contribute to find pathways to global sustainability. They focus on both social, economic and ecological development. With the 17 goals and more than 100 sub-goals the SDG’s cover almost all aspects of human life, the economy and ecology.

The UN sustainability goals

1. End **poverty** in all its forms everywhere
2. End **hunger**, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure **healthy lives** and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality **education** and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve **gender equality** and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of **water and sanitation** for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern **energy** for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and **sustainable economic growth**, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build **resilient infrastructure**, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce **inequality** within and among countries
11. Make cities and human **settlements** inclusive, **safe, resilient and sustainable**
12. Ensure **sustainable consumption and production** patterns
13. Take urgent action to **combat climate change** and its impacts*
14. Conserve and **sustainably use the oceans**, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote **sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems**, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote **peaceful and inclusive societies** for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the **Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

Figure 2: The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable entrepreneurship

So, how does entrepreneurship become sustainable? Sustainable Entrepreneurs need to find a balance between the three elements of Sustainable Development: economic health (prosperity), social equity (people) and environmental resilience (planet). This should involve the “discovery, creation, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to create future goods and services consistent with the sustainable development goals” (Greco & de Jong, 2017). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be confused with sustainable entrepreneurship. However, corporate responsibility is a concept including societal and ethical aspects in the firms’ business activities only. Nature and ecological concerns are not at the core or even directly included in such a concept.

Sustainability in World Heritage sites and protected areas

Sustainable development and sustainable entrepreneurship in and around natural World Heritage sites and protected areas would include contributing to taking care of the areas' landscapes, ecosystems and species.

The project areas Wadden Sea and the Geiranger area are both World Heritage sites. World Heritage status is given by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) to an area of "Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV) in a global context. The OUV underlines the special values of a site and thereby what nation states have a responsibility to protect and the focus for management of the area. A site inscription is always related to one of ten UNESCO criteria. While the West Norwegian Fjords – Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord is inscribed on the basis of criterion vii and viii, Wadden sea is inscribed on the basis of criterion viii-x:

- Criterion (vii): to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- Criterion (viii): to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- Criterion (viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- Criterion (ix): to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- Criterion (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on November 16th, 1972. Sustainable development is not explicitly mentioned in the text of the Convention. The idea of the convention, to preserve cultural and natural heritage, does however seem close to the idea of sustainable development, something the UNESCO eagerly points out in diverse settings.

While preserving the values of the OUV is the main concern of World Heritage area management, the relationship between World Heritage and economic and social development has over time become increasingly clear in UNESCO's work. From 2011, sustainable development in this broad sense has received more attention in the organisation's "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention." These are requirements related to the inscription of World Heritage sites (Boccardi & Scott, 2014). In 2012, an expert group was set up and since then, sustainable development has been integrated into several operational documents of the UNESCO and more and more into the management and operations of the sites (UNESCO, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2020).

The project partner the Wash and North Norfolk coast does not have a World Heritage status, but it is a protected area. One can roughly say that there are three main arguments for such protection in general: 1. All life forms have an intrinsic value and a right to live. 2. Ecological values: The species have different functions in nature and ecosystems. Without species, ecosystems collapse. 3. Applied values. Species and natural areas can be of benefit to humans. Outdoor experiences, use of natural resources for health purposes or tourism are examples of applied values (Olerud, 2018). Protected

areas are managed through laws and regulations that describe the main purpose of the preservation and rules to operate within them.

Nature protection and World Heritage thus are not the same. However, to receive a World Heritage status, management plans are needed. This means that the status in general will be accompanied by protected areas, nature reserves and management regimes, and with them administrative rules and regulations to preserve the OUV.

The OUV of the World Heritage sites of West Norwegian Fjords and Wadden Sea and information about the basis of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) of The Wash and North Norfolk are presented in the following.

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) - the basis for UNESCO World Heritage status

West Norwegian fjords - Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord

Brief Synthesis

The starkly dramatic landscapes of Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord are exceptional in scale and grandeur in a country of spectacular fjords. Situated in south-western Norway, these fjords are among the world's longest and deepest, and vary in breadth from just 250 m to 2.5 km wide. Fjord, a word of Norwegian origin, refers to a long, deep inlet of the sea between high cliffs formed by submergence of a glaciated valley. These two West Norwegian fjords are considered to be classic and complementary examples of this phenomenon, a sort of type locality for fjords that still display active geological processes.

Numerous waterfalls and free-flowing rivers, deciduous and coniferous woodlands and forests, glacial lakes, glaciers, rugged mountains and a range of other natural attributes combine towards making Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord among the most scenically outstanding landscapes in the world. A serial property covering an area of 122,712 ha, of which 10,746 ha is sea, these two fjords are separated from each other by a distance of 120 km. They form part of the West Norwegian fjord landscape, which stretches 500 km from Stavanger in the south to Åndalsnes in the north-east. Several inhabited villages and valleys are found along the fjords and inside the boundaries, and the landscape is supplemented (although not dominated) by remnants of its human historical past, which adds further interest and value to the property.

Criterion (vii): The Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord areas are considered to be among the most scenically outstanding fjord areas on the planet. Their outstanding natural beauty is derived from their narrow and steep-sided crystalline rock walls that rise up to 1400 m direct from the Norwegian Sea and extend 500 m below sea level. Along the sheer walls of the fjords are numerous waterfalls while free-flowing rivers run through deciduous and coniferous forest to glacial lakes, glaciers and rugged mountains. There is a great range of supporting natural phenomena, both terrestrial and marine such as submarine moraines and marine mammals. Remnants of old and now mostly abandoned transhumant farms add a cultural aspect to the dramatic natural landscape that complements and adds human interest to the area.

Criterion (viii): The West Norwegian Fjords are classic, superbly developed fjords, considered as the type locality for fjord landscapes in the world. They are comparable in scale and quality to other existing fjords on the World Heritage List and are distinguished by the climate and geological setting. The property displays a full range of the inner segments of two of the world's longest and deepest fjords, and provides well-developed examples of young, active glaciation during the Pleistocene ice age. The ice- and wave-polished surfaces of the steep fjord sides provide superbly exposed and continuous three-dimensional sections through the bedrock. The record of the postglacial isostatic rebound of the crust and its geomorphic expression in the fjord landscape are significant and represent key areas for the scientific study of slope instability and the resulting geohazards.

(Source UNESCO official web site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1195>)

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) – the basis for UNESCO World heritage status

Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands)

Brief synthesis

The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, with natural processes undisturbed throughout most of the area. The 1,143,403 ha World Heritage property encompasses a multitude of transitional zones between land, the sea and freshwater environment, and is rich in species specially adapted to the demanding environmental conditions. It is considered one of the most important areas for migratory birds in the world and is connected to a network of other key sites for migratory birds. Its importance is not only in the context of the East Atlantic Flyway but also in the critical role it plays in the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory water birds. In the Wadden Sea up to 6.1 million birds can be present at the same time, and an average of 10-12 million pass through it each year.

Criterion (viii): The Wadden Sea is a depositional coastline of unparalleled scale and diversity. It is distinctive in being almost entirely a tidal flat and barrier system with only minor river influences, and an outstanding example of the large-scale development of an intricate and complex temperate-climate sandy barrier coast under conditions of rising sea-level. Highly dynamic natural processes are uninterrupted across the vast majority of the property, creating a variety of different barrier islands, channels, flats, gullies, saltmarshes and other coastal and sedimentary features.

Criterion (ix): The Wadden Sea includes some of the last remaining natural large-scale intertidal ecosystems where natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed. Its geological and geomorphologic features are closely entwined with biophysical processes and provide an invaluable record of the ongoing dynamic adaptation of coastal environments to global change. There are a multitude of transitional zones between land, sea and freshwater that are the basis for the species richness of the property. The productivity of biomass in the Wadden Sea is one of the highest in the world, most significantly demonstrated in the numbers of fish, shellfish and birds supported by the property. The property is a key site for migratory birds and its ecosystems sustain wildlife populations well beyond its borders.

Criterion (x): Coastal wetlands are not always the richest sites in relation to faunal diversity; however, this is not the case for the Wadden Sea. The salt marshes host around 2,300 species of flora and fauna, and the marine and brackish areas a further 2,700 species, and 30 species of breeding birds. The clearest indicator of the importance of the property is the support it provides to migratory birds as a staging, moulting and wintering area. Up to 6.1 million birds can be present at the same time, and an average of 10-12 million each year pass through the property. The availability of food and a low level of disturbance are essential factors that contribute to the key role of the property in supporting the survival of migratory species. The property is the essential stopover that enables the functioning of the East Atlantic and African-Eurasian migratory flyways. Biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.

(Source UNESCO official web site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1314>)

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) covers an area of 1078 km², which include three Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This unique biosphere is both nationally and internationally important in terms of hosting significant populations of coastal bird species with total numbers reaching up to 450,000 at any one time. The area also encompasses a number of valuable habitats, such as Atlantic salt meadows and coastal lagoon

Qualifying Features:

“SPAs are classified in accordance with European Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, known as the Birds Directive. SPAs protect rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive), and regularly occurring migratory species.” (Source Joint Nature Conservation Committee, JNCC)

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are established under the European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Article 1 of the Habitats Directive defines a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as: “a site designated according to the Habitats Directive. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) means a Site of Community Importance (SCI) designated by the Member States through a statutory, administrative and/or contractual act where the necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status, of the natural habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is designated.” (European Union)

“Under Article 4(4) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) the Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site include: Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Large shallow inlets and bays; Reefs; Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*); Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*). Coastal lagoons form a Priority feature within this SAC. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site is the Harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*) with the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) present but not as a primary reason for site selection.” (UK Government)

(Sources UK Government:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844585/The_Wash_and_North_Norfolk_Coast_SAC_factsheet.pdf

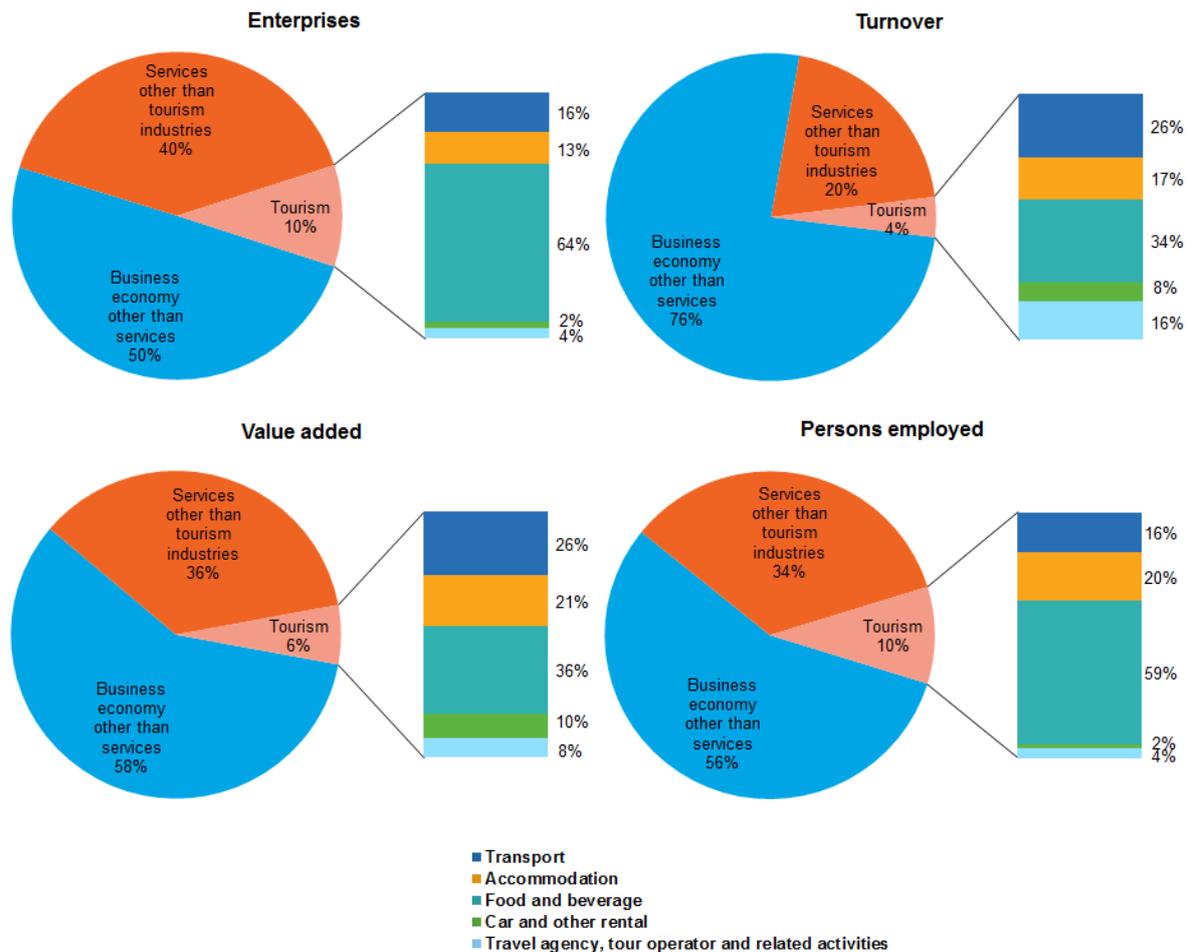
JNCC: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/special-protection-areas-overview/>

European Union: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:01992L0043-20070101&from=EN>)

Why become a sustainable tourism enterprise?³

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. It contributes to about one tenth of the global GDP and employment (UNWTO & UNDP, 2017). This means that a tourism enterprise is part of a sector that could be an important contributor to sustainable development in social, economic and environmental terms both locally and globally.

Even if an enterprise is small it is a puzzle piece in the overall picture. Statistics show that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) make up 99 % of the total enterprises across the EU; accounting for 70 % of the jobs and 60 % of the overall turnover from manufacturing and services (Constantinos, 2010).



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_na_sca_r2, sbs_na_1a_se_r2)



Figure 3: Number of small and medium enterprises, turnover, value added at factor cost and number of persons employed. EU – 28, 2016 (%) (EC, 2018)

SMEs in the tourism industry are also major contributors to the European economy, contributing significantly to the number of functioning enterprises and the number of people employed in the sector, something Figure 3 shows. In terms of tourism SMEs impact on the environment, only two thirds of European SMEs are actively reducing their waste and saving energy (EC, 2018). However,

³ The information in this part of the report is based on pre-corona figures and prognoses.

more SMEs are predicted to adopt environmentally friendly practises as a result of pressure from the market place and environmental legislation (Constantinos, 2010).

Living within the limits of our planet

We have recently entered a new epoch in earth history where human activities represent the dominant driver of environmental change (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). An overwhelming strand of literature from all over the globe confirm that we are no longer living within the limits of our earth systems (IPBES, 2019; IPCC, 2019).

A group of leading academics from a range of disciplines have conceptualised what they call nine planetary boundaries. They are limits on carbon dioxide emissions, pollutants, biodiversity loss among other factors, that should not be crossed in order to provide a safe space for humanity to thrive (Figure 4) (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015).

They identify that four of these boundaries have now been crossed as a direct result of human activities, these are climate change, biogeochemical flows, land-system change and biosphere integrity, these four are described in more detail below.

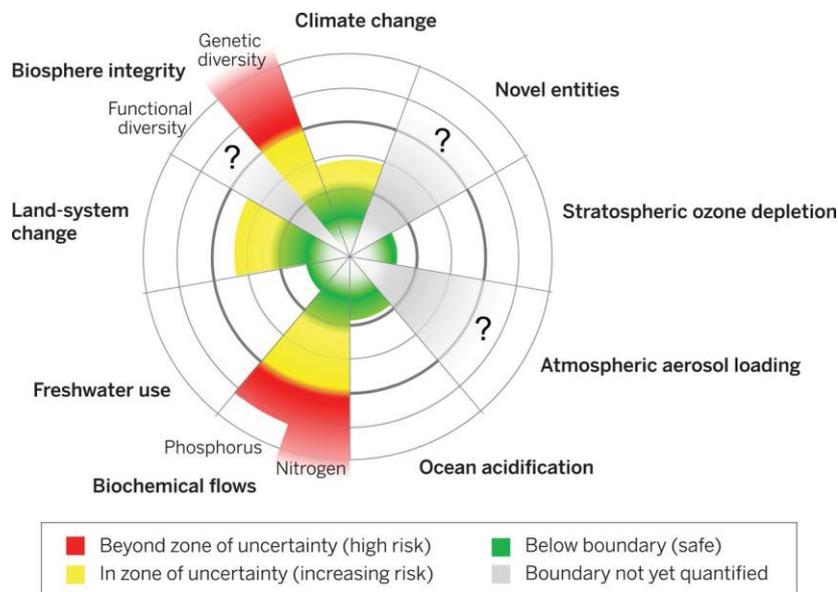


Figure 4: The nine Planetary Boundaries from Steffen et al. (2015)

Biodiversity loss and extinctions (Loss of biosphere integrity)

The biosphere, the living parts of planet Earth, is at risk. 25 % of plant and animal species (the genetic diversity) are currently at risk of extinction and the global ecosystems making up the biosphere have declined by 47 % in extent and condition since 1900 (IPBES, 2019).

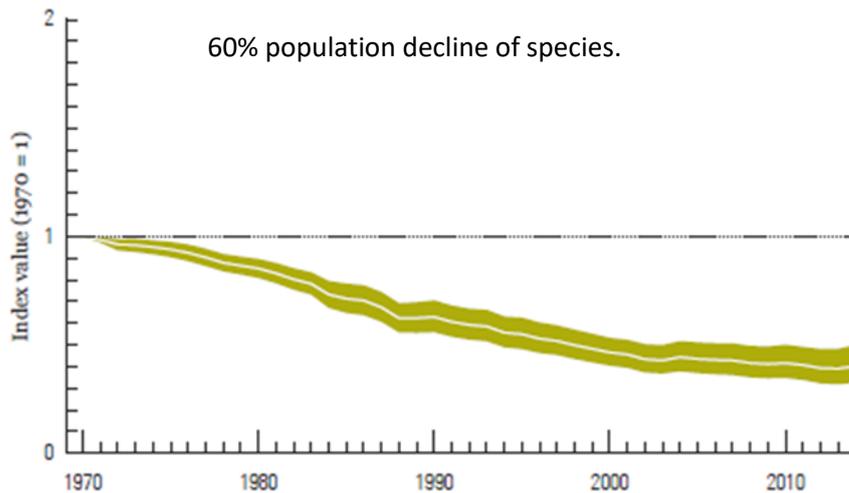


Figure 5: 16,704 populations representing 4,005 species monitored across the globe declined by 60% from 1970 to 2014. The white line shows the index values and the shaded areas represent the statistical uncertainty surrounding the trend (range: -50% to -67%). Figure and numbers copied from the Living Planet Report – 2018 (WWF, 2018, p. 18).

The change is happening right now. WWF’s global living planet index indicate that the populations of 4505 species have declined by 60 percent from 1970 to 2014 (Figure 5).

The main driver of these declines is land-use change, but also factors like the demand for water and other natural resources are important. Improvements to the biosphere can be made by protecting and rehabilitating ecosystems whilst improving connectivity between them. To create nature conservation areas is one such measure.

Climate Change

The carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has already surpassed the proposed levels to maintain a safe operating system for humanity. Consensus that climate change is linked to human activities is between 90-100 % for scientists who are employed to measure, monitor and analyse changes in our climate (Cook et al., 2016). In order to return to acceptable levels, action is required across industries to reduce emissions.

Nitrogen and phosphorus flows to the biosphere and oceans

Nitrogen and phosphorus support the growth of plants. These substances are recycled globally through natural systems. According to Steffen et al. (2015) this cycle is now at high risk. Agricultural productivity relies on human-made nitrogen and phosphorus fertilisers which are more reactive than those found in nature. These fertilisers are changing the natural nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, and they also cause pollution in coastal areas through leaching from agricultural land. This pollution is an extra stress on the biosphere and can result in biodiversity losses combined with social and economic losses. More sustainable agricultural practices, which have a lower impact on natural cycles, are required to reduce impacts within this planetary boundary.

Land system change

Land use change from forests, grasslands, wetland and more to agriculture is a common practice. Such land use change can reduce biodiversity, change water flows and have an impact on the natural carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles. Land is a limited resource and therefore, decisions regarding land use change should be taken with sustainability in mind.

What are Ecolabels?

Ecolabels, which are also described as Environmental labels/declarations and eco-certification, are tools which “provide information about a product or service in terms of its overall environmental character, a specific environmental aspect, or any number of aspects” (ISO, 2000). The goal of ecolabels as described in ISO 14020 is in addition to:

“... encourage the demand for and supply of those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement”.

Ecolabels have been used to indicate the environmental aspects of a product or service since 1928 with the introduction of the Demeter label for biodynamic food production <https://www.demeter-usa.org/about-demeter/demeter-history.asp>. There are now well over 400 ecolabels worldwide (Ecolabel Index) that cover a range of products and services.

Ecolabels vs Environmental Management Systems

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) are organisational level systems that provide companies with a framework whereby they can monitor and regulate their environmental impacts, (<https://standard.no/fagomrader/miljo-og-barekraft/miljostyring---iso-14000/>). The first Environmental Management System Standard developed was the Eco-Management and Audit System (EMAS) by the EU in 1993, which focussed on a limited number of industries, and then in 1996 the ISO 14001 was published by the International Standards Organisation to provide an Environmental Management System which was open to all industries⁴ (Font, 2002). National Environmental Management Systems, such as the Green Lighthouse, were then developed to cater to the needs of specific industries, or countries.

Whilst ecolabels tend to focus on the overall environmental (often social and economic as well) performance of a product, service or enterprise, Environmental management systems are generally focussed on the organisational processes. It is possible to differentiate environmental management systems from ecolabels using definitions found in international standards, such as ISO 14025 and ISO 14001 but in reality, there are crossovers between the two - especially when we examine the tourism industry. Certain ecolabels focus both on the organisational processes, such as energy and water management plans (which is closer to and EMS), as well as performance, such as energy usage below a certain threshold.

Different sustainability tools for different purposes

There is an abundance of sustainability tools available to enterprises outside of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and ecolabels, some of these are described below⁵.

Tools for sustainable production

Material Flow Analysis (MFA) is a systematic assessment of the flows and stocks of materials within a system defined in space and time. The results of an MFA can be used as a basis to account for and identify opportunities for management of the input of resources to a system and the waste output from the system.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is the assessment of the environmental impacts of a product throughout its life cycle from the acquisition of raw materials through to the end-of-life treatment, such as

⁴ If you want to know more about the differences between EMAS and ISO 14001, go to https://www.emas.de/fileadmin/user_upload/4-pub/UGA_Infosheet_From-ISO-14001-to-EMAS.pdf

⁵ Learning resources on the sustainability toolkit are available at CapSEM <https://capsem.wordpress.com/>

recycling. LCA has to be used to produce the Type III ecolabels, Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and is often used to assess products and services in other types of ecolabels. Life Cycle thinking and Life Cycle methodology are used frequently when describing ecolabel qualifying criteria.

Business model approaches

Business models are about the goals of the business, its operations and value chains. Several new types of business models have been launched to minimize environmental impact and enhance sustainability.

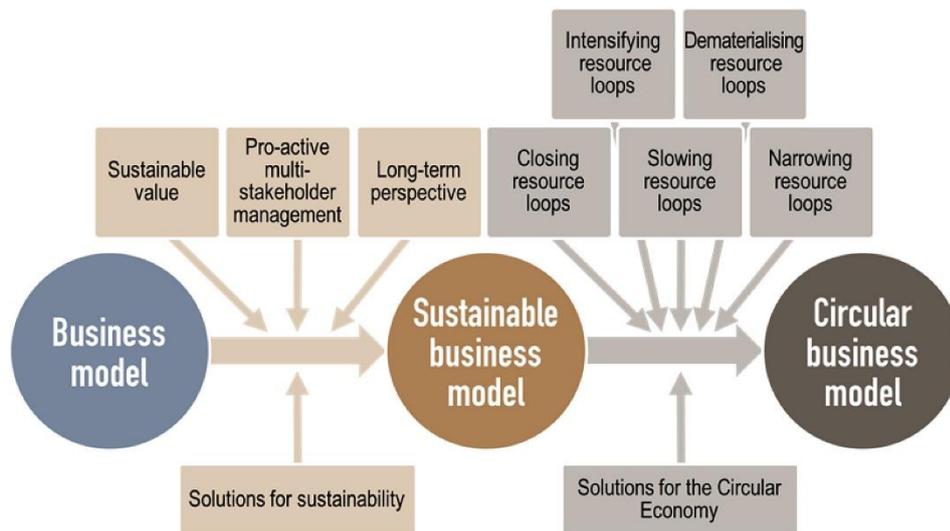


Figure 6: Comparison of traditional, sustainable, and circular business models, from (Geissdoerfer, Morioka, de Carvalho, & Evans, 2018)

Geissdoerfer et al. (2018) distinguish between traditional business models, sustainable business models and models that embrace a circular economy logic. The distinction is illustrated in Figure 6 where the goals of the enterprise and emphasis on sustainability and resource use differ in different business models.

Several approaches to changes of business models exist. Most attention is often given to the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) or 3P (People, Planet and Profit) approach. In 1997 Elkington introduced the concept with the book *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of Twenty-First Century Business* (Elkington, 1999). The TBL approach attempts to provide a practical direction suggesting balancing of the three dimensions of sustainability: the economical, the human and the environmental. Despite the critics behind using the TBL to define sustainable development, the framework is widely used to enhance sustainable entrepreneurship and also thoroughly studied (Greco & de Jong, 2017).

Joyce and Paquin (Joyce & Paquin, 2016) have developed an easily accessible Triple Layered Business Model Canvas (TLBMC). This extends the original business model by adding a social and an environmental layer. The goals of the environmental and social layers are to understand the positive and negative impacts of the organization on the environment and communities respectively. The TLBMC shown in Figure 7 can be used on different levels; from developing common understanding of business operations in a sustainability perspective, to more thorough analyses in a life cycle perspective. The model is described in more detail in Joyce and Paquin (2016).

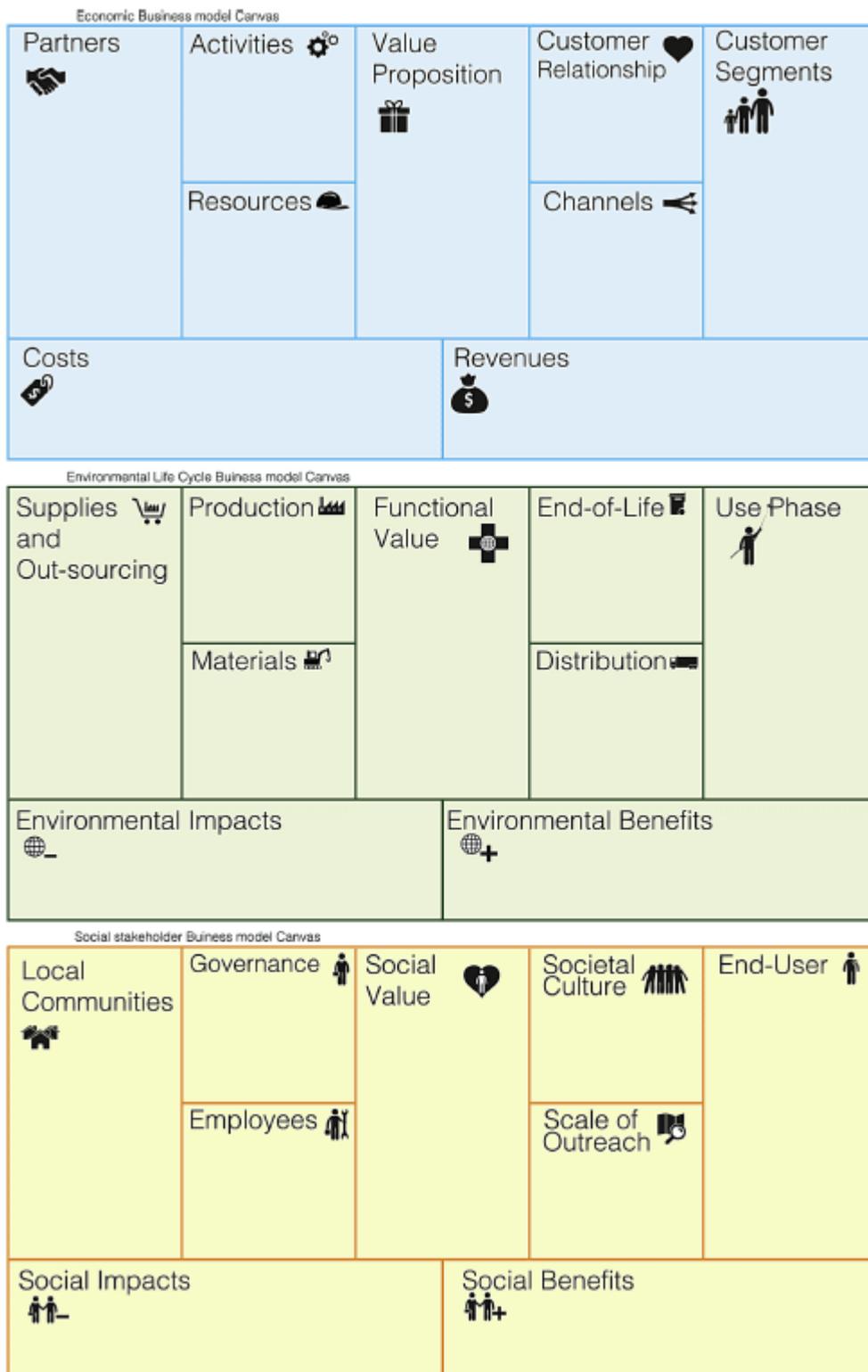


Figure 7: The Triple Layered Business Model Canvas (TLBMC) – a tool to analyse the business model on both environmental, social and economic terms (Retrieved from Joyce & Paquin, 2016, p. 1483).

Green Marketing Alternatives to Ecolabelling

The intent of **eco-branding** is to identify the goods or services of one seller as environmentally friendly and to differentiate them from environmentally unfriendly competitors. Eco-brands can be names, terms, signs, symbols, design or a combination of them (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). Eco-brands, such as Patagonia and Bodyshop, build their reputation over time to become synonymous with nature conservation and environmentally friendly products (Livesey & Kearins, 2002; Merrilees, 2016). Green branding communication strategies often aims at “associating the brand with pleasant, emotional imagery of nature”; these strategies, however, should be backed up by products that are proven to be environmentally friendly to maintain credibility (Hartmann, Apaolaza Ibáñez, & Forcada Sainz, 2005).

Eco-advertising through different media channels can be used to try to encourage consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). Eco-advertising illustrates a product’s environmental benefits, encourage a sustainable lifestyle and improve the eco image of a brand (D'Souza, Taghian, & Lamb, 2006). Rahbar and Wahid (2011) points out that eco-advertising generally consists of three aspects:

- The business’s concern for the environment
- The changes a business has made in operations to highlight its commitment to environmental protection
- The positive actions that the business is taking and the positive results of these actions on the environment

Eco-advertising can, however, result in the opposite effect than intended, whereby consumer attitudes towards a business are decreased by the eco-advertising; this is particularly prevalent when the business’s environmental claims are not substantiated (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014).

Pros and cons of ecolabelling and Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

Entrepreneurs have diverse and often multiple motivations for ecolabelling and certification. They range from greening tourism supply, corporate social responsibility and environmental management to cost savings, attracting new markets and receiving higher prices. Research into the motivations for ecolabelling shows that there are mainly two groups of reasons: business benefits and green philosophy (Dunk, Gillespie, & MacLeod, 2016; Yilmaz, Üngüren, & Kaçmaz, 2019).

Assessing the pros and cons

Below we are reviewing research that assess some of the main pros and cons of ecolabelling.

Table 1: Arguments for and against business ecolabelling and support in literature for the arguments. The conclusions are commented below.

Arguments for and against Business Ecolabelling (or EMS)	Support in literature (Low, Some, High)
Business arguments for	
Cost reduction	High
Marketing advantages	Some
Communicates environmental credentials	Some
Higher prices	Low
Business arguments against	
Costs of certification, recertification and yearly fee	Some
Sustainability reasons for	
Process advantages	High
Tourists develop positive attitudes to sustainability	Some
Openness of processes and impacts	High
Sustainability reasons against	
Omits transport	High
Favours big enterprises	High
Ecolabel schemes are distractors to sustainability	Some
Greenwashing of products and businesses	Some

Table 1 gives an overview of general impressions from the recent literature, concerning advantages and challenges connected to ecolabelling and EMS. The arguments for the assessments are described below.

Business arguments for

Cost reduction

Cost advantages of ecolabelling and EMS are well documented in the literature (Ayuso, 2007; Buunk & van der Werf, 2019; Goodman, 2000; Granly & Welo, 2014). The advantages apply especially to energy consumption where the investment costs tend to be low, while the cost reductions are potentially high. Buunk and van der Werf (2019) for instance, found that adoption of the Green Key label and implementing sustainable business practices led to a reduction of costs for 58% of respondents with an average cost reduction of 3.2%. Furthermore, almost 40% of respondents

indicated that they had to make investments of EUR 500 or less to meet the Green Key requirements. (Buunk & van der Werf, 2019).

Dunk (2016) however points to the fact that expected cost reductions will vary. In hotels with limited in-house expertise, the costs of scheme membership could be justified by the savings achieved. However, for hotels that have already implemented sustainability practices, certification may prove less cost effective (Dunk et al., 2016; Geerts, 2014). See Yilmaz et al. (2019) for a more detailed overview of costs and cost reduction.

Marketing advantages

There are some indications that ecolabelling gives marketing advantages, but findings are ambiguous. Below, we present different perspectives on this matter.

Customer awareness of ecolabels is a precondition for marketing advantages. The literature however indicates that both awareness of and confidence in ecolabels are low among consumers (Brécard, 2014; Janßen & Langen, 2017).

Likelihood of the consumer to consider the environmental impact of a vacation is another aspect. This likelihood seems to differ. Juvan and Dolnicar (2014) found that occasion influences environmental behaviour; even environmental activists at home engage in environmentally damaging behaviour whilst on holiday.

“The attitude-behaviour gap” is worth our attention, when looking into potential marketing advantages. Many studies show that people in general and tourists in particular are concerned with environmental issues and have intentions of environmentally friendly behaviour (Emil Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). There are however huge gaps between intentions and what people actually do when in a situation of choice. A recent study from the Geiranger World Heritage site illustrates this point. It shows that more than 65% of respondents consider themselves to be conscious of environmental protection (ticking 4 or 5 on a scale from 1-5). The same survey shows that only 22% actually let environmental considerations influence their choice of transport to the holiday destination (same scale) (Yttredal & Homlong, 2019a). This attitude – behaviour gap is widely known and explored and have a wide range of explanations (Emil Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). Credible figures on sustainable behaviour is therefore difficult to find. Juvan and Dolnicar (2016) did a bibliographical study of around 109 articles on environmentally friendly tourism behaviour. They found that the category of tourists both intending to and actually performing environmentally friendly behaviour in the studies varied between 20% and 2%. They pessimistically conclude that:

“.. collectively as a research discipline, there is little reliable knowledge about tourists’ actual environmentally sustainable behaviour.” (E. Juvan & Dolnicar, 2016, p. 8)

On the other hand, business leaders seem to be quite positive about ecolabels’ marketing advantages. Managers of hotels find ecolabels to be supportive of the hotel’s image and regard them as tools to disambiguate their activities in the context of social responsibility. Some hotel managers experience value chain changes from ecolabelling; bonds between management, customers, and intermediate institutions (such as tour operators and travel agencies) become stronger. Other managers again feel a higher sense of customer loyalty. (For an overview see (Yilmaz et al., 2019).

Of other marketing advantages, Margaryan and Stensland (2017) found that eco-labelled nature based tourism SMEs in Norway and Sweden had improved knowledge of the customer, improved knowledge of the current environmental issues and improved the quality of their product as a result of their ecolabel certification.

Communicates environmental credentials

There is a general perception that ecolabels can communicate environmental credentials. However, the relationship between sustainability communication and purchase intent is not only about ecolabels but about the business' communication as a whole. In this perspective, ecolabelling can improve consumer perceptions of a company when used in combination with descriptions of the positive activities and outcomes during the certification process. (Esparon, Gyuris, & Stoeckl, 2014). The totality of environmental communication is also emphasized by Hardeman, Font and Nawijn (2017) who found that specific sustainability messages in tourism; regarding management or social, cultural and environmental efforts were more effective than a general statement such as an ecolabel. Sparks, Perkins and Buckley (2013) finds that customer beliefs are complex and that purchase intentions are influenced mainly by the customers' overall attitude toward the resort. Still they find that information posted by customers are perceived as most useful and trustworthy. In line with this Tölkes (2018) argues that little is understood about personal communication on environmental issues.

Higher prices

There is little evidence supporting that ecolabelling in general gives a tourism business an opportunity to receive higher prices or increased sales. Buunk and van der Werf (2019) gives an overview of several studies showing that the possession of an ecolabel does not lead to increased prices or increased sales for hotels and B & Bs.

There are however nuances also to this general picture. Ban, Iacobaş, & Nedelea (2016) refers to a study showing that the business travellers are willing to pay 10% more to stay in "green" hotels. Jurado-Rivas and Sánchez-Rivero (2019)⁶ have findings from the World Heritage City Caceres in Spain that might be interesting as an example. They conclude that:

- Less than half of the visitors are willing to pay extra for sustainable products and services.
- Among tourists who were willing to pay more for sustainable hotels, the average extra amount was approximately 5–10% more than the cost of a double room, depending on the time of year of the tourist's stay.
- In the case of restaurants, the average extra amount for a lunch or dinner in an establishment that applies sustainability criteria amounts to 2.98 Euros.
- In this research, a high correlation between the willingness to pay for sustainability among hotel and restaurant business services has been observed.
- The willingness to pay extra for sustainable services increased in the years 2012 to 2016.
- Foreign tourists were generally more willing to pay higher amounts than Spanish tourists to improve the sustainability of accommodation and public
- Sustainable tourism is not a gender issue, as men were generally not willing to pay more or less than women for tourism products and services with an increased level of sustainability.
- Education increases willingness to pay
- Finally, unlike gender and age, it was empirically confirmed that there was a direct relationship between the willingness to pay for sustainability and the educational level of tourists.

Many of the studies of prices and extra income of ecolabelling or green enterprises, as presented above, are based on the intention or "willingness to pay" of the customer. Due to the "attitude-

⁶More than 400 respondents were asked in 2012 and 2016 about their willingness to pay. The question was: "Which quantity would you be willing to pay in order to enjoy a more sustainable tourist service in the following cases?" Different products and services were then introduced.

behaviour gap” as presented above, the positive findings in such studies must therefore be handled with caution.

Yttredal and Homlong (2019b) have a slightly different approach. They find that more than 80% of the visitors to the Geiranger area (WH site West Norwegian fjords) are willing to add up to 5 Euros and more than 50 % up to 10 Euros per person to their travel expenses if the money is used to preserve the area. Interestingly enough, there were no large differences between groups depending on nationality, sex or other background factors. This general positive attitude is confirmed by other surveys (See for example Babri & Díez-Gutiérrez, 2019 for willingness to pay toll for vehicles.). A kind of “toll” or extra fee to enter an area would remove the choice, and in this way would not be affected by the attitude-behaviour gap.

Business arguments against

Costs of certification, recertification and yearly fee

The ecolabels generally have a yearly fee, and these can vary greatly (see next chapter for an overview). Certification can also have costs for adjustment to ecolabel requirements. In a study of 56 accommodation enterprises Buunk and van der Werf (2019) found that 18% of the businesses reported zero adjustment cost and 21% reported investment costs of EUR 500 or less. The median investment cost was EUR 3,000 and the mean investment costs were EUR 17.634. The maximum reported investment was EUR 350,000 (Buunk & van der Werf, 2019). Costs are also arguments for leaving the labelling schemes (Buunk & van der Werf, 2019; Dunk et al., 2016)

The time required to collect data and complete paperwork is an issue for many enterprises struggling to meet multiple demands on their time. Furthermore, some enterprises feel that the extent of monitoring and record-keeping required is not of direct benefit to the business. Some quotes from enterprises leaving the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) in Scotland illustrate the points:

“The amount of record keeping needed was out of proportion with any benefits from the scheme.”

“The scheme was becoming very bureaucratic with too much useless statistics required to be collected which did not add anything to the business and created a lot of needless work.”

“The annual cost of being in the scheme was not really worth it as we had no bookings at all through being registered.”

“As a small B&B with a limited income we have to look at whether schemes such as this are cost effective.”

“Very few guests found me through the GTBS. It did not produce enough increase in income to cover the cost of membership. Cost of belonging to scheme too high for a small business. “

(Quotes retrieved from Dunk et al., 2016, p. 1598).

Sustainability arguments for

There is no universal set of indicators that measure tourism sustainability or show negative impact of such activity (Tiago, Gil, Stemberger, & Borges-Tiago, 2020). Trying to measure the direct effect of ecolabelling on sustainability would for this and other reasons therefore be indicative, and we do not know of such studies. There are however more indirect sustainability effects that have been reviewed.

Process advantages

A significant proportion of managers identify access to core scheme attributes as a driver for scheme participation. One of the advantages mentioned by the managers is that labelling gives them standards and procedures to improve sustainability without having the expert knowledge. There seem to be arguments that ecolabelling or certifying for an EMS give enterprises incentives to improve environmental and social performance. (Dunk et al., 2016). Yilmaz et al. (2019) show that eco-labelled hotels have more routines supporting the local economy and protecting local cultures and traditions. They also illustrate differences in hotel policies and praxis between accommodation enterprises that were eco-labelled and not. The content of this is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Illustration of sustainable tourism practices of accommodation enterprises with or without ecolabelling. + means that eco-labelled hotels have a significantly higher proportion of hotels with such routines or praxis. Dots ... means that there is no such difference (Modified from Yilmaz et al., 2019, p. 15).

Difference of routines and praxis related to sustainability Eco-labelled and non-eco-labelled accommodation enterprises compared	
	Eco-labelled enterprises
Sustainable management policies	
Policies to reduce negative impacts on your business environment	+
Policies to support the local economy	+
Policies to protect local culture and traditions	+
Occupational Health and safety policies	+
Training and Information Activities	
Training employees on environmental issues	+
Occupational health and safety trainings	+
Informing all employees of the hotel's initiatives on environmental issues	+
Energy and Water Saving Management	
Energy saving applications in customer rooms and common areas of hotel	+
Recording all energy consumption in monthly form	...
Informing customers about energy savings	+
Water saving applications in customer rooms and common areas of hotel	+
Recording all water consumption in monthly form	+
Informing customers about water savings	+
Environmental Waste Management	
Collection of wastes by category	+
Recording the amount of waste food on a daily basis	+
Employees oriented Applications	
Payment of overtime fees	+
Implementation of the personnel discipline regulation	+
Giving orientation training before starting work	+
Applications of employee suggestion and complaint	+
Rewarding of environmentally friendly employees	+
Informing customers	
No negative impact on local community access to resources	...
Informing customers about local people and local culture	+
Consideration of the opinions of the local community and the employees on the construction of new investments	...
Introducing our sustainability programs to customers	+
Informing our customers that we are environmentally friendly	+
Giving information about local traditions, culture, dress, natural and cultural heritage to customers	+

Tourists develop positive attitudes to sustainability

To what extent ecolabelling has an educational effect on tourists is unclear. Many studies show that people in general and tourists in particular are concerned with environmental issues (For example Yttredal & Homlong, 2019b). It may be discussed if these findings are due to “politically correct” reporting or a general awareness of sustainability issues. Juvan and Dolnicar (2016) point to the fact that tourist behaviour can be categorized along two dimensions: Intent and behaviour. Tourists can display environmentally sustainable behaviour or not, and they can have pro-environmental intent or not. The differences between the categories of tourists deriving from such a distinction will have implications for measures to promote environmentally friendly tourism both for a protected area and a tourism business.

Openness of processes and impacts

To be certified there is generally a demand for openness about processes and sustainability issues. Robinson (2004) argues that regardless of intent of certification this is an important result of ecolabelling:

“... having been forced by public pressure to adopt standards of environmental performance or social responsibility, the private sector has found that the credibility of those standards, and thus any competitive advantage they create, are greatly enhanced by adopting processes of measurement and certification that are transparent, open, subject to credible expert review, and that involve NGO participation.” (Robinson, 2004, p. 374)

Sustainability arguments against

Omits transport

Policies of sustainable tourism in general do not include greenhouse gas-emissions deriving from transport. This is seen as a weakness of the concept and the efforts (Aall, 2014). Most ecolabels also do not take into account the travel distance and method of the tourist. They are thus missing out on one of the greatest sources of environmental impact (Margaryan & Stensland, 2017).

Favours big enterprises

Ecolabelling seems to favour larger enterprises. Segarra-Oña et al. (2012) found that hotels in Spain with an ISO 14001 certificate are generally larger than hotels without. They point to the fact that for instance hotels belonging to a chain can use a central management unit for the certification process. Buunk (2019) show that Hotels and B & Bs with the Green Key label tend to be larger than unlabelled competitors along dimensions like revenue and number of employees. In addition to this, Dunk (2016) found that all but one of enterprises leaving the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS), were micro or small enterprises.

The time required to collect data and complete paperwork seems especially problematic for smaller enterprises with limited human resources (Ban et al., 2016; Buunk & van der Werf, 2019; Chang, 2011; Margaryan & Stensland, 2017). In contrast, larger businesses with specialist personnel and dedicated resources may find the sustainability transition less problematic (Mensah & Blankson, 2014).

Studies have also found a lack of knowledge and awareness, resources, capacity and willingness of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to voluntarily address environmental performance (Ateljevic, 2007; Brammer, Hoejmoose, & Marchant, 2012; Chan, 2010). For instance a study by Margaryan and Stensland (2017) found several barriers to nature based tourism SMEs taking up ecolabels: There is a disbelief in the effect that ecolabels produce. There is a perception that ecolabels are for larger companies with more turnover and employees and that ecolabels are redundant – owner-managers believe that they already have the knowledge to be sustainable.

Margaryan and Stensland (2017) also highlight these companies' belief that they are sustainable regardless of what they do, just due to their size, that their impact is negligible, and does not need any formal management. Dunk (2016) still points to the fact that the picture is far from complete there is need for more knowledge when it comes to small firms and environmental engagement.

Ecolabel schemes are distractors to sustainability

Schemes may distract time, attention and resources from actually improving sustainability of the company. Margaryan and Stensland (2017) for instance find that companies may consider themselves already sufficiently sustainable approaching sustainability in their own way, thinking they don't need any legitimation on behalf of a third party. Dunk (2016) found that scheme issues were particularly important when sustainable-philosophy-driven entrepreneurs left the Green label scheme. Grudges could be issues like record keeping and management, but also issues with criteria, assessments and recommendations.

Greenwashing of products and businesses

Greenwashing is defined by Lyon & Maxwell (2011) as "the selective disclosure of positive information about a company's environmental or social performance without full disclosure of negative information on these dimensions, so as to create an overly positive corporate image".

Greenhushing, on the other hand, is "the deliberate withholding, from customers and stakeholders, of information about the sustainability practices that they employ" (Font, Elgammal, & Lamond, 2017). Businesses engage in greenhushing to reduce the guilt of their customers and protect themselves from cynical customers, who may view their activities as hypocritical (Font et al., 2017).

Both greenwashing and greenhushing can damage the consumer's view of an enterprise in different ways. Greenwashing reduces consumer confidence in ecolabelling and other forms of eco-marketing. Greenhushing removes consumer guilt about their environmental impact; guilt is a powerful Eco-marketing tool for tourism that can effect positive change in tourist behaviour (Emil Juvan & Dolnicar, 2017). Terrachoice (2007) put together the main behaviour's enterprises should avoid in order to prevent greenwashing in "The Seven Sins of Greenwashing" report (see box on the following page, 33).

“The Seven Sins of Greenwashing

Sin of the hidden trade-off

A claim suggesting that a product is green based on a narrow set of attributes without attention to other important environmental issues. Paper, for example, is not necessarily environmentally preferable because it comes from a sustainably harvested forest. Other important environmental issues in the paper-making process, such as greenhouse gas emissions or chlorine use in bleaching, may be equally important.

Sin of no proof

An environmental claim not substantiated by easily accessible supporting information or by a reliable third-party certification. Common examples are facial tissues or toilet tissue products that claim various percentages of post-consumer recycled content without providing evidence.

Sin of vagueness

A claim that is so poorly defined or broad that its real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the consumer. All-natural is an example. Arsenic, uranium, mercury, and formaldehyde are all naturally occurring, and poisonous. All natural isn't necessarily green.

Sin of worshipping false labels

A product that, through either words or images, gives the impression of third-party endorsement where no such endorsement exists; fake labels, in other words.

Sin of irrelevance

An environmental claim that may be truthful but is unimportant or unhelpful for consumers seeking environmentally preferable products. CFC-free is a common example, since it is a frequent claim despite the fact that CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) are banned under the Montreal Protocol.

Sin of lesser of two evils

A claim that may be true within the product category but that risks distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole. Organic cigarettes or fuel-efficient sport-utility vehicles could be examples of this sin.

Sin of fibbing

Environmental claims that are simply false.” (Terrachoice 2007)

(Source UL, which acquired Terrachoice who originally published the 7 sins:

<https://www.ul.com/insights/sins-greenwashing>)

An overview of ecolabels covering tourism businesses

Following is an overview of different ecolabels covering tourism businesses. The aim of the overview is to make it easier for small tourism businesses to choose which ecolabel suits their purpose. The ecolabels in the overview were chosen out of over 400 ecolabels from the Ecolabel Index and Destinet websites as well as ecolabels identified by partner organisations within the PROWAD LINK project. Two criteria were used to pick the ecolabels presented in this report:

- Geographical Scope, only ecolabels who have a presence in the PROWAD LINK member countries United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands and Norway were included.
- The ecolabel can be used to certify a company or service directly related to the tourism industry (this excludes products, such as food and drinks that are produced in the PROWAD LINK geographical area).

Key information

To assess which ecolabel is suitable for a company, there is a need to have some key information about the label. Such information could be about the label's line of business, geographical scope, costs of certification and credibility to mention a few. Below we present what we perceive as key information for tourism enterprises. The information is further incorporated into the overview of ecolabels in the following section.

Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body

The ecolabel awarding institution may say something about the credibility of the label. Such awarding institutions can be of several types:

- For-Profit: private businesses, or business representation bodies, set up ecolabels to fit the needs of their customers, or members.
- Not-For-Profit: Non-government organisations, such as charities, set up ecolabels to address certain environmental or social issues important to their members.
- Governmental: Individual countries, or groups of countries, produce an ecolabel that can be used on products or services within that country, or region.
- Industry bodies
- National Park Authorities

Darnall, Ji, and Vázquez-Brust (2018) showed that consumers trust both governmental and non-governmental environmental organisations' awarding institutions over those governed by private business.

Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of an ecolabel is important as it indicates in which countries (with a focus on the countries participating in the project, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom) it is possible to obtain the ecolabel as well as indicating whether customers in a region will recognize an ecolabel.

Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel

Ecolabels for the tourism industry cover a wide range of areas, including:

- The tourist destination (a specific town or city, a national park or specified region)
- Accommodation providers, hotels, campsites, serviced apartments
- Restaurants
- Shops
- Transport

- Tourist activities
- and others

Ecolabels either focus on a specific area of the tourism industry, such as hotels or they may try to capture the whole tourism industry.

Cost

Knowledge about the cost of ecolabelling will be of importance to assess pros and cons of ecolabelling. The cost of ecolabel certification is often dependent on the type of tourism enterprise or activity, the size of the enterprise (employees, turnover, number of rooms in a hotel) and how often the certification needs renewed. Additional costs can include the daily/hourly costs of an audit to determine whether an enterprise has passed the ecolabel certification requirements. In this report, the costs for an enterprise to be certified for three years is included, unless otherwise stated.

Time to Achieve Certification

The length of the application process is an important factor for SMEs as time is a valuable resource. A short application process can allow for quick certification but could also indicate that the ecolabel is not scrupulous enough with their assessment criteria. Whereas, an extensive assessment may involve a site audit which may add additional costs to certification.

Period of recertification

Ecolabels have varying durations of certification from one to four years. The shorter the length of certification the more often an SME will have to invest both time and money for recertification. However, if an SME is focussed on continual improvement, regular recertification may be desirable.

Ease of access to Ecolabel Documentation

Important ecolabel documentation, such as the application criteria and costs can be freely available online or accessible after the applicant initiates the application process - which can take some effort. Poor ease of access means that documentation is unavailable and perhaps an application is required to gain access. Medium ease of access indicates that some documentation is available and excellent ease of access is used for ecolabel websites containing full relevant documentation.

Verification of Ecolabel Applications

Whether or not a product, service, or other, is verified by a third or second party is important as it provides legitimacy to the ecolabel. Third party verification by an accredited independent (from the ecolabel) verifier is the most rigorous type of verification. Rigorous verification ensures that ecolabels maintain a high standard and can prevent greenwashing. Second Party verification is carried out by the ecolabelling organisation and First Party is where the business applying for the ecolabel verifies themselves, this is the least rigorous type of verification.

Ecolabel Certification Criteria

Ecolabel certification criteria can cover environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects of a business and can number between 12 to 185 specific criteria. In this report, Ecolabels have been assessed for inclusion of criteria relating to a broad range of aspects which may be of interest to tourism enterprises. Those reading the report are encouraged to check which criteria of interest to them are included by the Ecolabels and to contact these ecolabels directly for more information.

General Management/Governance Criteria

Criteria in this category include those prescribing strategies, policies, adherence to legislation at the top tier of an enterprise.

Greenhouse Gas emissions

Criteria in this category include reporting Greenhouse Gas emissions, for example through the use of a carbon footprint.

Other Pollutants

Criteria in this category include reporting emissions of pollutants aside from Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Energy Consumption

Criteria in this category include those which prescribe implementing an energy management plan, using green energy and reducing energy use.

Water Consumption

Criteria in this category include those which prescribe implementing a water management plan or reducing water use.

Wastewater Management

Criteria in this category are those that specifically mention wastewater management.

Waste Management

Criteria in this category are those relating to how enterprises manage waste and recycling.

Transport

Criteria in this category include those relating to sustainable transport options for hotel guests, for example.

Wildlife Conservation, biodiversity, ecosystems

Criteria in this category are those that address issues of conservation, such as wildlife protection, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

Communication strategy

Criteria that fall into this category are those prescribing that communication of an enterprise's sustainability endeavors are communicated to customers and other stakeholders.

Staff Training

Criteria that fall into this category are those prescribing the training of staff in some aspect of Sustainability.

Societal Benefits

Criteria that measure how much an enterprise engages with, and assists, local communities.

Cultural Respect

Criteria that protect or promote local culture, such as including local art in hotel design and furnishings.

Food Supply Chain (fair-trade, local or organic)

Criteria that fall into this category include those requiring purchased food to be either local or certified fair-trade or organic.

Other Supply Chain Certified

Criteria that fall into this category include requiring the whole, or part of the supply chain to have achieved environmental certification, for example, all toiletries purchased should be EU Ecolabel, or equivalent, certified.

Economic Sustainability

Criteria that fall into this category include requiring an enterprise to report their financial performance and requiring an enterprise to support local entrepreneurship.

Number of Businesses (Products) Awarded to

An indication of an ecolabel's success with both enterprises and consumers can be the number of registered certifications. The unit of certification in a label varies. It can be destinations, enterprises, products or services or a mix of these.

Ecolabel Development: Recognised Standards followed?

The majority of ecolabels follow a set of international standards to develop the criteria they use to assess businesses/products/services for qualification. International standards can be used to improve the transparency of ecolabels and accountability of the organisations who have developed the ecolabel. If the labels adhere to international standards, they will in general refer to one of the following:

GSTC

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) was set up by UN-agencies in collaboration with non-governmental organisations and national/provincial governments. GSTC has developed international standards for certification in the tourism industry. GSTC sets out criteria across four pillars: Sustainable management, socioeconomic impacts, cultural impacts and environmental impacts.⁷ Several tourism ecolabels are accredited by GSTC, which means that they follow the GSTC criteria or a similar set of criteria. Tourism Enterprises can also choose to be certified directly under GSTC; this can be done through a third-party verifier.⁸

ISO

The International Standardisation Organisation (ISO) is an independent, non-governmental organisation which has developed 23043 different standards across most industries since 1947⁹. Three important, interrelated, ISO standards for SMEs in the tourism industry are the ISO 14001, for Environmental Management Systems, ISO 9001, for Quality Management and ISO 26000 for Corporate Social Responsibility.

ISO 14001¹⁰

The ISO 14001 for Environmental Management Systems is referred to by several tourism ecolabels, particularly those with certification for accommodation, as most of them require some form of environmental management system in place as part of the qualifying criteria.

⁷ More information on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC):

<https://www.gstcouncil.org/about/about-us/>

⁸ More information on direct certification by the GSTC <https://www.gstcouncil.org/certification/become-certified-hotel/>

⁹ More information on the International Standards Organisation (ISO): <https://www.iso.org/home.html>

¹⁰ More information on ISO 14001: <https://www.iso.org/iso-14001-environmental-management.html>

ISO 9001¹¹

ISO 14001 is often combined with the ISO 9001 standard for Quality Management Systems as the two standards complement one another. ISO 9001 sets requirements around an organisation's need to prove its ability to deliver products or services that meet customer and regulatory requirements and to improve customer satisfaction through effective implementation of the system.

ISO 26000¹²

The third ISO standard that tourism ecolabels may refer to is ISO 26000 for Corporate Social responsibility (CSR). This standard provides guidelines, not requirements, on how an organisation can be responsible in accordance with society's needs.

Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)

Ecolabels are awarded at least two ways: a pass/fail; or a tiered approach where a pass is divided into different levels of achievement to encourage continual improvement.

Tourism Ecolabels

Following is a presentation of 20 ecolabels (including 3 Environmental Management Systems) perceived most relevant to small and medium tourism enterprises in the PROWAD LINK area. They are presented in alphabetical order.

Table 3 and 4 provide a summary of these 20 ecolabels and is arranged in descending order by the number of Areas of Tourism covered by each ecolabel.

All information in the following tables has been gathered directly from ecolabel websites and direct correspondence with the ecolabelling bodies.

¹¹ More information on ISO 9001: <https://www.iso.org/iso-9001-quality-management.html>

¹² More information on ISO 26000: <https://www.iso.org/iso-26000-social-responsibility.html>

Table 3: Summary table of main characteristics of Tourism Ecolabels. All the information has been gathered between January and March 2020, therefore specific details, such as costs may have changed. [Gov. = Government, FP = For Profit, NP = Not for Profit, NI = No Information, Var = Variable, * = excluding auditing costs, + = ISO plus GSTC and EMAS, ^a = Can be 3rd or 2nd party certified, ^b = 2nd party certified.]

	Scope		Cost		Other Characteristics				Areas of Tourism Covered											
	Europe/Global	Limited	Minimum 3 Year Cost (Euros)	Months to achieve	Based on:	Awarding Body	3 rd Party Verified	Businesses Certified	Accommodation	Activities	Attractions	Events	Food & Drink	Marinas	Other Tourism Bus.	Supply Chain	Tour Operators	Tourism Offices	Tourism Shops	Transport
EMAS	Eur		Var.	12	ISO	Gov.	Yes	3694	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ISO 14001:2015	Glob		Var.	NI	ISO	NP	Yes	300000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Earthcheck	Glob		5100*	6-12	GSTC	FP	Yes	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Biosphere	Eur		600*	1	GSTC	NP	Yes	216	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x
Green Globe	Glob		1950*	3-6	ISO	FP	Yes	132	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x
National Park Partnership Programme		DE	150*	3-6	Other	Gov.	Yes ^a	1400	x	x	x		x				x		x	x
Green Tourism		UK	591*	Var.	NI	NP	Yes	2415	x	x	x	x						x	x	
Ecotourism Norway		NO	585*	3-12	Other	Gov.	No ^b	15	x	x	x		x		x		x			
Eco-Lighthouse		NO	828*	2-3	NI	NP	Yes	5300	x	x		x	x							x
The Green Key	Glob		1500*	Var.	GSTC	NP	Yes	3100	x		x	x	x			x				
Nordic Swan		NO, DK	9000	3-6	ISO	Gov.	Yes	25000	x			x	x		x	x				
Tourcert	Glob		6800	8	ISO+	FP	Yes	340	x						x		x			
Certified Green Hotel		DE	7500*	1	NI	FP	Yes	107	x			x								
Dehoga		DE	715*	NI	NI	FP	Yes	120	x				x							
Global Sustainable Tourism Council	Glob		Var.	NI	GSTC	NP	Yes	>5000	x								x			
NEPCon	Glob		6640	4-6	GSTC	NP	Yes	90	x								x			
EU Ecolabel	Eur		1400*	2	ISO	Gov.	Yes	77358	x											
Green Sign		DE, NE	2370*	1.5	ISO+	FP	Yes	225	x											
Travelife	Glob		960*	1	GSTC	FP	Yes	975	x											
Green Table		DE	240	0.5	NI	NP	Yes	90					x							

Table 4: Common qualifying criteria covered by each ecolabel. Criteria are for accommodation except for the Green Table certification, which focusses on Restaurants. *Full details of criteria cannot be accessed without submission of an application to the ecolabelling body.

Common Qualifying Criteria for Tourism Ecolabels																	
	Number of criteria covered	General Management/ Governance	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Other pollutants	Energy Consumption	Water Consumption	Wastewater Management	Waste Management	Transport	Wildlife, Biodiversity, Ecosystems Conservation	Communication strategy	Staff training	Societal benefits	Cultural Respect	Food Supply Chain (fair-trade, local or organic)	Other Supply Chain Certified	Economic Sustainability
EMAS	12*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	NI	x	x	x
Earthcheck	70	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	x
Biosphere	17*	NI	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Green Globe	40	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x
National Park Partnership Programme	41	x	NI	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	NI	NI	x	x	NI
Green Tourism	18*	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI
Ecotourism Norway	99	x	No	x	x	x	NI	x	x	x	NI	NI	NI	x	x	x	NI
Eco-Lighthouse	152	x	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	NI	NI	NI	x	x	NI
The Green Key	144	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nordic Swan	78	x	NI	NI	x	x	NI	x	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	x	x	NI
Tourcert	89	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Certified Green Hotel	80	NI	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	x	NI	x	NI	NI
Dehoga Umweltcheck	14*	NI	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	x	NI	NI
NEPCon	185	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	NI
EU Ecolabel	44	x	NI	NI	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	x	x	No	x	x	NI
Green Sign	92	x	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	NI	x	NI	NI	x	x
Travelife	128	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI
Green Table	12*	NI	x	NI	x	x	NI	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	x	NI	NI
Global Sustainable Tourism Council	168	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ISO 14001	NI**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	NI	NI	x	x	NI

Biosphere Responsible Tourism



BIOSPHERE

The Biosphere Responsible Tourism ecolabel covers businesses across Europe and the Americas. It was founded in 1999 by the Responsible Tourism Institute, a non-profit organisation with links to both UNESCO and the European Union. The Biosphere ecolabel can be applied to both destinations, tourism companies, such as hotels and shops, as well as cultural and historic sites of interest. Biosphere is relatively low cost to SMEs, costing a minimum of 200 Euros per year and taking 1 month or more to achieve certification but does require annual renewal. Biosphere follows the GSTC International Standard, which implies that it covers a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural issues. An additional benefit of Biosphere certification is that they offer their customers support in terms of training opportunities in Sustainability and assistance with developing a marketing strategy. Despite Biosphere's large geographical coverage, it has only certified 216 businesses.

Ecolabel	Biosphere Responsible Tourism
Established	1999
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Non-Profit, Responsible Tourism Institute, Spain
Website	https://www.biospheretourism.com/en
Geographical Scope	Europe and South America
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Active Tourism, Campsites, Catering Services, Convention Centres, Destinations, Golf, Events, Holiday Rentals, Hotels, Museums, Shops, Sites of Tourist Interest, Theme Parks, Tour Operators, Transport
Cost	600 Euros minimum for 3 years (excluding any additional auditing costs) https://www.biospheretourism.com/en/biosphere-certification/83
Time to Achieve Certification	1 month plus
Duration of Certification	Annual Renewal
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	17 (only main categories are communicated by Biosphere, the submission of an application is required to access full criteria)
Focus of Criteria	Broad range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation cultural, economic, environmental, social issues covered
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	216
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	GSTC Accredited
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Tiered and Pass/Fail
Extras	Training and Marketing benefits

Certified Green Hotel



The Certified Green Hotel ecolabel covers hotels, apartments, events and conference ships across Germany. It is a for-profit Ecolabel governed by the Association of German Travel Management. It is a relatively high cost ecolabel at 2500 Euros per year, but it can take less than one month to achieve certification, which lasts for 3 years. Multiple environmental and social criteria are covered by this ecolabel, but it is not clear whether international standards were used in its development. 107 businesses have been certified as Green Hotels across Germany and, as customers, they have gained access to assistance with marketing as offered by the ecolabel.

Ecolabel	Certified Green Hotel
Established	2011
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For-Profit, Association of German Travel Management
Website	https://www.certified.de/
Geographical Scope	Germany
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Hotels, Serviced Apartments, Event Locations, Conference Ships
Cost	7500 Euros minimum for three years (excluding any additional auditing costs)
Time to Achieve Certification	Less than 1 month
Duration of Certification	3 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	80
Focus of Criteria	Focus on Environmental issues (excluding wildlife/biodiversity) with some socio-economic issues covered, such as green supply chain
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	107
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	No standards followed – used expert advice to develop ecolabel
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Tiered: Good, Very Good, Excellent
Extras	Marketing Benefits

Dehoga Umweltcheck



The Dehoga Umweltcheck (environmental check), established in 2006, is an Ecolabel targeted at SMEs in the hospitality industry in Germany to give them a cheaper alternative to expensive Environmental Management Systems, such as ISO 14001 and EMAS. It falls under the umbrella of the Viabono GmbH, a private enterprise which administers its own ecolabels but also provides administrative support to several different ecolabels in the German Tourism sector. Dehoga Umweltcheck does not follow an International Standard as such but takes elements of ISO 14001, in terms of monitoring of energy, water and waste, and ISO 26000, in terms of an environmentally and socially responsible supply chain. It is a low-cost ecolabel at 250 – 450 Euros (plus an extra tariff per restaurant seat or hotel room) for 2 years certification. Dehoga Umweltcheck has certified 120 German businesses to date and offers assistance with marketing in addition to certification.

Ecolabel	Dehoga Umweltcheck
Established	2006
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For Profit Viabono GmbH Germany
Website	https://www.dehoga-umweltcheck.de/
Geographical Scope	Germany
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Hotels, Restaurants
Cost	715 Euros minimum for three years (excluding any additional auditing costs) * * for a 10 room hotel. https://www.dehoga-umweltcheck.de/kosten.html
Time to Achieve Certification	No Information
Duration of Certification	2 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Excellent
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	14 (only main categories are communicated by Dehoga; the submission of an application is required to access full criteria)
Focus of Criteria	Focus on Environmental issues (excluding wildlife/biodiversity)
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	over 120
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	Hybrid, EMS plus Green/Ethical supply chain
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Tiered - Bronze, Silver, Gold
Extras	Assistance with marketing

Earthcheck



EARTHCHECK

Earthcheck is an ecolabel with global coverage. Established in Australia back in 1997, Earthcheck is governed by a for-profit enterprise which offers certification across the tourism sector. Earthcheck is GSTC accredited and thus covers a range of environmental, social, economic, and cultural criteria. It is a high cost ecolabel, with a minimum annual fee of 1700 Euros and a certification process that can take between 6-12 months. Information about Earthcheck has poor availability as an application is required to obtain details on qualifying criteria.

Ecolabel	Earthcheck
Established	1997
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For-profit – Earthcheck, Australia
Website	https://earthcheck.org/
Geographical Scope	Global
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Accommodation, Activities, Administrative Offices, Aerial Cableways, Airlines, Airports, Attractions, Beverage Producers, Buildings, Casinos, Catering Services, Convention Centres, Communities (Towns, Cities, Precincts), Cruise Liners, Cruise Vessel, Destinations, Display and Retail, Exhibition Halls, Farm stays, Golf Courses, Laundry Facilities, Marinas, Railways, Restaurants, Spas, Theme Parks, Tour Companies, Tour Operators, Trailer Parks, Vehicles, Vehicle Rentals, Vineyard, Visitor Centres, Wineries.
Cost	5100 Euros minimum for three years (excluding any additional auditing costs)* *prices may have changed
Time to Achieve Certification	6-12 months (can include onsite auditing)
Duration of Certification	1-2 years depending on risk associated with a company's environmental impact.
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor – application required
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party by accredited verifier
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	70
Focus of Criteria	Wide range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation cultural, economic, Environmental, Social issues covered
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	Information not available
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Tiered approach offering Benchmarked, Silver, Gold, Platinum.
Extras	No Information

Eco-lighthouse



Eco-lighthouse is a Norwegian ecolabel that is able to certify a wide range of businesses both inside and outside of the tourism industry. It is a not for profit Ecolabel that was set up by the business community in collaboration with local/national Government. Eco-lighthouse is another type of Environmental Management System with multiple social and environmental qualifying criteria, specific to a variety of industries. Over 5300 certificates have been issued by Eco-lighthouse at an annual cost of 158 Euros (excluding 354 Euros minimum establishment fee). It takes around 2 to 3 months to achieve certification which lasts for 3 years.

Ecolabel	Eco-Lighthouse
Established	1996
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Not for Profit - Local/National Government & Business Partnership, Norway
Website	http://www.eco-lighthouse.org/
Geographical Scope	Norway
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Activities, Basic Overnight Accommodation, Catering, Conferences, Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes, Transport Companies,
Cost	828 Euros NOK minimum for 3 years (excluding any additional auditing costs)
Time to Achieve Certification	2 to 3 months
Duration of Certification	3 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Medium
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	152
Focus of Criteria	Focus on environmental issues (excluding wildlife/biodiversity) with some socio-economic issues covered, such as green supply chain
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	5300 valid certificates
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	No Information



The Ecotourism Norway ecolabel is a not-for-profit ecolabel for a range of tourism businesses in Norway, including accommodation, tourism activities and food and drink. Founded in 2008 by Innovation Norway, it is now administered by Hanen, the Norwegian Rural Industry Representation Organisation. It is a low-cost ecolabel at around 585 Euros for 3 years certification and can take 3 months to a 1 year to achieve certification. However, only 14 businesses are currently certified by Ecotourism Norway and the certification is not based on any International Standards and businesses are 2nd part verified (verified by Hanen) rather than 3rd party verified (by a separate organisation).

Ecolabel	Ecotourism Norway
Established	2008
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Governmental, Innovation Norway
Website	https://norsk-okoturisme.hanen.no/
Geographical Scope	Norway
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Activities, Bed and Breakfast, Farm Production, Meetings and Events, Farm Stay, Food and Refreshments, Boating Adventure
Cost	585 Euros minimum for three years (excluding any additional auditing costs)
Time to Achieve Certification	3-12 months
Duration of Certification	4 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Medium - some documentation accessible online
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	2 nd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	99
Focus of Criteria	Focus on environmental issues, including wildlife/biodiversity, socio-economic issues such as supply chain also covered
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	14 Businesses
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	No information
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing and networking benefits

EU Ecolabel



The EU Ecolabel is a well-established (1992) ecolabel with Europe wide Geographical Coverage. It is equivalent to the Nordic Swan and is governed by the European Commission. Accommodation and consumer products (food and other) can be certified by the EU Ecolabel and with over 77,000 products certified and 385 tourism businesses. It is a reasonable cost ecolabel, costing 350 Euros to join and 350 Euros per year, with certification taking 2 months minimum to complete and lasting between 2 and 4 years. The EU Ecolabel follows the ISO 14020 for products and covers a range of environmental criteria but no social criteria.

Ecolabel	EU Ecolabel (Nordic Swan for Norway and Denmark)
Established	1992
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Governmental, European Commission
Website	https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/
Geographical Scope	Europe, including non-EU countries
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Tourist Accommodation, Campsite Services Consumer Products (food and other)
Cost	1400 Euros for three years (micro-Enterprise) 2850 Euros for three years (SMEs) (excluding any additional auditing costs). https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/eu-ecolabel_fees.pdf
Time to Achieve Certification	2 months minimum
Duration of Certification	2-4 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor - Documentation is accessible on request
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party by accredited verifier
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	44
Focus of Criteria	Strong focus on environmental issues (excluding wildlife/biodiversity), some socio-economic issues, such as supply chain, also included
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	Tourism - 358 Licences (385) Overall 1,623 licences (77,358) 2019 figures
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	Followed ISO 14020, ISO/IEC Guide 65
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Certification is Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing benefits (Digital Toolkit)

European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme



The European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), established in 1995, is a type of Environmental Management System (EMS) which can be third party verified. It was developed by Governmental Bodies, including the European Commission and DG Environment. 3694 Businesses across 12664 sites have been awarded EMAS certification, which can take around 1 year to achieve. Certification can last 2 years for SMEs and the costs of certification are dependent on the fees charged by the third-party verifier.

Ecolabel	European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)
Established	1995
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Governmental, DG Environment, European Commission, Austria
Website	ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emas_for_you/
Geographical Scope	EU, including Norway
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Any Type of Business or Organisation
Cost	No details emashelpdesk@adelphi.de
Time to Achieve Certification	1-year internal process
Duration of Certification	Up to 2 years for SMEs
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Medium
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd Party Verified
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	12 broad categories of criteria
Focus of Criteria	Focus on the setting up of an Environmental Management System, broad range of criteria covered, excluding cultural and social aspects
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	3694 Businesses across 12664 sites
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	ISO 14001
Extras	emashelpdesk@adelphi.de
	No Information

Green Globe



Green Globe is another ecolabel with global coverage. It was established in 1993 by the for-profit, Green Globe Certification, USA. Green Globe can certify businesses across the tourism industry, from accommodation to transportation. 132 businesses, mostly in Germany and the Netherlands, have been certified across Europe. Annual membership fees for Green Globe is a minimum of 650 Euros and it takes between 3-6 months to obtain certification. Multiple environmental and social criteria are assessed by Green Globe during certification and they communicate that they use ISO 14020 to develop the ecolabel.

Ecolabel	Green Globe
Established	1993
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For-profit, Green Globe Certification, USA
Website	https://greenglobe.com/
Geographical Scope	Global
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Attraction, Business (Whole Sale / Retail), Congress Centre, Meeting Venues, Cruise Ships (River & Ocean), Golf Course, Hotel & Resort, Meeting & Events, Organization, Restaurant, Spa, Health Centre, Transportation (Mass Transportation, Bus, Company, Limousine Service, Car Rental), Travel Industry (Tour Operators, Destination Management Company, Meeting & Incentive Industry)
Cost	1950 Euros minimum for three years (excluding any additional auditing costs) https://greenglobe.com/contact-in-your-region/
Time to Achieve Certification	3-6 months (onsite audit required)
Duration of Certification	1
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor - registration required
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	40
Focus of Criteria	Broad range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation cultural, economic, environmental, social issues covered
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	132 in Europe, most prominent in Germany and Netherlands, less so in Denmark, Norway and UK
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	GSTC accredited
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Certified, Gold and Platinum
Extras	Marketing and Networking benefits

Green Key



Green Key

The Green Key is a not-for-profit ecolabel administered by the Foundation for Environmental Education since 1994. It is most popular in the Netherlands and Denmark, at least in Europe, and has certified over 3100 businesses across 66 countries. A range of tourism businesses can be certified by the Green key and comes at a reasonable cost of between 500 and 1000 Euros. Green Key follows the GSTC standard and thus covers environmental, social, economic and cultural criteria. Certification is required annually for the first 2 years and then at 3-year intervals.

Ecolabel	The Green Key
Established	1994
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Non-Profit, Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Denmark
Website	https://www.greenkey.global/
Geographical Scope	Global, most prominent in Netherlands and Denmark.
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Attractions, Conference Centres, Restaurants, Campsite and Holiday Parks, Hotels and Hostels, Small Accommodation, Supply Chain
Cost	1500 Euros minimum for three years (excluding any additional auditing costs) https://www.greenkey.global/costs-policies
Time to Achieve Certification	Varies, some countries have a fixed length of time for the certification process (onsite audit required).
Duration of Certification	1 year (for 1 st two years then certified for 3-year periods)
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Application required
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party verified
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	144
Focus of Criteria	Full range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	Over 3100 across 66 countries
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	GSTC accredited
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Certification is Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing Benefits (Links to online booking companies)



The Green Sign Ecolabel is a for-profit ecolabel administered by the German company GreenLine Hotels GmbH. 225 Hotels have been certified by Green Sign across Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Poland. Green Sign follows the GSTC standard and thus cover a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural qualification criteria. Certification comes at a minimum cost of 2370 Euros and lasts for 3 years.

Ecolabel	Green Sign
Established	No Information
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For Profit, GreenLine Hotels GmbH, Germany
Website	https://www.greensign.de/zertifizierung
Geographical Scope	Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Poland
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Hotels
Cost	2370 Euros minimum for 3 years (excluding any additional auditing costs) https://www.greensign.de/images/PDF/infracert_an_tragsformulare_01_2019_GreenSign_en.pdf
Time to Achieve Certification	6 weeks
Duration of Certification	3 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	92
Focus of Criteria	Focus on environmental criteria, excluding wildlife/biodiversity, with some coverage of socio-economic criteria
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	225
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	Incorporates ISO 14001, EMAS, ISO 26000 and GSTC
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Tiered Approach
Extras	Marketing and Networking benefits



Green Table is a relatively new ecolabel, established in 2015, which focusses on German Restaurants. Green Table is a not-for-profit ecolabel which has certified 90 restaurants to date. It was not developed using internationally recognised standards, rather using guidance from the Sustainable Restaurant Association. Multiple environmental and Social criteria are covered by the ecolabel and certification can take just 2 weeks. The cost of Green Table is the lowest of all ecolabels at 60 to 180 Euros per year and certification lasts 3 years. Green table is not 3rd party verified, rather a desk study is carried out by Green Table to assess restaurants.

Ecolabel	Green Table
Established	2015
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Not-for-profit Green Table, Germany
Website	https://www.greentable.de/restaurants/
Geographical Scope	Germany
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Restaurants
Cost	240 Euros for 3 years https://www.greentable.de/restaurants/
Time to Achieve Certification	2 weeks
Duration of Certification	3 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	2 nd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	12
Focus of Criteria	Focus on environmental criteria with some socio-economic issues covered, for example around local/Fairtrade supply chains
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	90
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	Sustainable Restaurant Association Standards
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing benefits



The Green Tourism Business Scheme is a not-for-profit ecolabel administered by Green Business UK since 1997. It covers a wide range of tourism businesses in the United Kingdom and Ireland and had certified 2415 businesses in 2011. Green Tourism makes reference to ISO 14020 standards in its literature, but it is not clear if a specific international standard was followed to develop this ecolabel, however 3rd party verification is required to achieve certification. The online application process means that time required to achieve certification is dependent upon the business being certified. The certification fees are relatively low at between 150 and 650 GBP (excluding the 75 GBP registration fee) and annual renewal is required.

Ecolabel	Green Tourism Business Scheme
Established	1997
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Not for Profit, Green Business UK
Website	www.green-tourism.com
Geographical Scope	United Kingdom and Ireland
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Attractions, Activity Providers, Bed & Breakfast, Conferences/Events, Corporate Offices, Guest Houses, Holiday Parks, Hostels, Hotels, Restaurants and Pubs, Retail, Self-Catering, Serviced Apartments, Serviced Accommodation, Venues
Cost	591 Euros for three years http://www.green-tourism.com/fees
Time to Achieve Certification	Online Application (no onsite audit)
Duration of Certification	Annual renewal
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Poor - Application required
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd Party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	18 broad categories of criteria
Focus of Criteria	Wide range of criteria covered but less focus on economic sustainability
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	2415 (2011 figure)
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Tiered Bronze, Silver, Gold
Extras	Discounts from Green Suppliers, Marketing benefits

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) does not directly certify any products or services but provides an accreditation program through its partner ASI/Assurance Services International to accredit Certification Bodies (<https://www.gstccouncil.org/certification/gstc-accredited-certification-bodies/>), which in turn can certify hotels, tour operators and destinations that adhere to the GSTC Criteria. GSTC also recognizes several ecolabels as having equivalent certification criteria, including NEPCon, Green Key, Green Globe, Earthcheck and Biosphere. GSTC certification criteria is extensive, covering environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects of enterprises. GSTC certification criteria began in 2008 now recognizes more than 30 tourism ecolabels as equivalent, therefore the number of businesses using GSTC several thousand, if not more. The cost of undertaking certification based on GSTC criteria is dependent on the certification body undertaking the certification.

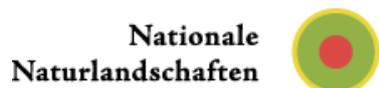
Ecolabel	The Global Sustainable Council (GSTC) Criteria
Established	2008
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Not-for-profit, Membership Organisation, Australia
Website	https://www.gstccouncil.org/about/about-us/
Geographical Scope	Global
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Accommodation, Destinations , Tour Operators
Cost	Costs are dependent on the certification body https://www.gstccouncil.org/certification/gstc-accredited-certification-bodies/
Time to achieve certification	Dependent on the certification body https://www.gstccouncil.org/certification/gstc-accredited-certification-bodies/
Duration of certification	3 years.
Ease of access to Ecolabel Documentation	Documentation on criteria is readily available
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party by accredited verifier
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	168
Focus of Criteria	Full range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation
Number of Businesses (products) awarded to	Greater than 5000 (all ecolabelling bodies that are accredited by GSTC can use the GSTC ecolabel)
Ecolabel Development Standards followed?	GSTC
Type of award (pass/fail or tiered approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing, training benefits

ISO 14001:2015



The International Standardization Organisation (ISO), based on of Geneva, Switzerland, does not certify any products or services directly. In order to gain certification of one of the many ISO standards, an accredited Certification Body must be used. In order to determine whether a particular Certification Body is accredited, it is pertinent to check with your National Accreditation Body; the International Accreditation Forum (<https://www.iaf.nu/>) members list contains details of each National Accreditation Body. ISO 14001:2015 provides guidelines to undertake an Environmental Management System (EMS) which is flexible enough to be used by any type of enterprise. Normal practise would involve an enterprise employing a consultant to assist them with developing the EMS and then having this certified by the accredited Certification Body. The first ISO 14001 standard was produced in 1996 and there are now over 300000 enterprises certified.

Ecolabel	ISO 14001:2015
Established	19996
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Not-for-profit, Non-Governmental Membership Organisation, Switzerland
Website	https://www.iso.org/iso-14001-environmental-management.html
Geographical Scope	Global
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Any tourism enterprise
Cost	Costs are dependent on the certification body
Time to achieve certification	6 months
Duration of certification	3 years, may vary
Ease of access to Ecolabel Documentation	ISO charge a fee to access all documentation
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party by accredited verifier
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	The number of criteria depends on the specific enterprise pursuing the Environmental Management System under ISO 14001.
Focus of Criteria	Strong environmental focus, can include socio-economic criteria
Number of Businesses (products) awarded to	300000
Ecolabel Development Standards followed?	ISO 14001
Type of award (pass/fail or tiered approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	Dependent on the certification body



The German ecolabel *Partner der Nationalen Naturlandschaften* (Partner of National Natural Landscapes) aims to foster regional sustainable development, to raise awareness and provide information to guests, to protect the environment and promote the national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in Germany. There are minimum criteria and extra regional criteria in each national park or biosphere reserve. The label is characterised by a participatory approach even though formally the awarding institution is in most cases a governmental one. The awarding committee which also takes care of the further development of the criteria includes not only the national park authority but also NGOs and representatives of the labelled businesses. The label has a validity of 3 years. In order to initiate a further improvement with regards to sustainability, the recertification criteria are stricter. Information about the assessment process and the qualifying criteria are online available. As extra benefit the labelled SME get access to the regional network of labelled businesses and organisations, benefitting of marketing and training offers. For instance, the National Park Authority Schleswig-Holstein and the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park Authority are in charge of regional networks, both labelling with *Partner Nationalpark Wattenmeer* due to close cooperation.

Ecolabel	Partner Nationale Naturlandschaften
Established	2008
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Governmental (authorities of national parks/biosphere reserves), Germany
Website	http://partner.nationale-naturlandschaften.de/
Geographical Scope	Germany (within a national park/biosphere reserve)
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Accommodation & gastronomy, destination management organisations, agriculture, nature experience, education
Cost	150-2700 Euros for three years certification, depending on the size of the business.
Time to Achieve Certification	3-6 months
Duration of Certification	3 years maximum
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Medium
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	Varying 2 nd or 3 rd party , depending on national park.
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	41
Focus of Criteria	Range of Environmental, excluding wildlife/biodiversity, and socio-economic criteria covered
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	More than 1400
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/fail
Extras	Marketing, Networking and Training Benefits

NEPCon



NEPCon is a global not-for-profit ecolabel established in 1994 by NEPCon Global. NEPCon is able to certify both accommodation and tour operator businesses and has certified 90 to date, all in South America, although NEPCon do now offer their services globally. It can take between 4-6 months to become certified by NEPCon and certification lasts for 3 years (although annual audits are a requirement). NEPCon has applied for GSTC accreditation but already claims to follow this accreditation. NEPCon offers its customers assistance with marketing and training in sustainability.

Ecolabel	NEPCon
Established	1994
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Not-for-profit NEPCon, Global
Website	https://www.nepcon.org/certification/tourism
Geographical Scope	Global
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Accommodation, Tour Operators
Cost	6640 Euros for three years
Time to Achieve Certification	4-6 months
Duration of Certification	3 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Excellent
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	185
Focus of Criteria	Wide range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation, strong focus on wildlife/biodiversity and protection of local culture
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	90
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	GSTC
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing and training benefits

Nordic Swan



Nordic Swan is the most well-established ecolabel, being conceived by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1989. Nordic Swan has certified 25,000 products across the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Conference facilities, hotels, restaurants, supply chains and products can be certified by Nordic Swan. Nordic Swan was developed using the ISO 14024 standard and thus has a focus on environmental criteria, although it does cover some social issues, such as the adherence to relevant work, environmental and health regulations. It can take between 3 to 6 months to gain certification by Nordic Swan and certification lasts between 2 to 4 years. It typically costs 9000 Euros for three years of certification, but more accurate prices can be obtained from the Nordic Swan's National Offices.

Ecolabel	Nordic Swan
Established	1989
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	Governmental, Nordic Council of Ministers
Website	www.nordic-ecolabel.org/
Geographical Scope	Nordic Countries (Norway and Denmark in Project Area)
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Conference Facilities, Hotels, Restaurants, Supply Chain. Products (Food and Other)
Cost	Typically, 7130 Euros for three years Contact National Office for details http://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/contact
Time to Achieve Certification	3 to 6 months (onsite audit required)
Duration of Certification	2 to 4 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Medium
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3 rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	78
Focus of Criteria	Focus on environmental criteria but supply chain criteria also included
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	25000 products certified ISO 14024 Type I Ecolabel
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	No Information

TourCert



TourCert is another international certification programme which focusses on destinations, accommodation, tour operators and other tourism businesses. It is a for-profit ecolabel established in 2009 and appears to adhere to a mix of international standards, including ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. It can take 8 months to achieve certification after which businesses are certified for between 2 and 3 years. 340 destinations and businesses are currently certified by TourCert which provides them with additional benefits, such as training on CSR.

Ecolabel	Tourcert
Established	2009
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For Profit, TourCert, Germany
Website	https://www.tourcert.org/en/
Geographical Scope	International
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Destinations, Hotels and other Accommodation, Tour Operators and other Tourism Businesses
Cost	6800 Euros minimum for three years https://www.tourcert.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TourCert-Certification-Prices-2018-1.pdf
Time to Achieve Certification	8 months
Duration of Certification	2-3 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Excellent
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd Party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	89
Focus of Criteria	Wide range of environmental, socio-economic and cultural criteria covered
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	340
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	Mix of EMAS, ISO 14001, 9001
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail. Can carry out a company check before being certified.
Extras	Training benefits

Travelife is another for-profit ecolabel with a global coverage. Established in 2007 by ABTA Ltd UK, Travelife is now a GSTC accredited ecolabel which has certified over 975 hotels. It takes 1 month minimum to achieve Travelife certification and costs 320 Euros per year minimum for 2 years of certification. Marketing benefits are also offered to certified hotels.

Ecolabel	Travelife
Established	2007
Type of Ecolabel Awarding Body	For-Profit ABTA Ltd UK
Website	https://travelifestaybetter.com/the-certification-process/
Geographical Scope	Global
Areas of Tourism Covered by the Ecolabel	Hotels
Cost	960 Euros minimum for three years (excluding additional auditing costs)
Time to Achieve Certification	1 month plus
Duration of Certification	2 years
Ease of Access to Ecolabel Documentation	Excellent
Verification of Ecolabel Applications	3rd party
Total Criteria Assessed by Ecolabelling Body	128
Focus of Criteria	Wide range of criteria due to GSTC accreditation
Number of Businesses (products) Awarded to	975
Ecolabel Development - Standards followed?	GSTC Accredited
Type of Award (Pass/Fail or Tiered Approach)	Pass/Fail
Extras	Marketing benefits

Glossary of Terms

This glossary has been created using the ISO 14050:2010 (ISO, 2009) definitions, unless otherwise stated

Accreditation – third party attestation related to verification body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific verification tasks

Certification – procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements

Ecolabel (Environmental Label) – provides information about a product or service in terms of its overall environmental or sustainability character, a specific environmental aspect, or any number of aspects (ISO, 2000)

Ecolabelling Body – third party body and its agents which conduct an ecolabelling programme

Environment – surroundings (global and within an organisation) in which an organisation operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelation

Environmental Claim – statement, symbol or graphic that indicates environmental aspect of a product, a component or packaging (ISO, 2000)

Environmental Criteria – environmental requirements that the product, or service, shall meet in order to be awarded an environmental label

Environmental Label / Environmental Declaration – claim which indicates the environmental aspects of a product or service

Environmental Management System (EMS) – part of an organisations management system used to develop and implement its environmental policy and manage its environmental aspects

Environmental Impact – any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organisation’s activities or products

Life Cycle – consecutive and interlinked stages of a product or service system, from raw material acquisition to final disposal

Life Cycle Assessment – compilation and evaluation of the inputs and outputs and the potential environmental impacts of a product system throughout its life cycle

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) (of a World Heritage site) – The text on which a World Heritage site receives its’ status. The OUV underlines how the site lives up to UNESCO criteria for such status and thus describes the responsibility of the nation state (UNESCO, 2020)

Self-Declared Environmental Claim – environmental claim that is made, without independent third-party certification, by manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers or anyone else likely to benefit from such a claim

Sustainable development - most often defined as: «... development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”(United Nations, 1987). A balance between social, environmental and economical dimensions are generally perceived to be the main element of sustainable development

Sustainability - term often used interchangeably with sustainable development. UNESCO defines the difference between sustainable development and sustainability as the difference between the endpoint and the processes and pathways to achieve sustainability (UNESCO, 2020)

Sustainable entrepreneurship - sustainable entrepreneurs aims to balance between the three elements of sustainable development: economic health (prosperity), social equity (people) and environmental resilience (planet) within their enterprise and value chains (Greco & de Jong, 2017)

Sustainable development goals (SDGs) - in 2015 the UN General assembly adopted 17 goals and more than 100 sub-goals of global sustainable development. The goals focus on social, economic and ecological aspects (UN General Assembly, 2015)

Third Party – person or body that is recognised as being independent of the parties involved, as concerns the issues in question

Transparency – open, comprehensive and understandable presentation of information

Verification – confirmation, through the provision of objective evidence, that specified requirements have been fulfilled

Verifier – person or body that carries out verification

Verification Body – body that performs verifications of environmental impacts in accordance ecolabel criteria

World Heritage Site - status given to an area by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten cultural or natural selection criteria (UNESCO, 2020)

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