

# **Tourism Certification**

*An analysis of Green Globe 21 and other tourism certification programmes*

A report by Synergy for WWF-UK  
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This report has been developed by Synergy on behalf of WWF-UK. It is based on research over a six-month period. This research has involved:

- Identification of the key components of sustainable development certification programmes in tourism and other sectors of industry
- Understanding existing sustainable tourism certification programmes and the published opinions about these programmes
- Internet research to identify the range of programmes that are currently promoted, their criteria, the system through which compliance is assessed, the cost of joining the system, the organisations that support it, and the range of companies that are involved
- Discussions with individuals in more than 25 organisations involved in the sustainable tourism debate on their views about the development of sustainable tourism certification programmes in particular, and sustainable tourism programmes in general
- Discussions with organisations that promote certification programmes to understand the precise requirements of each programme
- Where possible, contact with individual businesses and destinations that have participated in tourism certification programmes to understand how the system works in practice, any lessons learned and benefits gained.

A detailed list of stakeholders contacted is included as Annex 4.



The mission of WWF – the global environment network – is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The merits of the most prominent tourism certification programmes are examined and the potential contribution of certification to sustainable tourism is assessed.

The WWF vision for sustainable tourism and the guidelines for certification programmes that emerged from the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 1999 are used as a basis for examining how some of the more credible schemes measure up.

The WWF vision for sustainable tourism states that sustainable tourism and its associated infrastructure should:

- be compatible with effective conservation and operate within the area's natural capacity, for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources,
- minimise the ecological footprint, and
- give proper consideration to local cultures and local people in host areas, and ensure that these people have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism.

The CSD recommended that tourism certification schemes should:

- require companies to comply with national and regional regulations as an absolute minimum,
- have the potential to surpass regulatory requirements in a way which is cost effective,
- be developed with multi-stakeholder participation,
- include monitoring, assessment and verification systems to generate confidence and support from all parties, and
- include reference to the need for education focusing on travellers, investors, workers and host communities.

In the tourism sector, certification schemes can play an important role in bringing about more sustainable tourism because they provide participating companies with an action plan for improvement. Certification is, however, only one of a suite of tools required to make tourism sustainable. Effective and credible schemes need to be complemented by education, regulation and comprehensive land use planning.

The main focus of analysis is Green Globe 21, the certification programme with the greatest international reach. Drawing on the approaches of other programmes, the report makes recommendations outlining how tourism certification programmes, and in particular Green Globe 21, can be improved to make them more effective and more credible.

Tourism certification is provided by a wide range of initiatives that provide a marketable logo to companies that exceed (or claim to exceed) a specific standard. The logo allows businesses to demonstrate their environmental credentials. In theory, this allows consumers to identify companies whose operations are environmentally responsible or even sustainable. In practice, however, some of the current schemes are misleading. Green Globe 21, for example, allows its logo to be used as soon as a company commits to undertaking the certification programme. A subtly different logo is awarded when certification is achieved, but it is unlikely that consumers will recognise the difference. In addition, based upon the ISO 14001 environmental management standard, the Green Globe 21 standard allows participants to set their own targets. Certification is therefore 'process' rather than 'performance' based. This means a certified company has developed an environmental policy and set up an environmental management system, but may still

be operating in an environmentally damaging manner. Certification and the logo may be obtained by a company that is relatively more environmentally damaging than another that has not undertaken the programme. In addition, a large tour operator may be certified and use the logo on the basis of its head office operation, while its actual tours remain unchanged.

A good certification programmes should require participants to meet or exceed benchmark performance criteria prior to certification and use of a logo, and be underpinned by third party auditing and verification.

The success of schemes in terms of take up, depends upon consumer demand for sustainable tourism. This provides the tourism industry with a powerful market-driven incentive to demonstrate improved performance through certification. To date, take up across the tourism sector has been slow and tourism certification has not matched the success achieved by schemes such as the *Forest Stewardship Council* in the forestry sector. One reason for this has been the apparent lack of concern for issues of sustainability in choice of holidays by consumers, despite recent research that indicates a growing willingness to pay for a more sustainable product. Currently, the strongest determining factors are price, health and safety.

However, the biggest obstacle to the success of certification in the tourism sector remains a lack of credibility suffered by the most prominent scheme, Green Globe 21, combined with poor marketing, and a plethora of other schemes which only serve to confuse consumers. That different schemes have vastly differing requirements for participants, adds to this confusion. In addition, Green Globe 21 has undergone a number of metamorphoses, adding to the confusion within the industry as to what is required for certification. As a result, its logo remains in use by over 500 companies, only around 60 of which meet the current requirements for usage. Green Globe 21 also suffers from a number of other weaknesses including an only partially developed destination programme, and an absence of standard guidance notes for all the tourism sectors it claims to address beyond accommodation and tour operators. A possible solution would be the creation of an umbrella body overseeing all schemes. This would monitor and accredit the standards employed and so improve credibility.

Despite these drawbacks, tourism certification programmes have made significant progress over the last decade and have the potential to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable tourism. A number of areas, however, require development to improve both the credibility and effectiveness of tourism certification. These include:

- The award of certification logos only for achievement in excess of best practice performance standards rather than for commitment to improvement,
- Certification of sustainable (rather than purely environmentally responsible) progress,
- Improved branding and promotion of credible and effective programmes to consumers to increase uptake, potentially through a centralised umbrella accreditation body that oversees the creation of universal standards and increases comparability amongst schemes,
- Improved communication of the elements of sustainable tourism and its merits to businesses across the full spectrum of the travel and tourism sector to increase uptake,
- Improved participation by all sectors of the tourism industry, including transport operators and SMEs,
- Recognition of and active work with all stakeholders involved in tourism,
- Improved integration of the economic and social aspects of sustainable tourism, and
- Improved transparency through reporting at company and cumulative (sector) levels.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- AA 1000** The international foundation standard produced to help organisations improve the quality of social and ethical accounting, auditing and reporting. More information is available from the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability, <http://www.accountability.org.uk>
- Benchmarking** Benchmarking is the process of comparing performance and processes within an industry to assess relative position against those who are ‘best in class’. Successful benchmarking is more than an exchange of statistics. It is the exchange of information which enables managers to make continual performance improvements a reality and to enhance individual contributions to overall success of a company’s policies (Ref? HOK, 2000).
- Certification programmes** Tourism certification programmes cover the wide range of initiatives that provide a logo to those companies that exceed (or claim to exceed) a baseline standard. This logo primarily allows these businesses or destinations to demonstrate their environmental credentials to consumers. Certification programmes include ecolabelling programmes, programmes for which membership criteria are set and a membership fee is paid in return for use of a logo, self assessed accreditation programmes, and third party audited and externally verified initiatives.
- Corporate reporting** Publication of verifiable information about the company’s environmental, social, ethical or sustainable performance. Publication can either be in annual reports or stand alone reports.
- Eco-efficiency** Eco-efficiency is reached by the delivery of competitively priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality to human life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life-cycle, to a level at least in line with the earth’s carrying capacity. (Getting eco-efficient: Report of the Business Council for Sustainable Development – First Antwerp Eco-efficiency workshop, Nick Robbins, Business Council for Sustainable Development (1993).
- Ecolabelling** Ecolabel is a term used to describe an officially sanctioned scheme in which a product may be awarded an ecological label on the basis of its ‘acceptable’ level of environmental impact. The acceptable level of environmental impact may be determined by consideration of a single environmental hurdle, which is deemed to be particularly important, or after undertaking an assessment of its overall impacts. (*Environmental Glossary*, David Dooley and Neil Kirkpatrick, Pira International, Leatherhead, UK (1993). International guidelines for the development and operation of ecolabels have recently been agreed by the ISO and form the ISO 14023 standard.
- Ecotourism** Strictly defined, ecotourism embraces responsible travel to natural areas that is determined by local people, sustains their well-being, and conserves the environment. This is a difficult definition for real-life business situations. As a result, the term is widely used to embrace a range of tourism experiences, which may or may not adhere to the sustainability criteria underpinning true ecotourism, including safaris, travel to remote or isolated areas, adventure travel (including walking, white water rafting, kayaking and mountain biking), travel specifically to view nature, travel to view cultural heritage; and travel to national parks.

<b>Environmental auditing</b>	A management tool comprising a systematic, documented, periodic and objective evaluation of how well environmental organisation, management and equipment are performing with the aim of helping to safeguard the environment by: facilitating management control of environmental practices and assessing compliance with company policies which would include meeting regulatory compliance (ICC position paper on Environmental Auditing,1989). Environmental auditing procedures are now enshrined in the ISO 14000 series of standards.
<b>Environmental impact assessment</b>	The process of predicting and evaluating the impacts of specific developments or actions on the environment. Associated with the development planning process and found in some form in most countries, the conclusions of the EIA process are used as a tool in decision making. The purpose of an EIA is to prevent degradation by giving decision makers better information about the likely consequences the action could have on the environment. It cannot in itself achieve that protection. The EIA process involves reviewing the existing state of the environment and the characteristics of the proposed development; predicting the state of the future environment with and without the development; considering methods for reducing or eliminating any negative impacts; producing the environmental impact statement for public consultation which discusses these points; and making a decision about whether the development should proceed in the proposed site along with a list of relevant mitigation measures (Glasson, J, R Therival and A Chadwick, 1994).
<b>Environmental management system</b>	The part of the overall management system that includes the organisational structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for determining and implementing the environmental policy (Council Regulation 1836/93/EEC of 29 June 1993). Environmental management systems include tools such as environmental impact assessment, environmental auditing and strategic environmental assessment.
<b>GRI</b>	The Global Reporting Initiative was established in 1997 under the auspices of the US-based Coalition of Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) to design globally applicable guidelines for corporate sustainability reporting. The guidelines have been sent out for consultation and field testing. More information can be found at <a href="http://www.globalreporting.org">http://www.globalreporting.org</a> .
<b>ISO 14001</b>	The international standard for environmental management systems.
<b>Life-cycle assessment</b>	An objective process to evaluate the environmental burdens associated with a product, process or activity, by identifying and quantifying energy and materials used and wastes released to the environment and evaluating opportunities for reducing the impacts of these processes (UNEP, 1996).
<b>Mass tourism</b>	A term commonly, but loosely applied to a popular form of leisure tourism pioneered, for example, in Southern European, Caribbean and North American destinations in the 1960s and 1970s. It involves the movement of a large number of people on nominally standardised packaged tour holidays to resorts that are mainly purpose made or adapted for the purpose. Such tourism is often associated with high volume and low prices (Middleton, V and R Hawkins, 1998).

<b>Natural Step, The</b>	The Natural Step (TNS) is a non-profit environmental education organisation working to build an ecologically and economically sustainable society. TNS offers a framework that is based on science and serves as a compass for businesses, communities, academia, government entities and individuals working to redesign their activities to become more sustainable. More information can be found at <a href="http://www.naturalstep.org">http://www.naturalstep.org</a>
<b>SA 8000</b>	The standard for social auditing management systems developed by The Council on Economic Affairs.
<b>Sigma</b>	Sustainability Integrated Guidelines for Management aims to create the next generation of business management systems and tools, and thereby facilitate a more sustainable way of doing business. Further information can be found at <a href="http://www.bsi.org.uk/sigma">http://www.bsi.org.uk/sigma</a>
<b>Small and medium enterprises</b>	Small and medium businesses. Generally small and medium companies employ less than 250 but more than ten individuals. Companies employing less than ten individuals are often embraced under the term, but are also sometimes referred to as micro-enterprises.
<b>Social auditing</b>	A management tool comprising a systematic, documented, periodic and objective evaluation of how well social organisation, management and equipment are performing with the aim of helping to safeguard the culture and community by: facilitating management control of practices and assessing compliance with company policies which would include meeting regulatory compliance.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	Any person, entity or interest group that has some association with the company either as a shareholder, with a contractual relationship, neighbours, local authorities, government and other representative bodies (Accountability 2000).
<b>Strategic environmental assessment</b>	The formalised, systematic and comprehensive process of evaluating the environmental impacts of a policy, plan or programme and its alternatives, including the preparation of a written report of the findings of that evaluation and using the findings in publicly accountable decision making.
<b>Voluntary agreements</b>	Voluntary agreements are usually focussed on achieving environmental benefits beyond what the law requires (Ref? GEMI, 1994).

# ACRONYMS

<b>CAST</b>	Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
<b>CRC</b>	Co-operative Research Centre, Australia
<b>CST</b>	Certification for Sustainable Tourism – the official sustainable tourism certification programme operated in Costa Rica
<b>EMS</b>	Environmental management system
<b>GG21</b>	Green Globe 21
<b>HCIMA</b>	Hotel & Catering International Management Association
<b>IATA</b>	International Air Traffic Association
<b>IH&amp;RA</b>	International Hotel & Restaurant Association
<b>IHEI</b>	International Hotels Environment Initiative
<b>ISO</b>	International Organisation for Standardisation.
<b>ISO 9000</b>	The International series of standards for quality management systems.
<b>ISO 14001</b>	The International Standard for environmental management systems. ISO 14001 is one of a series of environmental management standards (the 14000 series) which specify guidelines for the development of ecolabels, guidelines for auditing and so on.
<b>LCA</b>	Life Cycle Assessment
<b>MEUR</b>	Million Euros
<b>NEAP</b>	Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme – the nature and ecotourism accreditation programme operated in Australia
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organisations
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>SIGMA</b>	Sustainable Industry Guidelines for Management – the new sustainable development management system currently under development by Forum for the Future, Department for Trade and Industry, Accountability and British Standards Institute. Some consider this to be the first in a new generation of standards that integrate social, environmental and ethical issues.
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and medium enterprises
<b>TUI</b>	Touristik Union International – one of the largest tour operators in Europe, based in Germany
<b>UNCED</b>	The United Nations Commission on Environment and Development
<b>UNEP</b>	The United Nations Environment Programme
<b>WTTC</b>	World Travel & Tourism Council
<b>WWF</b>	Formerly the World Wildlife Fund, now known as WWF

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the tourism sector and all other interested parties with an objective, independent analysis of the current state of tourism certification. More specifically, it aims to:

- explain what tourism certification is, how it works, and its role in bringing about sustainable tourism,
- evaluate a selection of existing tourism certification programmes, and
- offer constructive criticism on how these could be improved.

Many claim that travel and tourism is now the world's largest industry. If even modest predictions of growth are achieved over the next decade, the industry is set to double in size. Growth rates on this scale mean that more and more of the global population will experience opportunities to travel and more of our pristine environments will be exposed to tourism impacts. Some of these impacts can be positive, providing an incentive and means for conservation as well as providing a basis for cross-cultural understanding. Some impacts can be negative. It is only necessary to look at the north Mediterranean coastline and to other honey-pot sites at home and overseas to identify the impacts that can be associated with over-zealous tourism development.

Over the last decade, the international travel and tourism industry has been one of the prime proponents of the value of voluntary initiatives in reducing the negative and enhancing the positive impacts associated with its own activities. Leading companies have argued that it is in their own interests to protect the environment and cultures on which they depend. Trade associations have also argued that it is difficult, if not impossible, to regulate the industry effectively when it is concerned predominantly with the movement of people rather than the production of goods (WTTC, IH&RA, IHEI). With the exception of a few transport providers, large-scale hotels and visitor attractions, impacts from the industry are diverse and emanate from a very large number of small businesses or from individual visitors. It is argued, therefore, that programmes that modify the practices of individuals have more potential to influence change than specific regulations targeting the activities of large businesses.

In response, a wide range of voluntary initiatives has emerged from the sector. Codes of conduct in the 1980s and early 1990s, have been taken forward by self-help guides and manuals, and latterly by certification and benchmarking programmes. In general, these initiatives are a positive development. Certification programmes in particular have the potential to encourage the industry to improve and report on their performance to consumers. A large number of certification programmes have been developed and promoted to consumers in recent years, perhaps more than a hundred world-wide, each offering some form of logo to illustrate enhanced environmental or sustainability performance. Some of these programmes are legitimate and credible, providing those tourism businesses that have genuinely adopted environmental improvement or sustainable development programmes with an opportunity to prove their credentials to consumers, suppliers, shareholders, governments and other businesses. Other certification programmes are little more than paid membership programmes, providing positive public relations to participating companies.

Although this growing interest in sustainable tourism and the parallel evolution of a range of tourism certification programmes is a positive development, the number of different programmes

has caused confusion amongst consumers, businesses and destination managers alike. Such confusion, combined with scepticism about the use of different logos by a range of companies in or servicing the same location, could seriously undermine the significant potential that certification has to bring about sustainable tourism.

Tourism certification programmes have, for the most part, been developed by the industry itself. These include monitoring or review procedures which range widely from self-evaluation to fully accredited third party audits. The proliferation of logos (Fig. 1), labels and terms advertising environmental or sustainability credentials that has emerged over the last few years has made it difficult, if not impossible, for the consumer to distinguish the genuine product. Responsible businesses that have responded to the environmental or social agenda, have been left scrambling to prove their legitimacy (Epler Wood and Halpenny, 1999, p 1). The lack of any framework, against which tourism certification programmes and logos are measured, leaves considerable room for market confusion.

*'We are concerned about the proliferation of tourism certification processes – especially those based on paid membership in the certifying organisations and self-evaluations. We worry that if the public sees that different certifying organisations recognise different lodgings, the general perception will be that all evaluation methods are subjective and any lodging can buy its way into a certification'. (Epler-Wood and Halpenny, 1999)*

There is a clear need, therefore, for an analysis of the range of existing certification programmes as a first step to improving both credibility and comparability. This report builds on the work undertaken by UNEP (1998) and others by identifying the key characteristics of major tourism certification programmes, by evaluating their potential to deliver more sustainable tourism, and by suggesting ways in which they could be more effective in promoting the adoption of sustainable practice by businesses, destination managers and tourists.

**Fig 1 – Some of the logos that stakeholders may see that claim to describe the environmental or sustainable credentials of different tourism businesses.**



## 1.2 SCOPE

It is not possible to offer a detailed examination of all of the programmes that claim to offer tourism certification in a report of this nature. Nor is it possible to assess the credentials of all the programmes available world-wide to identify which is best – many have different strengths and weaknesses and some local programmes are only available in their native language. Analysis therefore focuses on those tourism certification programmes that:

- are nationally or internationally relevant,
- are relatively widely known within the industry and (where information is available) also to consumers,
- have set criteria for membership,
- use some form of verification to ensure members are meeting specified criteria,
- appear as examples of good practice in one or more pieces of tourism literature, and
- appear to comply with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development recommendations for tourism certification programmes which recommend that schemes,
  - require companies to comply with national and regional regulations as an absolute minimum,
  - have the potential to surpass regulatory requirements in a way which is cost effective,
  - are developed with multi-stakeholder participation,
  - include monitoring, assessment and verification systems to generate confidence and support from all parties, and
  - include reference to the need for education focusing on travellers, investors, workers and host communities.

Detailed attention is given to the Green Globe 21 company programme. This is the best-known programme internationally and it is the only initiative that claims to cover the full scope of tourism activities globally (from destination management to each of the individual sectors that comprise the international travel and tourism industry). Annex 3 provides further information about Green Globe 21 and the other certification schemes considered in this report. The Green Globe 21 destination initiative is less well developed and has fundamentally different requirements to the company programme. It does not match the requirements for certification programmes specified above but is covered in the further analysis section on Green Globe 21.

Other programmes of particular interest within the context of this report are numerous and include:

- Green Tourism Business Scheme (Scotland)
- Green Key (Denmark)
- Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme – NEAP (Australia)
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism – CST (Costa Rica)
- Ecolabel for hotels (Nordic countries)
- ECOTEL initiative (HVS International)

### 1.3 BACKGROUND

In the UK alone three in ten of the public have chosen, or boycotted, a product or company for ethical reasons in the last twelve months. That equates to around 12 million consumers actively changing their purchasing habits because of their concerns (MORI, 1999). 32% of the British public consider themselves to be concerned about global warming and 37% about traffic growth (ONS, 1999). Many translate their concerns into direct action and this demand from consumers for 'responsible' business behaviour is starting to drive growth in corporate social and environmental responsibility (MORI, 1999).

In the USA, considerable numbers of company chief executives consider that keeping pace with environmental regulations (40%) and promoting ethical behaviour (21%) will be among the most challenging issues to face them by 2005 (Deloitte Touche, 1999). Many of the world's largest companies (including Unilever, Swiss Bank Corporation, The Co-operative Bank, Rio Tinto, Shell and BP) claim to be responding by adopting more environmental, ethical, socially responsible or sustainable business practices. Many seek to highlight their credentials to stakeholders through enhanced reporting and carefully targeted advertising and branding. Many have also sought international recognition of their efforts through accreditation with, for example, international 'standards' for environmental management systems (ISO 14001), the newer social and ethical auditing 'standards' (SA 8000/AA 1000), or sustainable development initiatives such as 'The Natural Step'.

The international travel and tourism industry has been relatively slow to respond to claims of changes in consumer preference favouring environmentally and socially responsible or sustainable products and to the explosion in 'green labelling' that occurred in the early part of this decade. There are four main reasons for this (also see Box 1):

- sustainable tourism is poorly defined in practical terms,
- sustainability issues are not perceived to be a key factor in tourist decision making processes,
- the industry is fragmented (mainly comprised of small and medium sized businesses which individually have limited environmental impacts and limited resources with which to address them), and
- a belief that generic 'green labelling' and certification programmes do not address the specific needs of the industry.

**Box 1 - Reasons the travel and tourism industry was slow to respond to the sustainable development agenda.**

1. *Sustainable tourism is poorly defined in practical terms*

There are many definitions of sustainable tourism. One of the most commonly quoted is drawn from the Brundtland report and states: '*sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present visitors, tourism businesses and host destinations while protecting and where possible enhancing opportunities for the future.*' Many businesses find it hard to understand the relevance of such a definition to their business, or, if they do see relevance, to interpret this into management strategies. Many certification programmes now claim to help businesses to operationalise this definition.

2. *Sustainability issues are not a key factor in tourist decision making*

Surveys over recent years investigating the importance of social/environmental issues to the holiday decisions of tourists have been unable to illustrate conclusively that environmental, social or sustainability considerations are a key concern. The main criteria for holiday choice among UK tourists remain weather, cost and good facilities (TearFund, 2000). Some research claims that tourists would be prepared to pay more for environmentally responsible choices. However, these claims are not strongly supported by evidence of tourists actual buying patterns and behaviour (see Annex 1).

In some countries (e.g., Scandinavia and Germany) and some market segments (e.g., eco or nature tourism) environmental concerns are of slightly higher priority for consumers. It is important to note, however, that even so-called ecotourists are often not motivated to travel because of an interest in being 'responsible', 'environmentally concerned', or to 'generate benefits for local people' (Epler Wood and Halpenny, 1999). It is therefore clear that sustainable tourism credentials alone do not offer significant marketing benefits over other tourism products of similar price and quality. They are, however, being increasingly seen by some consumers and tour operators as an essential part of a quality product.

3. *The industry is fragmented, mainly comprised of small businesses who do not consider environmental issues a priority*

Travel and tourism is not a single industry in the traditional sense of the word. It is instead, a complex amalgam of products, services and environmental and cultural attributes in diverse locations. The industry does not produce large-scale pollution at a single point like other industries. Many of the expressions of unsustainable tourism development manifest themselves in destinations rather than within individual businesses or at point sources. While destination success may suffer adversely from environmental or cultural degradation, tourism businesses rarely see this as a direct result of their own practices. Fragmentation within the industry, the relative lack of a coherent industry body that represents its interests, and the globally dispersed nature of its impacts have resulted in a slow industry response.

4. *A belief that generic certification programmes do not address the specific needs of the tourism industry*

During early UK trials of BS 7750 (later ISO 14001) implemented by the Hotel & Catering International Management Association, the hospitality sector claimed that the management system approach adopted by many certification programmes was not relevant to their specific business requirements. These businesses claimed that voluntary initiatives focussing on the specific reduction of energy and water consumption or waste generation would be more relevant to their needs.

A range of developments over the last decade, however, illustrate that the tourism industry is increasingly aware of and willing to respond to its own impacts and to communicate the details of its environmental programmes to consumers and other stakeholders. Driven by the development of codes of conduct in the 1980s, advanced by the publication of manuals and self-help guides in the early 1990s, this awareness has recently been enhanced by (also see Box 2):

- increase in regulatory pressure and awareness of cost savings from prudent resource consumption,
- awareness that growth in tourism could threaten some of the world's remaining pristine environments and that the future viability of many short-haul mainstream tourism destinations is already under threat, and
- growth in the number of tourism professionals that consider environmental quality essential to the delivery of their product or service.

A wide range of certification programmes, which claim to help the market differentiate between those tourism products that are sustainable and those that are not have now been developed to help responsible tourism businesses implement sustainable programmes and display their credentials to consumers. However, not all programmes are as effective or as credible as they could or need to be.

## Box 2 – Factors pushing the tourism industry towards sustainable development.

### 1. *An increase in regulatory pressure and awareness of cost savings from prudent resource consumption*

An increasing number of tourism businesses have been affected by the changing nature of environmental regulations, particularly the shift to the principle of 'pollution prevention' rather than 'polluter pays'. Where regulations previously primarily tackled large-scale polluters once pollution had occurred, the new generation of financial and regulatory tools such as the European landfill tax on waste disposal, increase the costs of poor environmental practices for all businesses regardless of type and size. The Climate Change Levy in the UK, for example, could increase energy costs for hospitality establishments by up to 15%. Many businesses have also become increasingly aware that environmental management programmes can cut utility costs by up to 25% (IHEI, 1996).

Some governments have also established stringent regulations against specific types of tourism development. Planning laws and regulations typically deal with building height, building style, building location and the installation of basic infrastructure, such as waste water treatment plant, transport routes or waste treatment facilities. These regulations have mainly focussed on the larger hotels, attractions or transport facilities and target the environmental impacts of the industry. They have been applied with varying degrees of success and are increasingly being applied to prevent blatantly unsustainable forms of development.

### 2. *An awareness by governments and businesses that growth in tourism could threaten some of the world's pristine environments and prime destinations.*

Some specific niche markets have a unique dependence on the environment. Ecotourism is one such market. Strictly defined, ecotourism embraces responsible travel to natural areas that is determined by local people, sustains their well-being, and conserves the environment. In terms of practical implementation, this is a difficult definition for real-life business situations. In reality, the term is widely used to embrace the range of tourism experiences, including: safaris, travel to remote or isolated areas; adventure travel (including walking, white water rafting, kayaking and mountain biking); travel specifically to view nature; travel to view cultural heritage; and travel to national parks. The growth in some types of nature-based tourism now threatens many of the world's pristine environments. Research by the World Resources Institute in 1990 found that while tourism was growing at an annual rate of 4%, nature travel (a larger subset of the travel market than ecotourism) was increasing by between 10-30% (albeit from a small base). Growth on this scale and the direct dependence of this market on the environment make it a priority focal point for sustainable tourism programmes. Even mainstream destinations are under threat from over-zealous tourism development. As early as 1995 Martin Brackenbury (then Director of Human Resources at Thomson Tour Operators) stated that many of their prime destinations in the Mediterranean were at or over capacity and future tourism growth could be threatened if appropriate management processes were not established (WTTERC, 1995).

### 3. *Tourism professionals now consider environmental quality essential to the delivery of their product*

Over the last few years, many tourism professionals have come to consider environmental quality essential to their product or service (despite the fact that these issues are not important to tourists in isolation). According to a survey undertaken by auditing company SGS, some 75% of tourism professionals consider that the lack of an environmental standard can have a negative impact on corporate image (SGS, 1998). A decade's research by German tour operator TUI illustrated that 'changing values and customer expectations show that traditional ideas of what constitutes product quality are outdated. Environmental quality is very high on the list of holiday essentials' (Middleton and Hawkins, 1998).



## 2 CERTIFICATION: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

### 2.1 ONLY PART OF THE SOLUTION

Certification is just one in a wide range of tools that seek to encourage sustainable business performance. Other tools continue to be developed and each has relative strengths and weaknesses (Annex 2). Most initiatives, from voluntary codes of conduct through to fully audited certification programmes, life cycle assessments and benchmarking processes, are complementary (Fig. 2).

### 2.2 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH A LOGO

Tourism certification programmes generally provide a logo to those companies that exceed (or claim to exceed) a baseline standard. A recognisable logo primarily allows businesses or destinations to demonstrate their environmental credentials directly to consumers and offers potential competitive advantage to those businesses that display it.

*'Effectively implemented, ecolabel [sic] schemes can change the way both producers and consumers behave. For example, companies that sell tourism products find that the economic benefits of earning ecolabels grow as people become more environmentally conscious. Ecolabels also help to sell tourism products. And by using suppliers already in the possession of ecolabels, consumers can make sustainable choices when they go on holiday or travel abroad' (UNEP, 1998, p6).*

### 2.3 CONFUSION AND SLOW UPTAKE

Despite this potential competitive advantage and the compelling reasons that are often quoted to encourage tourism businesses and destinations to adopt sustainable tourism programmes, less than 1% of tourism businesses have joined certification initiatives to date (though there is significantly greater participation in some regions than others). Lack of participation by the industry relates to:

- scepticism about the potential of individual tourism businesses to bring about more sustainable tourism destinations in the long term,
- confusion about the relative merits, costs and savings of different systems and the requirements of the many standards, logos and programmes that currently exist, and
- uncertainty about the importance of environmental or sustainable credentials to visitor purchasing choice.

Indeed, it is possible that environmental labels stopped having a positive influence on consumer choice some time ago. Confusion in the market place, caused by a proliferation of general environmental logos, has resulted in a loss of consumer confidence:

*'Most of the logos or symbols [in use] were either the manufacturers' marketing claims or packaging symbols. There are comparatively few bodies who provide approval marks or product endorsements ... The most important point about all these different logos and symbols is that, unless the consumer is familiar with them, the different types are indistinguishable. An approval mark or endorsement logo can look exactly like a marketing claim or packaging symbol' (National Consumer Council, 1996, p 2)*

There is therefore a real threat that the expansion of certification initiatives for tourism products could confuse both businesses and consumers and result in claims for sustainable tourism being discredited, as has happened for other products.

## 2.4 DIFFERENT SHADES OF GREEN

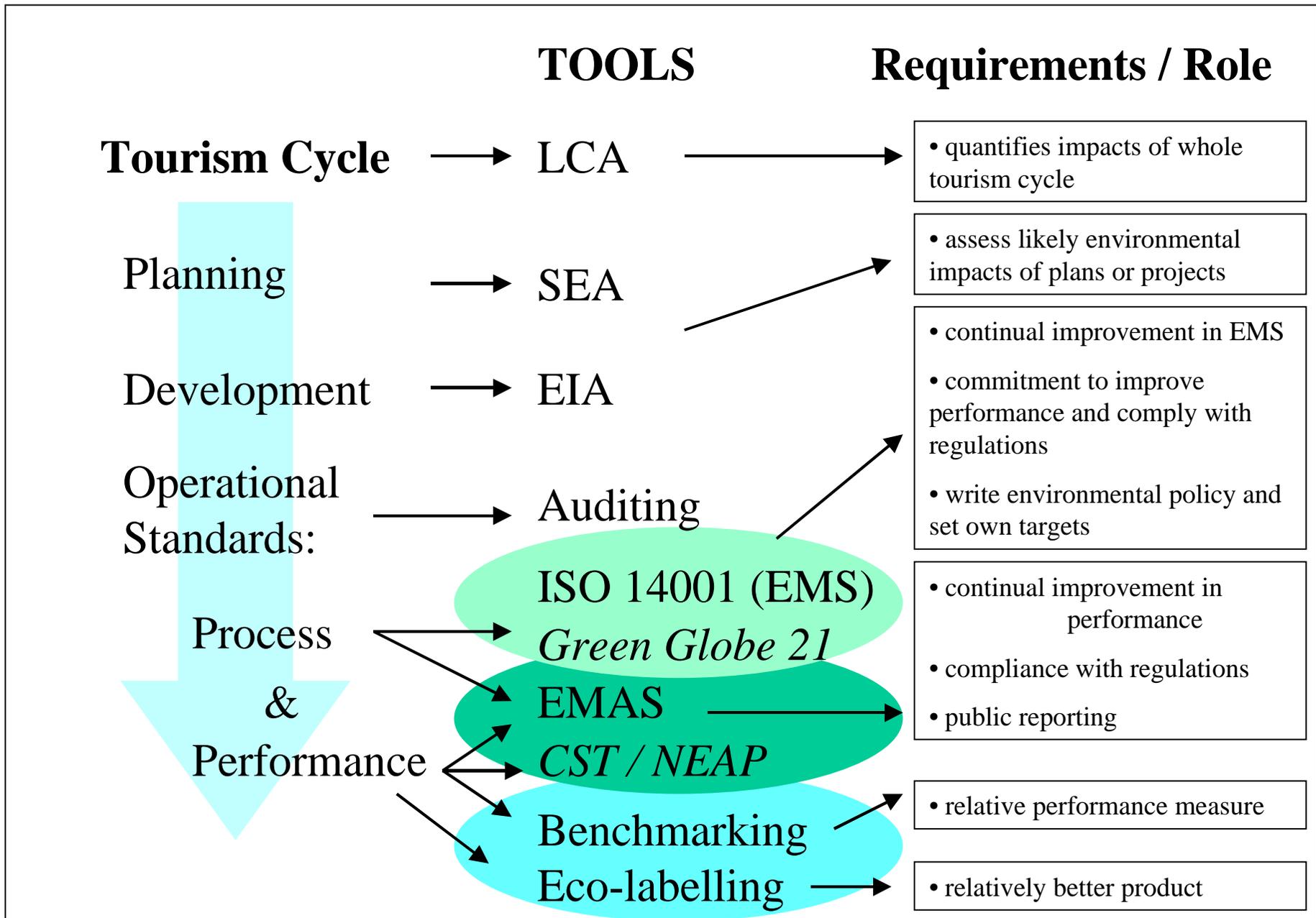
Ultimately, whether certification results in sustainable tourism or not depends upon what is being certified, or the 'unit of certification'. The most crucial distinction here is between (management system) *process* and (environmental) *performance*. In the case of ISO 14001 (the ISO standard for a company EMS) and Green Globe 21 (based upon ISO 14001), for example, it is a series of steps to be taken, a process, which is being certified. In and of itself, a process is insufficient to generate sustainable tourism (Fig 3).

A company that establishes an environmental management system following the steps set out by ISO 14001 may achieve certification against the international EMS standard. However, in undertaking ISO 14001, organisations set their own targets for improvement (based on an initial review). A key problem here is that ISO 14001 is therefore not a 'standard' at all as it does not set environmental *performance* objectives. It is only concerned with whether a company's EMS conforms to its own stated environmental policy. EMS standards are therefore management system standards, not performance standards.<sup>1</sup> Implementing, monitoring and continually improving its management system, as required by ISO 14001, does not mean that a company is sustainable. The setting of environmental performance targets (by the company within the EMS process) may indicate and facilitate year on year improvement, but unless these targets relate accurately to the capacity of the surrounding environment to absorb and assimilate its impacts in perpetuity, they will not indicate sustainability *per se*. Nor is a certified company's performance necessarily better than that of another company that is not certified but which may already be exceeding the certified company's targets.

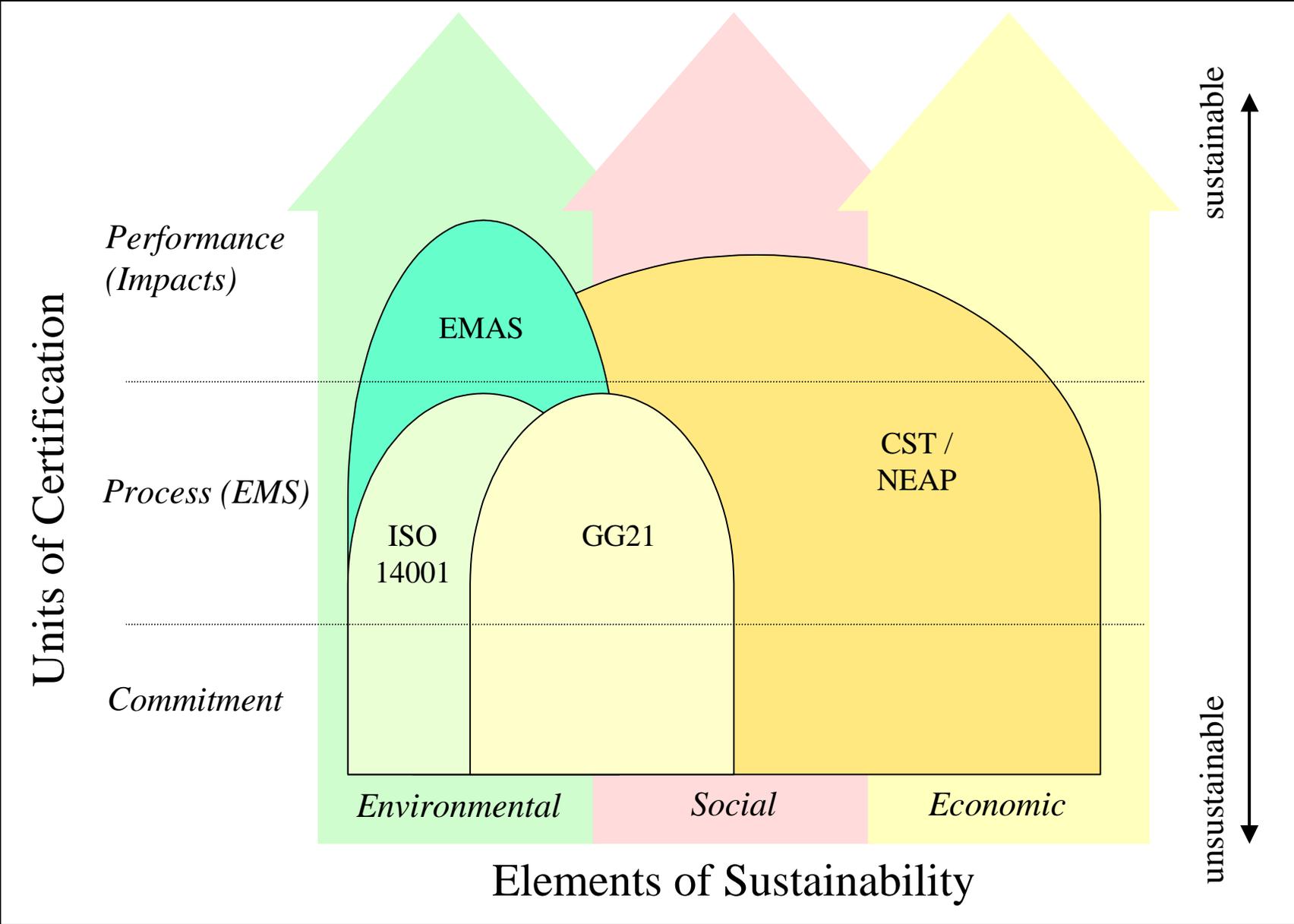
While ISO 14001 does not pertain to encompass sustainability, some tourism certification programmes do. Only where universal *performance* levels and targets that tackle sustainability (environmental, social and economic) are specified within and by a standard, and where criteria making their attainment a prerequisite are present, can something akin to sustainability be promised by certification. Performance is clearly much harder to encompass within a certification programme than process, particularly one that aspires to have international applicability across a range of situations. Targets that imply sustainability may be difficult to define – no one has yet come up with a satisfactory methodology for defining tourism carrying capacity – and they may alienate businesses that seek gradual improvement. It is essential, however, for the credibility and effectiveness of tourism certification schemes, that both consumers and the travel and tourism industry understand and recognise this process-performance distinction. Without the comparability that setting performance levels allows, tourism certification schemes remain open to the accusation of greenwash. Crucially, consumers and businesses alike must ask what is being certified before assuming a logo implies sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> When ISO 14001 was launched in 1996, the Financial Times (15 October 1996, p12) described it as a 'checklist which enables companies to anticipate and act on environmental issues before they become problems'.



**Fig. 2 - Some Tools Which Address The Environmental Impacts Of Tourism**



**Fig. 3** Sustainability Coverage of Different Certification Programmes

# 3 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISM CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

This section outlines how different certification programmes operate by examining the way in which they approach the key elements that should underpin credible schemes.

As discussed in the previous section, tourism certification programmes fall into two broad categories with subtle but significant differences.

## **Process Initiatives**

Initiatives, such as Green Globe 21, that seek to 'provide an action programme for sustainable tourism' and encourage gradual improvement in individual company performance while making no reference to a baseline performance standard. These initiatives offer all tourism businesses that make a commitment to reduce their level of environmental impact the opportunity to gain certification based upon the implementation of a process or system that addresses this impact. They make only limited reference to a company's current level of awareness or impact. It is argued that this approach is applicable to all industry players because it encourages performance improvement over time rather than simply awarding the best companies.

## **Performance Initiatives**

Initiatives that seek to identify products, services or operators that are sustainable. The Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia), for example, accredits nature and ecotourism products (i.e., individual tours, attractions and accommodation) rather than whole businesses. This approach recognises only those businesses or products that demonstrate that they exceed a specific level of performance considered to represent best practice. It is argued that this approach helps consumers to choose those products, services or operators that have less impact or are genuinely sustainable. Those tourism businesses or destinations that have a higher level of environmental impact (especially the mass market and transport operators) are relatively unlikely to apply for membership of such programmes because they may find it difficult to meet the stringent criteria. The potential for such initiatives to bring about initial change across the entire industry is more limited.

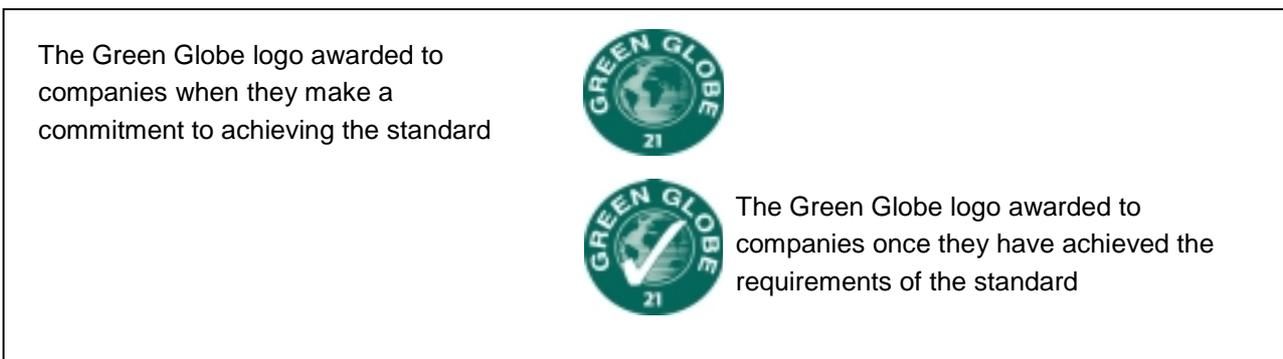
Whether tourism certification programmes seek to change the practices of all businesses (process-led) or identify those that exceed a specific level of performance (performance-led), they have a number of elements in common. Some of these are also common to a growing set of environmental management, sustainable management, reporting and social and ethical auditing tools such as ISO 14001, SIGMA, GRI, SA 8000 and AA 1000 (Fig. 2). They include:

- award of a logo, recognisable to consumers, differentiating the sustainability or environmental credentials of the product or service from those of other providers,
- compliance with local regulations as a minimum requirement of membership,
- a published commitment to the environment and/or sustainable development as a minimum requirement of membership,
- an environmental management system or set criteria which must be met or exceeded by members, which may indicate continuous improvement in process and/or performance,
- a scoring, reporting, auditing or verification system as a guarantee that standards are met,
- a facility to provide technical help and support to assist organisations to make progress, and
- a fee structure to underpin the operation of the system.

### 3.1 CERTIFICATION LOGO – COMMITMENT OR ACHIEVEMENT

By their very nature, all certification programmes provide members with a logo that can be used to differentiate their product in the marketplace. Some programmes, for example Green Globe 21, enable those businesses or destinations that become members of the initiative to display a logo from the day that their membership commences or from the publication date of an environmental policy statement which includes a commitment to implement the standard. Companies then have a specified time period (twelve months in the case of Green Globe 21) in which to implement the actions necessary to comply with the conditions of ‘full’ membership (including undergoing third party verification). A second and subtly different logo is awarded once the conditions of membership have been met (Fig. 4).

**Fig. 4 – Green Globe 21 branding used to differentiate those companies that are in the process of developing an EMS and those that have been through third party verification.**



Other programmes offer different levels of award for differing achievements. ECOTEL is one of the most complex programmes offering five different stages of award (globes), each with slightly different criteria. Each globe represents progress against a three-tiered scoring system in five different areas (environmental commitment, solid waste management, energy efficiency, water conservation, employee environmental education and community involvement). The Green Tourism Business Scheme (Fig. 5), David Bellamy Conservation Award and other programmes offer a simpler process whereby differing levels of award are provided according to the ‘depth’ of environmental initiatives that have been undertaken.

**Fig. 5 – Requirements of the Green Tourism Business Scheme for accommodation providers**



Most programmes, even those providing a range of award levels, require companies to have made at least some environmental improvement (in many cases, this is externally verified or audited) prior to being awarded any form of logo for public display. This means that all of the companies

that display the logo should have already achieved a specified standard of performance which is considered to highlight them as relatively more environmentally responsible or sustainable than their peers or implemented a system to address impacts. Requirements currently vary enormously across different schemes. In some cases, especially for the ecotourism programmes, the criteria that need to be met are stringent and prohibit access by many of the mainstream tourism businesses.

Both process and performance approaches have merit. The former encourages companies to develop their response to sustainable tourism within an enabling framework whilst benefiting from the enhanced public relations image associated with a logo demonstrating their commitment. Within this approach, offering different logos to illustrate different levels of performance encourages companies to continue once they have tackled simple (and usually cost saving) tasks at the first level. Unless logos are carefully promoted, however, there is a danger in such an approach. Consumers may think they are choosing the most sustainable products rather than simply selecting a company that is committed to implementing an environmental or sustainability programme. The performance approach actively prohibits those businesses that cannot meet specific performance criteria from membership benefits while promoting only those products that are operating at best practice levels. This offers consumers a genuinely more sustainable choice but potentially prevents the vast majority of tourism businesses from attaining membership.

### **3.2 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE OR BEYOND LEGISLATION**

Each of the certification systems, including many international management standards, require members to comply with pertinent international, regional or national regulations as a minimum condition. Some initiatives, for example, ECOTEL and the Green Tourism Business Scheme provide their top level of award to those companies that display leadership that significantly surpasses regulatory requirements. Some programmes, such as Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica), encourage businesses to work with regional authorities in areas where regulations are poorly developed or inadequately enforced to improve them. This is an area in which tourism certification can play a significant role, but which is not well explored by some of the international programmes. It is unclear within some programmes (especially those that facilitate membership from corporate businesses rather than individual units) whether compliance should be at a corporate level (throughout the entire range of business activities) or at the level of each site-specific individual unit. It is also unclear how non-compliance will be treated within a specific unit, for example, in a developing country.

For example, within its tour operator initiative, Green Globe 21 offers membership to large international tour operators. A condition of membership is that local, regional and national regulations should be obeyed. It is unclear, however, whether an international tour operator should ensure that this is the case in all destinations - a considerable task in its own right. It is also unclear whether national regulations should be applied in the place of regional ones when the latter are more stringent.

Public confidence in credible certification programmes must be built on regulatory compliance. Non-complying companies must be penalised by the withdrawal of any logo illustrating good environmental or sustainability credentials. Almost all certification programmes make provision for this. Tourism certification programme can also play a constructive role in many of the countries in which tourism is developing most rapidly (e.g., many of the African, Indian and Latin American destinations that are experiencing tourism growth rates in excess of 10% per annum). This is especially the case when membership is among the larger companies and in those countries in which there is an inadequate baseline for developing or implementing regulations. In these areas,

certification programmes could have considerable benefit if they specified that members should surpass regulatory requirements to protect the environment and the culture of a destination.

### **3.3 PUBLISHED COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

All credible certification programmes require companies to make a published commitment to environmental improvement, but many do not explicitly extend this commitment to sustainable development. The Green Tourism Business Scheme, for example, specifies environmental commitment as a compulsory measure. This commitment embraces 'ensuring that participants operate within environmental regulations and cause minimal risk to the environment'. The ECOTEL standard requires hotels to 'express through a verbal statement or other formalised policy, dedication to environmental responsibility and leadership'. Green Globe 21 has the publication of an environmental policy statement as one of its core criteria. It is implicit that this policy should embrace cultural and social criteria, but not explicit that it should extend to include the full breadth of sustainable development. A strength of the Green Globe 21 programme is the need to ensure the policy statement is fully integrated with other company policies, thus ensuring that the environmental programme becomes a core part of the company's ethos rather than an add-on initiative.

Certification programmes often implicitly require members to embrace many of the components of sustainable development, while explicitly referring to the term environmental development and environmental policy statement. Progress towards sustainable tourism requires certification programmes to embrace more explicitly the concept of sustainable development (especially some of the equity aspects of this term) and promote it to their members.

### **3.4 GENERIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PROCESS) OR SPECIFIC CRITERIA (PERFORMANCE)**

Broadly speaking, environmental or sustainability management systems underpin all of the mainstream tourism certification systems. These have common, well-defined and tested elements that have evolved over the last decade as international companies in all sectors have sought to implement targeted programmes to tackle environmental impacts. The management system approach has been adopted by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and lies at the core of ISO 14001 (for environmental management systems), ISO 9001 (for quality management), and SA 8000 (for social auditing). With the exception of ECOTEL, all of the programmes examined make the criteria for their management system available and easily accessible to the public (generally through a website). Table 1 illustrates the common elements of management systems that are embraced by both generic international management system standards and also tourism certification programmes.

**Table 1 – Common elements of management systems also embraced by certification programmes**

	Compliance with regulations	Assessment & prioritisation of environmental or sustainable aspects	Publication of environmental or sustainability policy or mission statement	Nomination of representative responsible for environmental/sustainable issues	Staff training to implement the policy	Targeted action plan to reduce impacts	Monitor progress	Consult with stakeholders	Report results publicly
<b>ISO 14001</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>SA 8000</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>The Natural Step</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>Green Globe 21 (certification only)</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹
<b>Green Tourism Business Scheme (Gold level)</b>	☺	◆	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>CST (Level 5 - advanced)</b>	☹	◆	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>ECOTEL (Primary criteria)</b>	☺	◆	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹
<b>Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme</b>	☺	◆	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>KEY</b>	☺ = Programme explicitly requires companies to take this action ☹ = Programme requires companies to address this issue to some extent ☹ = Programme does not really require companies to address this issue. ◆ = Programme identifies specific key environmental aspects to be addressed within its format.								

Despite common 'system' elements, there is a vast chasm between the level of detail specified within the management systems for different programmes. Some tourism certification programmes, for example Green Globe 21, model their approach on the ISO 14001 environmental management system standard. They thus specify that a management system must be developed to prioritise and address impacts in nine key performance areas.<sup>2</sup> This provides the Green Globe 21 programme with a degree of flexibility that enables its application in any sector of the travel and tourism industry and to any geographical location. It requires a company or destination to identify its own negative impacts and to address these systematically to deliver continuous improvement Annex 3 provides more information on the Green Globe 21 programme.

The management system approach has a number of benefits:

- *A good fit with the management ethos of larger companies.* Many of the large international travel and tourism companies (that are a primary target for membership of the Green Globe 21 initiative) are accustomed to implementing standardised management systems throughout their operations. Many, for example, have standardised health and safety and quality control manuals and a management system approach integrates an environmental focus into an existing framework without imposing excessive demands.
- *Global reach.* There are many areas of the world where the resources do not exist in the public or private sector to finance the development of tourism certification initiatives that provide geographically specific criteria or where insufficient data is available to provide performance targets. The flexibility of Green Globe 21 means that it can be easily adapted and used in these areas if underpinned by appropriate training.
- *Applicability to all tourism businesses.* The generic nature of the approach means that it can theoretically be applied to any tourism business, thus encouraging the widest possible application.

However, it also has drawbacks:

- The management system approach is less applicable to the small travel and tourism businesses that make up the bulk (circa 97%) of the travel and tourism industry. Management systems are often resource intensive to implement and small travel and tourism businesses are often not accustomed to their use. The considerable volume of paper work required by a management systems approach (and the level of technical knowledge required to implement such systems) often deters smaller players.
- The environmental aspects that companies choose to address may not be those that are of key importance for the future of the tourism industry or to the communities within which tourism is based. For example, community discontent at the development of 'enclave' tourism may be a key factor in determining the success of future tourism development in an area, but a company may elect initially to address its energy, waste and water management practices to gain cost savings. Region specific programmes can target these individual issues within their criteria.
- Those companies that bear the logo may be relatively less sustainable than their peers. The logo simply signifies that they are in the process of implementing a management system to address environmental or sustainability issues. Some commentators on the ISO 14001 process

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<sup>2</sup> These performance areas are: energy efficiency, conservation and management; management of fresh water resources; ecosystem conservation and management; management of social and cultural issues; land use planning and management; air quality protection and noise control; waste water management; waste minimisation, reuse and recycling; storage and use of hazardous substances.

on which Green Globe 21 is based, for example, claim that it is a paper-based system that does little to encourage the reduction in impact and rather more to encourage paper-based monitoring.

Some, tourism certification programmes, especially those with a regional focus, publish specific compulsory criteria with which members must comply as well as reaching a total score for all issues. Typically these programmes include elements of management systems, but also embrace regionally relevant or sector specific performance issues (Box 3).

### **BOX 3 –Specific Requirements For Socio-Economic Improvements Within A Regional Certification Programme**

Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica), for example, specifies under the topic of the socio-economic environment that:

- 16.1 60% of hotel employees are drawn from the local community
- 16.2 The hotel provides training to local people so they can work effectively at the hotel
- 16.3 The administrative employees of the hotel are Costa Rican
- 16.4 The hotel contributes and support the training of human resources for complementary tourism activities
- 16.5 The hotel hires human resources trained in complementary tourism activities
- 16.6 The hotel does not hire anybody illegally. It also does not hire anybody below minimum requirements
- 16.7 The job opportunities offered by the hotel are not creating unfavourable situations in the local community.

Source: CST website (<http://www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr>) 29/03/00

Criteria of this nature can only be provided for specific activities or within tightly defined geographical environments. However, such criteria can ensure that the tourism industry addresses the issues that are of greatest importance within an area, thus genuinely make a contribution towards sustainable development.

A particularly strong approach has been adopted by the Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels. Applied across the Nordic countries, this has combined a generic management system approach with performance benchmarks and specific criteria (Table 2). This approach ensures that those businesses that are awarded the use of the logo have a management system in place, that the management system is delivering results in terms of actual performance and that the hotel is investing in technologies or improvement measures that are specific to its circumstances.

This latter approach encourages businesses to establish comprehensive environmental management systems that deliver systematic and continuous improvements, include performance targets and also encourage businesses to invest in technologies that deliver the greatest economic and environmental benefits within a specific region. They also offer consumers genuine choice of those businesses that are performing at best practice levels. The Nordic approach currently embraces only the environmental aspects of tourism development and would need to embrace social and economic aspects to ensure the delivery of truly sustainable tourism.

**Table 2 – An effective combination of a generic management system with specific improvement targets**

	<b>Limit values (At least two of the limit values for energy, water, chemical treatment and waste must be fulfilled)</b>
<b>Max 300l / guest night permitted if:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restaurant operation turnover exceeds MEUR 2.3 or,</li> <li>▪ Leisure department has a pool of over 45m<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Max 250l / guest night permitted if:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restaurant operation turnover is between MEUR 0.6 and 2.3 or,</li> <li>▪ Leisure department has a pool of less than or equivalent to 45m<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Max 200l / per guest night permitted if:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restaurant operation turnover is less than MEUR 0.6 or</li> <li>▪ There is no leisure department.</li> </ul>
	<b>Environmental Management (Obligatory demands)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water consumption is controlled and measured 12 times per year, and reported twice per year to all personnel. Details should be documented</li> <li>▪ Kitchen, washing-up and domestic personnel, as well as maintenance personnel, are trained once a year. Part of the training contains information on how and why water should be saved. Training should be documented</li> <li>▪ A plan of action for water-saving measures is drawn up specifying tangible goals</li> <li>▪ Documented procedures for operation and maintenance of water consuming equipment and tap-water systems must be in place</li> <li>▪ Clear, easy to understand instructions are drawn up for rectifying (e.g. dripping taps and leaking toilets). Leakage should be rectified within two days.</li> </ul>
	<b>Measures implemented</b>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toilets use no more than 6 litres of water per flush. (90% 2 points; 50% 1 point – measured as a % of total number of toilets)</li> <li>▪ Toilets have 2 flush levels. (90% 2 points; 50% 1 point – measured as a % of total number of toilets)</li> <li>▪ All mixing valves are economy flow, and have a flow of less than 10 litres per minute (2 points) or a flow rate of less than 12 litres per minute (1 point)</li> <li>▪ Mixing valves are of single tap type (90% 2 points, 50% 1 point – measured as a percentage of total mixing valves)</li> <li>▪ All urinals are fitted with motion sensors/time control for flushing or are manually flushed (1 point)</li> <li>▪ Water systems for cooling units are closed, or are air cooled (2 points)</li> <li>▪ A documented system is in place describing methods for daily use of dry cleaning methods (wonder cloths) – 2 points</li> <li>▪ Rainwater is collected and used for, e.g. watering/toilets/laundry/car wash (2 points)</li> <li>▪ Waste paper basket in each guest toilet (incl. Guest rooms) – 1 point</li> </ul>
<b>Restaurant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water meter installed for separate consumption monitoring (2 points)</li> <li>▪ None of the dishwashers use more than 4 litres/basket (2 points), 6 litres/basket (1 point)</li> <li>▪ All rinse hoses close automatically on releasing the handle (2 points)</li> </ul>
<b>Pool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water meter installed for separate consumption monitoring (2 points)</li> </ul>

Source: Nordic Ecolabelling (1999) Ecolabelling of Hotels – Criteria Document Version 1.1.

### 3.5 SCORING, AUDITING OR REPORTING

A key issue for tourism certification programmes in the past has been the way in which compliance with the conditions of the programme is assessed. Some programmes, for example Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica), Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia) and ECOTEL (HVS International), use scoring processes to pre-screen businesses. These are followed-up with spot checks, audits or written references at a later date. Other initiatives, for example Green Globe 21, operate auditing processes implemented by the programme secretariat or by an independent auditing company to assess compliance. Many of the early programmes operated a self-assessment process for providing an award. Over the last decade, the number of certification programmes operating according to self-assessment processes has diminished significantly and most credible initiatives now offer some form of third party verification. For example:

- Operating according to similar principles to ISO 14001, performance of Green Globe 21 businesses achieving the certification standard (the logo with the tick) is verified by external and professional environmental auditing companies. All businesses are visited prior to the award of the full certification logo with the exception of large companies taking out corporate membership. A sample of properties from these corporate businesses will be visited and their performance verified each year.
- The credibility of NEAP is maintained through a number of measures. All operators are required to provide the names of two referees (one of whom must be a protected area manager) along with their application. In addition, across the board paper audits on one set of NEAP criteria are undertaken each year. Operators can also expect a random, on-site audit on the entire set of NEAP criteria at some stage during their three-year period of accreditation. (NEAP, 2000).
- Inspections for the Green Tourism Business Awards take place every two years and are carried out either by a Scottish Tourist Board grading officer or by an environmental auditor. This is an innovative approach which combines quality grading visits with environmental or sustainable development assessments.

Some tourism certification programmes are responsible for both the recruitment of members and the decision as to whether to award a logo. Although most have credible processes in place and a vested interest in guarding the credibility of their logo, the ethics of both taking money from members and deciding which organisations should be awarded a logo (or should have it withdrawn) must be questioned. While adding to the costs of certification, third party auditing can ensure confidence in results. However, NEAP argue that extensive experience gained in developing criteria and assessing product, make their own personnel best placed to carry out auditing.

The issue of reporting results of those companies that achieve certification, and are awarded use of a logo within the public domain, is poorly addressed by all certification programmes. None of the certification programmes state that businesses must publicly report the results of their environmental or sustainable development programmes. Few of the tourism businesses that are members of such programmes have chosen to issue public sustainability or environmental reports (although many have made information informally available over the Internet. Such reporting is a desirable step to ensure full transparency within tourism certification programmes and to allow all stakeholders to assess the credentials of those businesses that claim to operate sustainable or environmental programmes. It would also ensure that those businesses that claim false credentials

are clearly identified. Reporting can also offer positive benefits to companies by distinguishing them from competitors.

### **3.6 TECHNICAL HELP AND SUPPORT**

Over recent years, a wealth of information about sustainable or environmentally responsible operations has been developed and published (Annex 2). Certification programmes can and often do play an important role in disseminating information about sustainable tourism that has been developed by a wide range of organisations. They also often develop their own help and assistance networks, including networks of local consultants that are able to help businesses make progress towards sustainable tourism. This training plays an important role in capacity building, especially in locations where understanding of sustainable development is not well advanced. Cost of support materials and the depth to which they are developed is, however, a key issue for many businesses, and greater co-operation between tourism certification programmes and other trade associations could help to promote sustainable development materials more widely. Initiatives such as the EcoNETT sustainable tourism website <http://195.212.4.4> (which was developed by the World Travel & Tourism Council) help to ensure dissemination of information.

Partnerships are also a powerful mechanism to deliver regionally relevant and timely information to participants as well as to build capacity for sustainable tourism. The Green Globe 21 partnerships with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism and Co-operative Research Centre (Australia), for example, can only help to promote capacity building for sustainable tourism and improve knowledge about the importance of sustainable development within the industry. However, partners recruited and initiatives begun opportunistically could benefit from a more strategic approach.

### **3.7 A FEE STRUCTURE TO UNDERPIN THE OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM.**

With very few exceptions (national programmes where the government is prepared to subsidise the costs) and in common with international standards, certification programmes charge some type of membership fee. This is usually structured according to the company size and, where different grades of certification are available, the level of certification applied for. For most businesses, this membership fee is a significant barrier to entry, especially where it cannot be offset against guaranteed cost savings on an on-going basis. In many instances, the certification costs can be equivalent to quality grading costs. Many businesses consider the latter to be of greater importance because they have higher consumer profile.

The level of this fee varies significantly even within individual schemes and many programmes do not disclose their membership fee structure. Membership fees often need to be supplemented by fees for third party verification and access to other services, such as consultants or training programmes. Fees generally underpin the operations of the secretariat function, help to maintain membership services (including marketing the logo to consumers), and underpin any publications. Generally an additional fee is charged for training materials, inspections and audit visits.

Most tourism certification programmes have some type of structured fee level which charges larger businesses relatively higher fees than the small and medium enterprises (Box 4). Some tourism certification programmes are now very sophisticated in terms of their auditing processes, but this sophistication comes at a cost that is often prohibitive for small and medium sized businesses. Some programmes, such as the Green Business Tourism Scheme (Scotland), try to overcome excessive fees by combining assessment for lower levels of their award with a quality grading scheme. This is one approach that can widen access for all tourism businesses to certification initiatives. Other organisations, for example, Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica)

have the costs of certification subsidised partially or wholly by the public sector as a part of its interest in promoting sustainable tourism.

**Box 4 – Membership fees for selected certification programmes**

Green Globe 21 membership is relatively expensive costing:

**Companies**

Entry into Green Globe 21 costs between US\$350 and US\$15,000 and is open to all Travel & Tourism companies ranging from small businesses to multinational travel chains.

Local - US\$750 - For small companies operating in a local area. (For those companies with less than 50 employees a SME rate of US\$350 applies).

National - US\$2,500 - For companies operating within one country only.

Global US\$5,000 - For International corporations.

**Communities (Destinations)**

The basic cost for the first phase is US\$50,000. Thereafter the Environmental Management Systems costs depend on the specific nature and amount of work identified in the plan. Similar considerations apply to the independent verification process.

Green Globe website 18/8/2000

In addition to this membership fee, companies must pay for an audit process which can cost around £1,500 for a large business. Additional services from consultants are also provided at additional cost. Green Globe 21 does seek to reduce costs through partnerships with Governments. For example, discussions with the New Zealand Government seem likely to yield membership for 800 tourism businesses at £70 for the initial 12 month period (information disclosed in a discussion with Geoffrey Lipman, 18/06/00).

The fee schedule for NEAP includes an application fee and annual fee. These are as follows:

Annual Turnover	£0 – 370	£371 – 93,000	£93,001 – 370,000	£370,000 – 1,115,000	1,115,001 and over
Application fee	60	70	90	125	180
Annual fee	90	140	280	465	700

*(all figures rounded. Converted from AUS \$ using 2.69 to the £ as quoted by American Express, 26/06/00)*

It is clear that tourism certification programmes have a number of common elements. The key issue is the extent to which these elements are able to deliver sustainable tourism (or more sustainable tourism at the very least). The next section examines this issue in more detail.



## 4 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

Can tourism certification programmes in their present form (see previous section) bring about sustainable tourism? This is a difficult question to answer when the actual components of sustainable tourism are yet to be fully defined or agreed (there are more than one hundred definitions of the term in existence), and given that less than 1% of all tourism businesses belong to credible certification programmes.

Three key issues - social equity, long term economic benefit for all, and environmental protection - are enshrined in all sustainable development and most sustainable tourism definitions. Within the WWF vision, for example, sustainable tourism and its associated infrastructure should:

- Be compatible with effective conservation and operate within the area's natural capacity, for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources,
- Minimise its ecological footprint,
- Give proper consideration to local culture and local people in host areas, and ensure that these people have an equitable share in the benefits of tourism.

Social equity, long term economic benefit for all and environmental protection are also embraced to some extent by most tourism certification programmes. Each of these three aspects of sustainable tourism are not, however, reflected equally in such programmes (Table 3). Programmes can be divided into those that do not extend beyond the concept of eco-efficiency, those that focus predominantly on the concepts of eco-efficiency and biodiversity protection; and those that seek to encourage the adoption of genuinely sustainable tourism.

This section analyses the extent to which tourism certification programmes can help to bring about the WWF vision of sustainable tourism.

**Table 3 — Coverage of key elements of sustainability by different tourism certification programmes**

	ECO-EFFICIENCY / NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION	BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION / ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT	SOCIAL ASPECTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
<b>Green Globe 21</b>	☺	☺	☺	☹
<b>Green Tourism Business Scheme</b>	☺	☺	☹	☹
<b>Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels</b>	☺	☺	☹	☹
<b>Certification for Sustainable Tourism</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>ECOTEL</b>	☺	☺	☹	☹
<b>Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>KEY</b>	☺ = Programme explicitly addresses this issue ☹ = Programme addresses this issue to some extent ☹ = Programme does not really address this issue.			

#### **4.1 TOURISM AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION AND OPERATE WITHIN THE AREA'S NATURAL CAPACITY FOR REGENERATION AND FUTURE PRODUCTIVITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

With the exception of some destination initiatives, most tourism certification programmes focus on existing tourism infrastructure, rather than new developments. Within most programmes, it is clear that new developments and infrastructure should be in keeping with the local environment, be locally sourced wherever possible, consider overall carrying capacity requirements and should integrate with other sectors to ensure complementary and balanced development patterns. Where existing initiatives are not compatible with local conservation (e.g., constructed from tropical hardwoods, depend on a municipal (and ineffective) waste water treatment system rather than installing their own system), most would still qualify for certification. The argument for this is that certification ensures that their operational practices are, at the very least, environmentally responsible or comply with regulatory requirements.

The integration of effective conservation policies into existing operational practices and procedures is a key theme for most certification programmes. For example, Green Globe 21 specifies ecosystem conservation and management as one of nine key areas for action, the Green Tourism Business Scheme (Scotland) dedicates one of its sections to Wildlife and Landscape, and Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia) and Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica) specify a number of very specific issues that require redress on this topic (Box 5). The relative importance of conservation initiatives in comparison to other environmental or sustainability issues varies significantly within different programmes. Within ecotourism programmes, very specific conservation initiatives are included and member companies are expected to address at least some of these immediately. This is partly possible because these programmes apply to well-defined types of landscape, well-defined types of tourism and generally have a clearly defined link between the benefits of conservation and the quality of the tourism product. The mainstream certification programmes on the other hand, tend to encourage tourism businesses to focus on operational areas (e.g., energy conservation and water management) prior to addressing conservation initiatives. Within these programmes, conservation initiatives focus on education activities and habitat creation within landscape features.

None of the tourism certification programmes, even at a destination level, specify explicitly that tourism businesses should operate within the area's natural capacity for regeneration and future productivity of natural resources. This issue is, however, partly addressed in many of the programmes through a focus on reduction in resource consumption.

**Box 5 – Conservation requirements of Green Globe 21 (generic) & Certification for Sustainable Tourism (specific)**

The Green Globe 21 standard requires companies to conserve local and global biodiversity through the protection of natural ecosystems, sensitive habitats and endangered species. For hotels, this requires the following actions:

- Educate guests about local endangered species and measures to be taken to protect them
- Encourage guests to respect natural ecosystems, e.g. by providing environmental educational information
- Encourage guests not to purchase products made from endangered species
- Build habitat creation into landscape design
- Support organisations working to protect local and global biodiversity.

Within the CST initiative, more specific actions are listed under a range of headings, including:

- Native plants are predominantly used on the hotel's gardens
- The hotel does not allow the dispersion of non-native ornamental plants used on the hotel gardens to the surrounding environment
- The main tree species in the hotels are identified according to their local and scientific name
- The hotel's gardens are maintained avoiding the use of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides
- The hotel owns – and appropriately manages - a natural protected area
- The hotel implements specific actions to promote the non extraction of flora and fauna by tourists or other individuals
- The hotel's external illumination system does not produce alterations to the natural environment or changes to wild animal behaviour.

## **4.2 TOURISM AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD MINIMISE ITS ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT**

Most tourism certification programmes have evolved from a clear understanding of the importance of pristine environments to successful tourism. Most also have their foundation in eco-efficiency and environmental management systems. Efficient management of natural resources used directly by tourism facilities is central to each of the programmes. Reduction of resource consumption is the central tenet of all programmes. Elimination of negative impacts on natural resources (especially when the cost benefits are less well proven) are less important within more generic tourism certification programmes, but are relatively more important within ecotourism programmes.

Table 4 illustrates the coverage by different programmes of issues relating to the ecological footprint of tourism.

The ecological footprint of companies relates not just to the range of issues that are covered, but also the depth to which companies pursue programmes. Many process-oriented programmes, for example Green Globe 21 and ISO 14001, allow companies to establish their own improvement targets and prioritise areas for improvement. Other programmes, for example the Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels, Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica) and the Green Tourism Business Scheme (Scotland) specify benchmark levels that companies must exceed, across a range of issues. This performance approach (see section 2) ensures that those businesses that are certified and awarded use of a logo have a relatively smaller ecological footprint.

It is clear that all tourism certification programmes do help businesses to limit their ecological footprint and some are able to deliver impressive results. Companies participating in some programmes report significant resource consumption savings. HCIMA, for example, estimate that those hotels joining their Hospitable Climates partnership initiative with the UK Government can expect to reap energy savings of between 10-40%. All programmes focus primarily on those issues that will deliver cost savings to businesses. Other aspects of environmental management (e.g., noise reduction and minimising the use of non-renewable resources) are much less directly addressed.

Certification programmes to date have focussed predominantly on the development of criteria for the accommodation sector and to a lesser extent tour operators and visitor attractions. Transport operations, which some critics would consider to have the largest ecological footprint, have not been addressed by many certification initiatives. Even within the context of hospitality operations, some certification programmes do not focus on the implications of guest, supplier or staff transport. Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia), however, has activity specific minimal impact criteria (including boating, vehicle use, aircraft use, etc.) and where these are part of a nature or ecotourism product the criteria must be met before accreditation is granted. Green Globe 21 also claims to provide guidance for transport operators. But as of March 2000, guidance notes, the expertise to implement management systems within this sector, and the ability to provide effective performance targets, had yet to be developed. No transport operators are currently members of any of the programmes examined, although Green Globe 21 have formed an alliance with Future Forests and Avis Rent-a-Car to promote a carbon sequestration initiative. Those transport operators that wish to prove their environmental or sustainability credentials have turned to programmes such as ISO 14001 or other environmental management system programmes. In total, in 2000, Hugh Somerville (Head of the Environment at British Airways) estimates that less than 10% of global airlines have responded to the environmental agenda and that this has come from the larger scheduled airlines.

**Table 4 – Tourism certification programmes – Reducing the ecological footprint?**

	Energy efficiency/ conservation / management	Fresh water conservation/ management	Minimal use of non-renewable natural resources	Ecosystem conservation/ management	Land use planning/ management	Air quality protection	Noise control	Waste water management	Waste minimisation	Purchase, storage and use of hazardous substances
<b>Green Globe 21</b>	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>Green Tourism Business Scheme (all levels)</b>	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺
<b>Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels</b>	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺
<b>Certification for Sustainable Tourism (all levels)</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>ECOTEL (primary globe)</b>	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
<b>Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme</b>	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>ISO 14001<sup>3</sup></b>	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹
<b>KEY</b>	☺= Programme explicitly addresses this issue ☹ = Programme addresses this issue to some extent, usually as a part of another issue (for example, actions to manage fresh water volumes usually also reduce waste water volumes and can improve quality) ☹ = Programme does not really address this issue.									

<sup>3</sup> Within the context of ISO 14001, companies make a commitment to pollution prevention and to the establishment of an environmental management system to ensure that they consistently reduce the environmental impacts of their operation. The EMS standard does not specify the areas on which pollution prevention should focus – it is up to each member organisation to identify its environmental impacts (called aspects within the standard), to prioritise those that have the greatest magnitude and to take action to minimise negative impacts. The extent to which each company addresses the specific issues identified by the table will, therefore depend on the extent to which they consider their operation to impact upon it.

### **4.3 TOURISM AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD GIVE PROPER CONSIDERATION TO LOCAL CULTURE AND LOCAL PEOPLE IN HOST AREAS, AND ENSURE THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE AN EQUITABLE SHARE IN THE BENEFITS OF TOURISM.**

Within the tourism sector there has been much debate but little concrete guidance on appropriate mechanisms for integration of community and cultural issues into tourism development or on the broader aspects of social responsibility and economic equity. Some certification programmes, for example, ECOTEL (HVS International) and the Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels, make little or no reference to social or cultural issues outside initiatives with employees.

Those certification programmes that do embrace these issues generally consider them under the following terms (Table 5):

- the establishment of processes to consult with stakeholders about the operation of the business, new development plans, or the environmental programme specifically,
- integration of social considerations (predominantly use of the local supply chain) into purchasing decisions,
- ensuring that the consumption of water and energy do not prejudice access of local residents to these resources,
- provision of information about appropriate behaviour and dress codes to guests,
- provision that companies should not promote activities, such as sex tourism,
- the implementation of local employment policies (especially for senior management roles),
- input into local training initiatives, and
- employing people according to local laws and paying staff at or above minimum wage levels.

Most tourism certification programmes do make reference to the need to acknowledge the rights of local people within a tourism context. Usually, a stakeholder consultative group is proposed as an appropriate mechanism to ensure local consultation and education materials about culture are considered an appropriate response. Stakeholders are, however, rarely clearly defined and the process for consultation is also not fully developed.

Few of the certification programmes really explore the broader context of ensuring that local people have an equitable share in the benefits of tourism (Table 6). Where it is embraced, for example by Green Globe 21 and Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica), it is within the context of employing a percentage of the local workforce, avoiding certain exploitative types of tourism such as prostitution, and ensuring that minimum wage regulations are applied. The broader context of social equity which is embraced by this aspect of the WWF vision for sustainable tourism is poorly explored within many of the certification programmes and the sustainable tourism debate in general.

*'The problems [related to tourism development] experienced by local people around the world are symptoms of unsustainable development. There has to be a commitment from the major players to a more fairly traded tourism which takes into account the needs of host communities. The WTO and its members are agreed that changes are needed, but there is no consensus on how they will be implemented. Mechanisms need to be found which will turn rhetoric into action to eliminate the worst aspects of tourism development'*

(Tourism Concern, 1998)

**Table 5 – Tourism certification programmes – delivering on the social aspects of the sustainability agenda?**

	Human rights			Labour			Environment		
	Protect human rights	Ensure no complicity in human rights abuses	Uphold freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining	Eliminate forced and compulsory labour	Abolish child labour	Eliminate discrimination	Precautionary approach to environmental challenges	Promote greater environmental responsibility	Encourage development / environmental technologies (inc. guest education)
<b>Green Globe 21</b>	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☹
<b>Green Tourism Business Scheme (all levels)<sup>4</sup></b>	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
<b>Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels<sup>5</sup></b>	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
<b>Certification for Sustainable Tourism (all levels)</b>	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>ECOTEL (primary globe)</b>	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
<b>Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme<sup>6</sup></b>	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺
<b>KEY</b>	☺= Programme explicitly addresses this issue ☹ = Programme addresses this issue to some extent, usually as a part of another issue (for example, actions to manage fresh water volumes usually also reduce waste water volumes and can improve quality) ☹ = Programme does not really address this issue.								

The headings on this table are taken from the UN Global Compact

<sup>4</sup> It could be argued that many of these issues are not relevant to developed country economies, such as Scotland, Scandinavia, etc.

<sup>5</sup> As above

<sup>6</sup> As above

**Table 6 – Where does the money go? The economics of tourism and the effects of debt and the wider economy.**

	Sector	Share of £1 Tourist Expenditure	Initial share	Tourism-supporting imports by Kenya	Debt Service Payments by Kenya	Final share
<b>UK</b>	Tour operator	20p	60p	+10p	+15p	85p
	Airline	40p				
<b>Kenya</b>	Hotel chain	23p	40p	-10p	-15p	15p
	Safari company	8p				
	Kenyan Government	9p				
	Local Masai	0				

Source: Leeds Development Education Centre / Tourism Concern Pack, *The Final Frontier?* (1993)

In comparison with other sectors, the lack of focus within the tourism industries on human, economic and social aspects of sustainable development is not an unusual position. Most sustainable development initiatives tend to focus most strongly on environmental issues and internal social issues such as staff management and health and safety. However, there is now increasing emphasis on social issues and some of the world's major businesses (e.g., Shell, BP, Body Shop, Co-operative Bank) undertake annual social reporting. However, processes, codes and guidelines for social reporting are voluntary and it remains hard for businesses in any sector to understand how they should monitor and react to indirect social impacts of their business (Box 6). For the vast majority of businesses of all types, defining social responsibility is considered the responsibility of government. For the tourism industry, however, social responsibility is also a unique part of product quality and long term destination success that requires a more proactive approach.

The issue of social integration and equity is complex and regionally differentiated. It is also more relevant to developing country destinations or areas of high tourism volumes, such as the Mediterranean coastline. This makes the issue difficult to deal within the context of global and generic tourism certification programmes such as Green Globe 21, but no less significant in the contribution it can make to their effectiveness and credibility.

Tourism certification programmes do have the potential to deliver more sustainable tourism. Most programmes currently focus on the ecological and environmental aspects of tourism development and identify issues related to tourism accommodation infrastructure, rather than the whole tourism destination. The following section assesses the ways in which tourism certification programmes could contribute further towards sustainable tourism.

## **BOX 6 – What does social equity mean for businesses**

Social equity is a complex issue and one that is only just being refined. For businesses, this refinement is generally taking place within the context of the corporate social responsibility debate. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development consider Corporate Social Responsibility to 'require the continuing commitment by business to behaving ethically and contributing to economic development while improving the quality of life of the work force and their families as well as the local community and society at large' (WBCSD, 2000). In general terms, it embraces the following concepts:

- Human rights
- Worker rights
- Environmental impact
- Community involvement
- Supplier relations
- Monitoring.

The UN embrace these issues within the Global Compact which asks the private sector to embrace, support and enact a set of core values within their sphere of influence. The issues embraced by the compact are:

### **Human Rights**

- Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses

### **Labour**

- Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining;
- The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- The effective abolition of child labour; and
- Eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

### **Environment**

- Businesses shall support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Source: WBCSD (2000); UN (1998)

## 5 PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR TOURISM CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

Tourism certification programmes have evolved significantly since their appearance in the early 1990s and many programmes have gone some considerable way to meeting the criteria for credibility laid out by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (see section 1 - Scope).

Many of the better-known programmes have also adopted the approach taken by the environmental management systems (e.g., ISO 14001) or have adapted these for tailor-made application to specific types of tourism environment. This ensures that the efforts of the industry are in-line with other sectors and also helps to build confidence in the credibility of programmes across a range of stakeholders. There are still some programmes that do not meet the requirements of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, especially those that continue to operate systems of self-assessment or that independently verify the performance of their own paid members, and those that lack any form of stakeholder input.

However, in combination with emerging techniques, such as social auditing processes, ethical accounting systems, benchmarking and life cycle assessments, tourism certification programmes have considerable potential. The focus of most programmes on existing tourism infrastructure, however, is flawed. For an industry that is predicted to double in size over the next decade, it is questionable whether certification programmes have the potential to ensure that new developments meet sustainability criteria. Most certification programmes do include some reference to integrating 'sustainable considerations' into new developments but these do not reflect the wide range of issues emerging within the sustainable design debate. Some destination programmes seek to tackle this issue, but these are inadequately developed as yet to prove their credibility (see section 6).

The following are all key issues for the future development of tourism certification programmes:

- increasing participation and integration,
- awarding achievement,
- promoting sustainable (not just environmental) improvement,
- actively working with stakeholders, and
- improving transparency.

## 5.1 INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION

To some extent, most tourism certification programmes (even those that rely on self-assessment) have potential to improve sustainability within the industry. One of the key barriers to prevent such programmes from bringing about more sustainable tourism at a destination level or throughout the industry as a whole is the relatively poor uptake by the industry. Some initiatives, such as Green Globe 21, have tried to counter poor participation by individual businesses by seeking to develop destination-wide initiatives that encourage widespread industry participation within a specific area, but such initiatives have not yet been adequately developed or tested.

Although in some regions there has been significant participation in sustainable tourism programmes, globally, participation has been extremely poor. Green Globe 21, Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia), Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica) and ECOTEL (HVS International), four of the best-known certification programmes, together have less than one thousand members. Notwithstanding, the ecotourism focus of NEAP, in the world's largest industry, comprising many thousands of businesses in the accommodation sector alone, this is a derisory number. The reasons for the lack of participation in tourism certification programmes are many and varied. Confusion about the relative merits of different initiatives, combined with a lack of appreciation of the importance of sustainable tourism or its relevance to specific businesses, are important considerations. There is much that those involved in certification programmes could do to improve communication and uptake. Four specific actions are a priority:

### ***EFFECTIVE MARKETING TO CONSUMERS***

There are currently more than one hundred certification programmes, or programmes offering a logo for some type of environmental achievement, operating world-wide. Each of these programmes has some form of public relations and communications strategy through which they seek to reach consumers and tourism businesses. However, in a global tourism market place, few certification programmes have the resources or outreach to achieve effective branding. Although no comprehensive research exists, it is likely that only a tiny sample of consumers (probably less than 1%) are aware of the existence or meaning of any tourism certification programme. This is despite the fact that surveys consistently reveal that consumers are concerned about the impact of travel and tourism on the environment (e.g., MORI 1998, TearFund 2000, VSO 1998). It was widely acknowledged by the stakeholders consulted during this research, that consumer demand will be the key to encouraging businesses to join tourism certification initiatives. Branding and marketing resources within tourism certification programmes are currently not effectively targeted.

**Effective and transparent branding that builds consumer confidence will be vital to ensuring the future credibility of tourism certification programmes.** Such branding could be undertaken by individual certification programmes through effective partnership arrangements (such as those currently under development between Green Globe 21 and PATA and Green Key). It is, however, unlikely that any individual programme will have the necessary resources both to guarantee credibility (especially where the membership organisation also verifies company performance and awards the certification), and promote a unified brand to a global travel market. **A more appropriate mechanism may, therefore, be a centralised umbrella organisation with a realistic budget, along the lines of the Forestry Stewardship Council, that both accredits the certifying organisations and promotes the brand to consumers. With non-profit status, such a body would also counteract cynicism about the profit-making basis of some tourism certification schemes.**

## ***EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATIONS***

Many tourism businesses are confused about the array of certification mechanisms and which is most appropriate for their requirements. Many small businesses are not even aware of the existence of certification programmes. Some businesses, for example TUI, have tested the implementation of two or three certification programmes (including both ISO14001 and Green Globe 21) prior to deciding which is most appropriate. For smaller businesses, and those that are less committed to environmentally responsible or sustainable development, this is costly and presents a barrier that is likely to deter membership.

Some initiatives, for example Green Globe 21, have re-branded on many occasions. While re-branding allows innovation, if it occurs too frequently it can cause confusion amongst consumers and businesses and devalues the credibility of programmes. Re-branding also means that many organisations still display the logo that applies to a previous iteration of the programme rather than the current, usually more stringent, standard. Effective policing of the brand is essential to ensuring continued credibility.

**Effective branding and communication of brand meaning to businesses is essential. Clarity of branding can be achieved through individual communication with companies by different programmes, or through a centralised and independent organisation that accredits organisations that match certain sustainable tourism criteria and centrally promotes their logo.**

## ***INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL / SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMES INTO OTHER INITIATIVES FOR THE INDUSTRY***

Few, even very small businesses, operate without health and safety or quality programmes. Most, however, consider sustainable tourism or environmental programmes as an optional extra relevant only within the context of specific types of tourism (e.g. ecotourism) or within specific businesses that are seeking niche market advantage. Environmental and sustainable tourism programmes must be promoted as central to profitability and long term business success if they are to bring about more sustainable practices within the vast majority of tourism businesses. **A closer link between mainstream management programmes, such as quality assurance, and certification programmes, and enhanced promotion by all of the mainstream trade associations, is essential to their success.** The model used by the Green Tourism Business Scheme (Scotland), linking quality assurance accreditation and environmental accreditation, could have value in this regard.

## ***THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMMES WHICH ARE EFFECTIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE FOR SMES AND WHICH STRETCH ACROSS THE TOURISM SECTOR AS A WHOLE.***

Certification programmes currently fail to address adequately the impacts of many aspects of the travel and tourism industry (including transport which many would consider the most damaging aspect of the industry). Most programmes focus on the actions of accommodation providers alone and some extend to consider the impacts of the tour operator sector. The only initiative that claims to target all sectors of the tourism industry is Green Globe 21. Across industry participation is vital, but Green Globe 21 has developed guidance only for tour operators and accommodation providers to date, and so the credibility of the approach for other sectors is difficult to assess. **It is essential that certification programmes develop appropriate initiatives and gain membership from the widest possible range of tourism businesses including transport operators, tour operators, cafés, restaurants, retail outlets, travel agents and visitor attractions, thus offering the tourist real choice across all holiday components.**

The difficulty of attracting small businesses is common to many certification programmes. ISO 14001 is inappropriate to small business needs. In the UK, an alternative iterative checklist-based approach, known as ACORN, is being developed specifically for the small business sector.

Small businesses comprise in the region of 97% of the total travel and tourism industry and are its life-blood. Within destinations, these businesses cumulatively often have a significant environmental impact. However, small businesses are generally excluded from tourism certification programmes by price, the complexity of implementing management systems or awareness. The management system style certification programmes that are suited to larger businesses cannot be superimposed on small business structures. Simple and prescriptive checklists, which can be implemented by members of staff with a limited level of training or knowledge, are more appropriate at this level. Many of the ecotourism certification programmes have elements that could work well within a small business context (especially where these include targets for resource consumption) and these could be explored through partnership initiatives. **The outreach of certification programmes to small businesses could be improved through simple checklists as opposed to management systems.** To be successful, these initiatives must be credible (to consumers and to other stakeholders), supported by a local network of advisers, offer rapid pay-back, require limited implementation time, and address issues of local relevance. **It is unlikely that global certification mechanisms for small businesses will be successful unless implemented through a credible local hotel or tourism association. Guidelines to help local or national authorities to develop credible programmes, possibly certified by a central accreditation network, is probably the best route for success.**

## **5.2 AWARDING ACHIEVEMENT RATHER THAN COMMITMENT**

There is a clear differential within tourism certification programmes between those that are process-led and award the use of a logo based only on commitment and/or those that award the use of a logo based on the implementation of a management system(see section 2), and those that are performance-led and award the use of a logo based on the achievement of key performance criteria. Evidence from consumers indicates that they rapidly lose confidence in programmes that do not highlight actual achievement. The following actions are therefore key:

### ***CERTIFICATION OR LOGOS ARE NOT AWARDED FOR COMMITMENT***

Some tourism certification programmes still provide a logo once a company has joined the programme and made a commitment to its aims. This commitment may be in the form of publishing an environmental or sustainable policy statement or simply returning a signed application form. While this offers an incentive for many businesses to join programmes, it can undermine consumer confidence. Consumer credibility for such programmes can be easily undermined. **Tourism certification programmes should be oriented towards awarding achievement and not commitment alone.**

### ***INTEGRATION OF MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA***

There is a distinction between those certification programmes that provide recognition for the development of management systems and those that award achievement based on actual performance (see section 2). There is merit in both approaches. **Certification programmes will more rapidly lead towards sustainable tourism if they combine management systems and defined performance criteria (e.g., for water consumption per guest per night). This enables businesses to establish effective management systems to tackle sustainability issues while meeting consumer expectations that certified companies really are the best.** This approach will require certification programmes to adopt a regional and sectoral dimension that specifies performance criteria. The development of such criteria may take some time and will necessarily vary between destinations to reflect different priorities and circumstances.

### **5.3 PROMOTING IMPROVEMENTS IN SUSTAINABILITY**

Certification programmes either claim to help businesses adopt more environmentally responsible practices (e.g., the Nordic Ecolabel for Hotels) or to help businesses adopt sustainable business practices. Some certification programmes employ the concepts of environmental responsibility and sustainable development interchangeably, and others refer to environmental sustainability. It is unlikely that most businesses or consumers recognise the difference between those programmes that claim to bring about sustainable tourism and those that seek to bring about environmentally responsible tourism. The end results are, however, a world apart. The following actions are therefore key:

#### ***RECOGNISING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM***

Many of the impacts of tourism are on the physical environment and many programmes focus on the environmental management of tourism impacts. This focus, however, encourages many businesses to overlook the broader cultural and economic issues that are so essential to tourist area success, and that are central to sustainability (but that do not promise significant resource savings). There can be little doubt that those businesses that have engaged in implementing purely environmental management programmes in the late 1990s will find themselves faced with implementing social and ethical programmes in the first decade of the new millennium. **Tourism certification programmes should therefore focus on the broad range of issues embraced by sustainable tourism, rather than narrowing their focus to environmental issues alone.**

#### ***ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT***

When working with a membership of commercial companies, it is often difficult to address some of the economic aspects of tourism development, especially as regards the leakage of profits to overseas subsidiaries. The sensitivity of these issues needs to be taken into account to ensure certification programmes do not alienate their members. **There is, however, a need for certification programmes to address more thoroughly the economic aspects of sustainable development.**

## 5.4 RECOGNISING AND WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

All of the programmes that claim to help businesses adopt more sustainable business practices make some reference to stakeholder dialogue and stakeholder consultation. Most have made efforts to ensure dialogue at international and regional levels. This process is, however, very poorly defined as are the core components of socially responsible or long-term and economically ethical tourism programmes. As a priority, the following action should be taken:

### *DEFINE STAKEHOLDERS & CONSULTATION PROCESS*

**Tourism certification programmes need to define more clearly the range of tourism stakeholders and their interests as well as the type of interaction that should be undertaken with them to ensure the adoption of sustainable tourism.** Partly reflecting the recent the international debate about stakeholder interaction, current definitions of stakeholders within the tourism sector are poorly defined and rarely differentiate between stakeholders at an international level and at a local level or between the fundamental differences in the process of negotiation at these two levels.

Stakeholder consultation processes can take a number of forms. At worst, they comprise meetings held once development decisions have been made to inform local people of their fate. At best, they are inclusive debates that actively involve stakeholders in decision-making processes. Some tourism certification programme provide checklists to specify some aspects of stakeholder consultation, but the full process (as explored in the emerging documentation on SA 8000 and AA 1000) is not clearly explored or its importance adequately emphasised. **Tourism certification programmes must identify appropriate stakeholder consultation processes and the stages at which consultation should take place. Ideally, stakeholders should be included throughout the tourism development process and should play an active role in decision-making.**

## 5.5 IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY

Over the last decade, tourism certification programmes have made significant strides in improving the transparency of their own procedures. With few exceptions, the conditions that businesses displaying certification logos have met are easily accessible. Equally, the introduction of third party verification systems has improved the level of confidence in many programmes. This ensures that the organisations that are certified and gain a logo are credible and have operational management systems in place and/or meet specified performance targets. Transparency of results at a company level is, however, less evident. Only a handful of tourism businesses have chosen to issue environmental reports. Few issue environmental statements within the context of their annual reports, and none issue ethical, green accounting or social reports. Transparency could be greatly improved by:

### ***ENCOURAGING REPORTING BY INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES***

Following the award of a logo or certification, many companies rightly promote their achievements through brochures, websites and other mechanisms. Few, however, provide truly transparent reports, which illustrate lessons learned as well as successes. These lessons can provide useful information for others and also help certification programmes address emerging problems. **Public reporting of progress, especially by larger companies, would increase awareness of the benefits of certification and the adoption of sustainable development programmes across the sector as a whole, improve the knowledge level of stakeholders of what can be achieved, and improve confidence in the credibility of certification initiatives.** Many guidelines already exist for reporting environmental if not sustainability performance. These could be adopted by the tourism sector and by tourism certification programmes.

### ***CUMULATIVE REPORTING***

The main aim of certification programmes is to improve progress towards sustainability of the tourism sector as a whole. **Sector-wide reporting (by certification programmes individually or cumulatively) will help to prove the effectiveness of such programmes and provide a view of targets that the industry as a whole could achieve.** Cumulative reporting will obviously focus on success stories. However, failure is also an important aspect of certification, and reporting should reflect the number (but not names) of businesses that fail to meet specified standards.

## 6 FURTHER ANALYSIS OF GREEN GLOBE 21

This section focuses in more detail on Green Globe 21, the programme pertaining to have the greatest international reach and widest sectoral coverage. It seeks to highlight how Green Globe 21 (as revised and re-launched in March 2000) compares to other tourism certification programmes, and highlights the relative strengths and weaknesses of this initiative. It also makes specific recommendations on how the programme could be improved. In addition, the emerging Green Globe 21 initiative for destinations is examined.

### 6.1 THE GREEN GLOBE 21 COMPANY PROGRAMME

**Green Globe 21 company programme compares moderately well to other tourism certification programmes.** More information on this programme can be found on the Green Globe 21 website at <http://www.greenglobe.org>. When comparing Green Globe 21 to other initiatives, such as Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia) and Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica), it is important to bear in mind that **Green Globe 21 seeks to have global scope and to target the mainstream (mass) tourism businesses. This limits the level of detail that can be included within the programme.** It is not possible for the programme to make reference to the very specific issues that influence individual destinations. Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica) and Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia) are able to do this because they focus on specific types of ecosystem and can build their priorities on Government or natural area management plans. **The Green Globe 21 approach has the strength that it can be adopted by any company in any location. It can be especially useful in those countries where governments lack the will or resources to establish their own certification programmes.**

**The Green Globe 21 programme also targets the mainstream tourism businesses that generally have a lower level of environmental awareness and less motivation to adopt sustainable development programmes.** Many ecotourism businesses (or businesses located in natural areas where the predominant tourist appeal is nature or culture) may seek out certification programmes because they recognise the link between the economic success of their business and the natural environment. With the exception of an enlightened few, mainstream businesses are rarely so proactive. Many need to be convinced of the necessity for environmental, let alone sustainability, programmes. Many of the potential business members of Green Globe 21 will have done little to implement environmental programmes and will regard the issue as having relatively low priority. Programmes that require many hundreds of detailed actions will alienate rather than encourage membership. **To encourage membership Green Globe 21 therefore has less stringent requirements in terms of actual environmental performance than programmes that target ecotourism businesses.**

#### **SPECIFIC STRENGTHS**

**Green Globe 21 has a basis in, and considerable similarity with, the ISO 14001 environmental management standard.** It is, therefore, firmly rooted in detailed and credible environmental management systems theory and, where it has been tested by companies such as TUI against ISO 14001, compares well. In addition, Green Globe 21 are currently hosting discussions with ISO about using their standard rather than the generic format for all travel and tourism businesses.

**The programme requires continuous improvement within the environmental management system.** Therefore, those businesses that wish to retain the certification must continue to make progress in implementing an environmental management system that reduces impacts.

**The programme places environmental management within a consistent framework** that can, theoretically at least, be used by any tourism business anywhere in the world to monitor systematically tourism impacts. This is particularly useful for those countries where the Government or tourist association is not able to establish its own certification initiatives.

**The standard makes reference to many of the impacts of tourism** (including social and cultural issues) rather than purely the environmental impacts of tourism.

**The standard sets regulatory compliance as a bare minimum requirement** (although companies do not need to assess their compliance until their initial year of 'commitment' to develop an environmental management system has expired).

**The management systems approach fits well with the existing quality and health and safety systems approaches** that are used by many of the corporate companies. It lends itself easily to the development of management manuals and to the systematic training approach used by these businesses.

**The approach has resulted in membership from some of the large corporate companies.**

In forming **partnerships with regional networks**, such as Caribbean Action for Sustainable Tourism and Co-operative Research Centre (Australia), Green Globe 21 enables the dissemination of the standard and the building of capacity at a regional level and to begin the process of **building a global brand**. It also provides the flexibility to enable the brand to reflect regional issues and be driven by regional representatives.

In using a network of facilitators and in operating training programmes globally, the initiatives **helps to build capacity** for sustainable tourism.

**The programme ensures credibility by using third party auditors** to undertake the verification work. The businesses acting as auditors are credible and include the world's leading environmental auditing company SGS.

It is one of the few programmes that have managed to gain a moderately **high level of industry awareness** and some consumer awareness.

**There are, however, some issues that could be addressed within the context of the programme. These relate partly to the actual programme components, and also to the management of the programme.**

### ***SPECIFIC CONCERNS***

The programme currently allows its branding to be used as soon as a company commits to achieving certification and has published an environmental policy statement. Although initial branding differs subtly from that offered when a company has achieved certification, it is unlikely that this differential will be clear to consumers or many businesses. **Branding should only be offered upon certification to those businesses that achieve the requirements of the standard. Branding for commitment should be disbanded.**

The programme provides those businesses that are able to achieve a series of management system requirements with a brand. This means that it may reward some companies that have a relatively greater environmental impact, but have a programme in place to tackle key environmental impacts. This is a criticism that can equally be applied to ISO 14001. **It would be advisable to work with regional or other global organisations to establish minimum performance standards that companies should meet to ensure that the most impacting are not branded or certified.** There is provision for this within the standard, but it is not currently implemented. For example, the current IHEI and WWF work on benchmarking hotel performance could be integrated into the standard, together with regional partners' work (e.g., Australian initiatives on performance criteria), and IATA aviation work.

**The standard talks about stakeholder consultation, but does not specify either a process for such consultation or really clearly define stakeholders. This should be rectified using some of the emerging work on social and ethical auditing processes.**

**In line with ISO 14001, the programme offers branding to corporate businesses as well as to each individual unit.** Although there are benefits, especially in terms of cost and allowing the establishment of centralised management systems, associated with offering such membership, **it is difficult to assess how the standard is applied in practice in each individual unit.** Within the hotel programme this issue has been resolved by making provision that each hotel within the company will be reviewed at least once within a three-year duration. This is credible, but some aspects of the standard should be immediately assessed within each unit, for example, compliance with regulation.

**The tour operator standard causes particular concern.** One set of tour operator guidance is provided for tour operators of all scales despite the significant differences between the operations of small inbound tour operators, small tour operators (e.g., Guerba) and global operators (e.g., Thomson). Such guidance is inappropriate to each of these levels. For example, an operator like Thomson will feature many hundreds of destinations within its product range. By joining Green Globe 21, it will be certified and gain the use of the logo for all of its brochures although it may only have started to implement some management programmes within head office operations. The use of the logo may, however, convince the consumer that they are choosing a tour, including a travel agent, an airline, transit transport, accommodation and visitor attraction, that has environmental credentials. **For complex products run by international tour operators, the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia) approach, that accredits all elements of one specific product (i.e., a tour or a route), has greater credibility.** This means that a consumer can choose two different tours from the same tour operator one of which is certified and one of which is not. This would also have benefits for mainstream operators by enabling them to work on their niche market routes first, where more customers are likely to seek green accreditation. **Green Globe 21 should revisit its tour operator guidance and divide this to reflect the different scales of tour operations, and to provide practical programmes that can be realistically implemented by large tour operators throughout complex operations while also protecting the consumer.**

**It is difficult to assess the application of the standard to other sectors because guidance has yet to be produced to substantiate claims of applicability at these levels.** It is essential that such guidance is developed and adequately tested prior to taking members on from these sectors.

**The programme is one of the more expensive to join and this limits membership significantly.**

**In some areas, the initiative competes with other programmes and it would be useful if guidance could be provided to help operators identify which initiatives are most appropriate to their needs.** Green Globe 21 has addressed this issue to some extent by signing partnership agreements with, for example, PATA (for the Green Leaf) and the Danish Green Key.

## **6.2 THE GREEN GLOBE DESTINATION PROGRAMME**

**There are a number of concerns about the development of consumer branding for destinations and specifically about the implementation of the Green Globe 21 destination brand.** Many of the stakeholders consulted reflected these concerns (e.g., UNEP and Conservation International) and voiced doubts about the potential of establishing generic management systems for destination-wide application at the current time. **The considerable vision that Green Globe 21 has illustrated in seeking to develop a destination standard should be recognised.** The real benefits of sustainable tourism for businesses and consumers, will only be felt once action is taken at a whole destination level - to reduce pollution, to ensure resources are equitably distributed, to enhance community relations, to improve exchange between tourists and residents, and to ensure that a significant percentage of the profits from tourism remain within a local area. This is particularly true for mainstream tourism destinations. **However, the processes of destination management are not adequately understood or capable of being embraced by a single environmental management system approach.** Concerns about the destination initiative do not reflect the competency of Green Globe 21 staff, but the enormity and complexity of the task involved.

Like the company programme, the Green Globe 21 destination brand has evolved significantly over the last five years and written guidance about the requirements is currently only available in draft form (contact Green Globe 21 for a copy). Green Globe 21 claims that it is underpinned by Agenda 21 for sustainable tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Its principle objective is to:

*'Promote environmentally sustainable tourism development at destinations where there is a developed tourism industry. It provides governing authorities, travel and tourism companies and the communities that reside within the destinations with: (i) a clear set of criteria for achieving year-on-year improvements; (ii) a framework for application of the criteria; (iii) the process for meeting the criteria; (iv) the requisites for achieving GG21 certification on recognition for meeting the criteria'.*

The destination programme claims not to be prescriptive but goes on to specify a number of criteria that those applying for the standard must meet.

### **SPECIFIC CONCERNS**

**Within the framework of the draft guidance document for the standard, reference is made to a wide range of environmental management tools,** including the ISO 14000 series of environmental management standards, environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA). These are all discreet planning tools (some of which, e.g., SEA, are not fully developed in their own right), and **there is little evidence that Green Globe 21 either has the facilities or the understanding of these tools to ensure their adequate implementation.**

**The whole standard is littered with poorly explained jargon. For example the standard aims to help destinations establish a Sustainable Destination Management System (SDMS), while not being prescriptive about the precise components of such a system!**

**The Green Globe 21 process awards the use of a logo as soon as management commitment is made to the initiative. Some of the above processes (e.g., SEA which is proposed for implementation within Phase I of the process) can take many years to implement and even skilled planners are often uncertain about the credibility of results.**

The destination programme claims to cover a very wide range of tourism destinations, but it is difficult to understand the definition of a destination. The current description of a tourism destination is too broad and embraces almost any area that has any type of tourism. The Green Globe 21 documentation provides the following definition of a tourism destination:

- a defined region with a recognisable travel and tourism capacity comprising a range of tourism operations;
- where there is infrastructure support, such as transport, sewage, water treatment etc.;
- which takes into account the needs of the local population and protects unique cultural heritage and diversity;
- where a group of stakeholders from the public and private sector (the destination management group) are prepared to take responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the SDMS;
- that is promoted by a Lead Agency, and has declared its commitment to sustainable tourism development based on Agenda 21 for Travel & Tourism and has undertaken the Green Globe 21 Destination programme incorporating: a) scoping Study, b) destination visioning, c) Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Action Planning, d) capacity building and training, e) implementation of identified and prioritised actions, f) an independent third party assessment of achievements according to the Green Globe 21 Standard for Destinations;
- that has committed to year on year improvement of the environment;
- that provides a strategic context to support the Green Globe 21 certification of individual tourism businesses.

**It is hard to identify how a destination will be audited to provide evidence that it complies with this broad range of criteria.** No destination has yet progressed through all aspects of the standard and so success cannot be assessed. It also seems unlikely that all of the programmes have been tested as they seem to be applied differently in a variety of circumstances.

**The Green Globe 21 destination programme relies for its implementation on the Destination Management Body.** This may be a tourist board, a tourism development authority, or a government department that usually has some political influence. Throughout the process, the Green Globe 21 team work with the destination management body to deliver reports, analysis of tourism impacts and strategies to identify potential 'risks' arising from tourism development or other activities in the area. **It would appear that analysis is largely desk-based and relies on only limited time within the destination. This reinforces concerns about the lack of real stakeholder involvement within such a process.**

**The destination programme is implemented in six key phases.** To date, none of the Green Globe 21 destinations have progressed through all aspects of the programme (only one destination has reached Stage III) so **the latter phases are relatively untested.**

**Green Globe 21 destination programme costs in the region of US\$30,000 to US\$70,000.** There are also significant additional costs associated with the programme, including staff time, the hosting of stakeholder group meetings, and training. **The level of benefits derived from this cost are unclear.**

**It is difficult to see how the implementation of the programme will be assessed on the ground given the ambiguities within the documentation about its implementation.**

**The programme claims to support Agenda 21 initiatives and yet makes no reference to integrating the tourism industry within the Agenda 21 framework at a destination level.**

**The destination brand as it stands does not match the UN Commission on Sustainable Development requirements for credible certification programmes** (see section 1). In reality, it is likely that the destination programme will be implemented in different ways in different destinations and will not lend itself to the standardisation required by a certification initiative. **This means that the brand has little more than public relations value. The Green Globe 21 destination brand should be significantly changed to ensure credibility. One approach that would offer credibility could mirror the Blue Flag initiative which provides checklists and performance criteria for specific types of environment. A second option could be a closer link with local Agenda 21 initiatives that ensures tourism becomes one of the focal points driving Agenda 21 programmes forward.**

### **6.3 GREEN GLOBE 21 MANAGEMENT**

There are also some concerns about the overall management of the Green Globe 21 programme and its aims. Green Globe 21 is an ambitious initiative that claims global scope. It is operated by a tiny secretariat of around eight people working out of the head office in London. Additional tasks are carried out in offices located in Australia (representing Asia Pacific) and Puerto Rico (representing the Caribbean and Americas), and by commissioned consultants. The tiny secretariat manages the main elements of both the destination and the company programmes, provides most of the supporting materials, liaises with consultants, markets the programme globally, provides membership support, trains Green Globe personnel, co-ordinates audit visits, co-ordinates stakeholder consultation and undertakes most administrative duties.

**The programme aims are very ambitious and while the dedication, professionalism and commitment of the Green Globe 21 team are not in doubt, the team is inadequate to manage a programme of this scope.** This means that companies or destinations sometimes experience long delays between commissioning and receiving work and that sector specific guidance for some aspects of the programme has not been developed. **Other tasks that are essential to credibility (e.g., the convening of the international multi-stakeholder advisory panel) have also slipped. These issues undermine confidence in the programme as a whole and need to be addressed.**

**The programme claims to offer certification to all sectors of the travel and tourism industry** (hotels, resorts and other accommodation providers; tour operators; caravan and camp sites; food service; airports; airlines; cruise ships; marinas; car hire companies; exhibition halls and conference centres; visitor attractions; leisure centres; golf courses; natural and protected areas; beaches). **Yet guidance has been developed only for tour operators and hotels and only hotels have succeeded in gaining the accreditation.** It is not possible to assess the credibility of the programme for other sectors until guidance is developed and fully tested. **Such guidance**

**should be developed in consultation with relevant industry bodies and make reference to the wealth of environmental and sustainability management tools that currently exist for the sector. It should also be adequately tested prior to implementation to ensure that re-branding does not dog the programme further.** On a related issue, Green Globe 21 is exploring the potential to develop a small business programme and is piloting an initiative in Cumbria. This will add an additional layer to the initiative and will stretch resources still further. It will also extend the Green Globe 21 brand into a new area, potentially undermining some of the strengths of the existing brand.

**The programme has been re-branded a number of times since its launch.** It was last re-launched in March 2000 at ITB (Berlin) and is to be amended again later on this year. There can be no doubt that the re-branding has improved the credibility of the programme significantly. **However, the number of times the programme has been re-branded and launched has caused considerable confusion about its precise requirements.** Even amongst the relatively well-informed stakeholder group consulted, many were unsure about the precise requirements of Green Globe 21 and some thought it was still based on self-assessment. **Regular re-branding also causes difficulties and confusion for businesses.** Many businesses that joined the Green Globe membership programme (which has now been disbanded) still bear the logo. As at April 2000 the EcoNETT Internet site advertised more than 500 businesses and destinations bearing this logo where, in reality, the number of businesses that have been accredited to meet the Green Globe 21 standard is around 60. Many businesses, especially smaller ones, print their brochures and documentation (including all documentation bearing the Green Globe 21 logo) on a two-year cycle. Regular re-branding increases the costs for these businesses and also causes wastage of existing materials.

**Many aspects of the Green Globe 21 programme are positive and it has played a key role in the emerging tourism certification market. However, the management and co-ordination aspects of the programme have the potential to undermine its future development if they are not addressed. This is particularly true as regards stakeholder consultation at all levels, essential in ensuring that the programme retains credibility and support from the tourism community.**



## 7 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Significant progress has been made by many tourism certification programmes over the last decade. The wide range of stakeholders that have been involved in the development of these initiatives, those individuals and organisations that have developed and promoted them, and those businesses that have invested in them, have played a significant role in taking some of the necessary steps towards a more sustainable tourism industry.

Sustainable tourism is currently a vision, rather than a reality. It is a vision that has varying components for the many stakeholders involved in tourism development. This report seeks to help tourism certification programmes, and the many stakeholders with an interest in their development, to play a leading role in achieving sustainable tourism. The far-reaching nature of many of the recommendations will not be easy to address within a business context. Considerable difficulties lie in mobilising businesses, whose primary motivation is often returning a profit for shareholders, to address some of these issues. However, by addressing these issues, they will be able to ensure that they stay in business, and that the destinations in which they operate will also prosper in the long term.

For those that are reticent, recent experience shows that proactive businesses are beginning to realise the many and hidden benefits associated with rethinking their core product to take account of the society and environment in which they operate (Box 7).

### **Box 7 – The advantages of taking a proactive stance towards issues of sustainability**

In recent years, British Petroleum has been one of the first businesses to rethink its product strategy and reap significant public relations benefits from gaining a relatively modest position in renewable energy. Its Chief Executive also recognises that it has to play a positive and responsible role in identifying sustainable solutions... The company still has a significant commitment to oil exploration, but through its renewable energy initiatives has put some distance between itself and the rest of the industry – an essential attribute for future-oriented companies.

*Source: Financial Times Supplement (ND) Responsible Business – A Financial Times Guide, Financial Times, London.*

Tourism certification programmes are already playing a role in defining the components of sustainable tourism. They can, however, play a more significant role by helping businesses to rethink their core strategy for the long term. In summary, the following actions will help tourism certification programmes deliver sustainable tourism:

- the award of certification logos only for achievement in excess of best practice performance standards rather than for commitment to improvement,
- certification of sustainable (rather than purely environmentally responsible) progress,
- improved branding and promotion of credible and effective programmes to consumers to increase uptake, potentially through a centralised umbrella accreditation body that oversees the creation of universal standards and increases comparability amongst schemes,
- improved communication of the elements of sustainable tourism and its merits to businesses across the full spectrum of the travel and tourism sector to increase uptake,
- improved participation by all sectors of the tourism industry, including transport and SMEs,
- recognition of and active work with all stakeholders involved in tourism,
- improved integration of the economic and social aspects of sustainable tourism, and
- improved transparency through reporting at company and cumulative (sector) levels.



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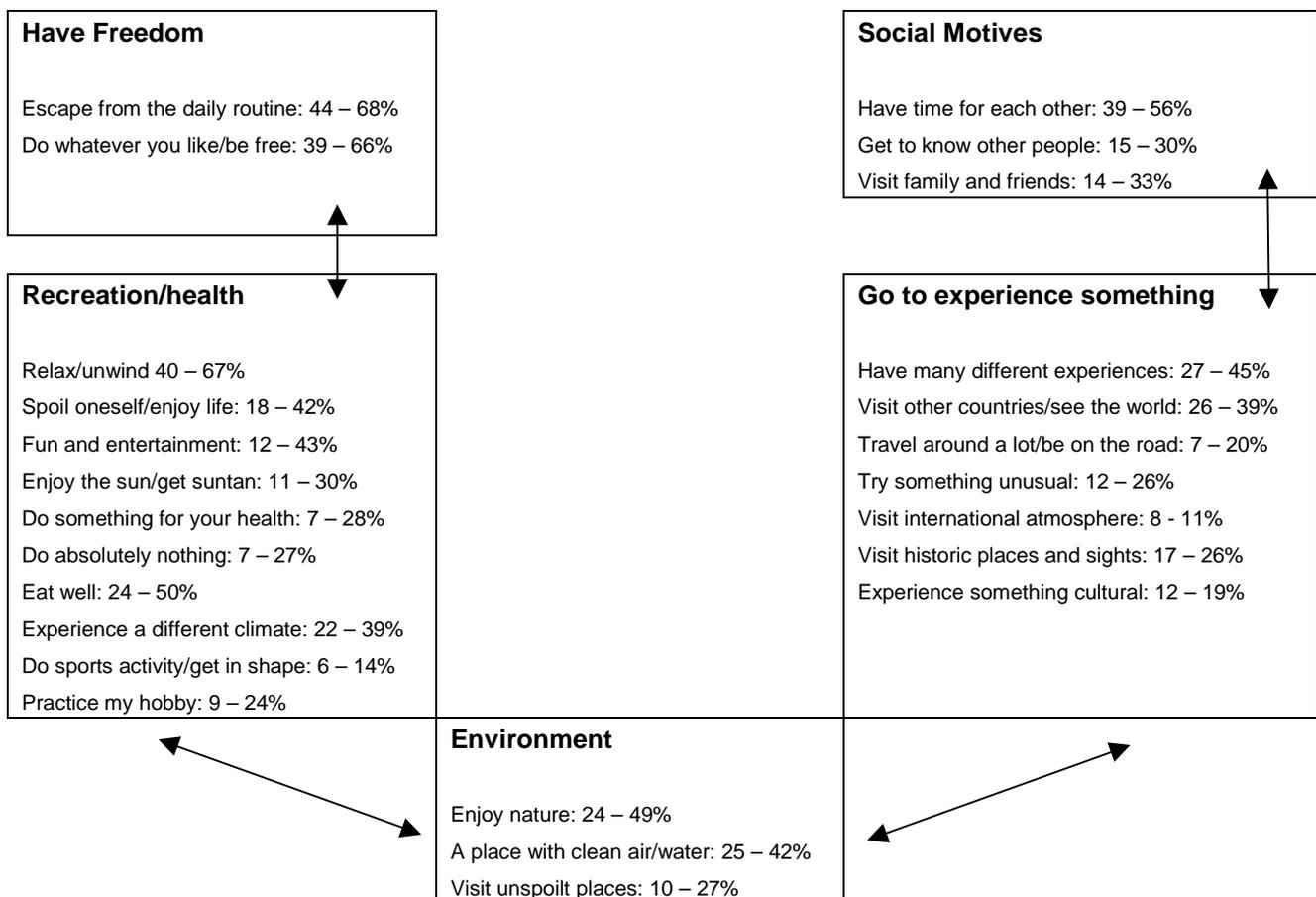
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# ANNEX 1 – ARE TOURISTS PREPARED TO PAY MORE FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY / SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL CHOICES?

A wide range of surveys have sought to illustrate that tourists are prepared to both choose environmentally preferable holiday experiences and to pay a premium for these products. Experience of companies, such as British Airways Holidays and TUI is, however to the contrary. Tourists may be influenced by the potential to select environmentally preferable products in theory, but in practice are influenced by a wide range of complex travel motives of which the environment is just one small component. It is likely that the environment contributes to the quality of the holiday experience, but with the exception of a dedicated few, does not provide a sufficient incentive to choose one product over another. The table below illustrates the role environmental and social issues played in the holiday decision making choices of 30,000 European tourists.



Source: Danmarks Turistrad, Institute for Tourism Research and planning, Denmark



## ANNEX 2 – TOOLS DEVELOPED TO HELP THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IMPROVE ITS ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

### Codes of conduct:

First developed	Late 1970s/early 1980s
Main emphasis tourism businesses Sectoral relevance	Visitor behaviour, changing environmental and social impacts of Predominantly focussed on visitor management and on responsible environmental management for all aspects of the industry
Examples	WTTC Code for Environmentally Responsible Tourism Businesses, Annapurna Conservation Area Visitor Guidelines
Strengths	Raise awareness throughout the industry Generic applicability to all sectors/activities Flexibility – applicable to most environments and types of tourism development.
Weaknesses	No monitoring mechanism

### Manuals/Tools

First developed	1980s
Main emphasis	Promoting eco-efficiency
Sectoral relevance	Business in general Predominantly focused on hotel sector or visitor management in specific destination types
Examples	Environmental Action Pack – IHEI Pollution Solutions Best Practice Ecotourism – A guide to energy and waste minimisation – Office of National Tourism, Australia The International Ecotourism Society’s guidelines for tourists and operators
Strengths	Accessibility_- most manuals are available at a very low entry cost for all businesses.  Simplicity - most are written in simple, non-technical language and can be implemented as easily by an enthusiastic but inexperienced member of staff as by a busy general manager.  Low cost of action - Most rely on low or no cost actions.

Ability to dictate the pace of change – Manuals enable businesses to implement environmental programmes at their own pace and in the way which best suits their business needs. They do not enforce actions which may managers perceive as irrelevant to their particular business.

Lead by example - Most manuals include some reference to good practice and these examples can inspire businesses.

Potential reach to activities of all travel and tourism businesses - The low entry cost combined with the charitable status of many of the originating organisations for these tools mean that they can have global reach throughout all layers of the travel and tourism industry.

## Weaknesses

Short shelf life - With the exception of periodicals such as *Green Hotelier* organisations are unable to find resources to update.

Generic applicability – Most manuals have global or national relevance. They: are unable to address some of the specific issues that are important at a destination level; recommend suites of technologies that are not universally available or applicable; and can on occasion raise potential conflict between health and safety and environmental considerations.

Language – Most manuals are produced in English.

No technical support - Most manuals are provided to participants with no follow-up mechanism or help line for technical queries. This leaves most in a position to refer only to simple and effective cost saving mechanisms, but unable to provide more detailed guidance on integrated environmental or sustainable development solutions. Combinations of technologies are often cheaper to install and deliver significantly higher benefits than single solutions and so cost saving opportunities may be lost through this approach.

Do not help businesses set benchmarks or quantify performance - Although one or two of the more recent manuals do set performance benchmarks, few are able to provide performance benchmarks to help businesses assess how well they are performing and where the greatest potential improvements lie.

No mechanism for measuring success - Most manuals provide no overall framework within which success can be viewed and tracked. It is, therefore difficult to assess the extent to which businesses are making improvements within a consistent framework.

Focus on eco-efficiency – Most focus on techno-fixes and environmental aspects of tourism.

## Award programmes and competitions

First developed	1980s
Main emphasis	Larger tourism businesses Eco and nature based tourism
Sectoral relevance	All sectors, focusing on destinations and accommodation sector
Examples	BA ETC Tourism for Tomorrow Awards IH&RA/AMEX Award
Strengths	<p>Evolve over time – Most competitions and award programmes focus on specific topics of interest in different years.</p> <p>Create awareness among consumers – In some cases, the public relations value far exceeds public exposure to certification logos or technical manuals.</p> <p>Create competition within the industry – Competitions and award schemes are very effective at both creating awareness of sustainable development issues and also creating competition between businesses to adopt better environmental/sustainability principles.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Judging process– With some notable exceptions, award programmes do not have transparent systems for assessing the quality of entries or for auditing those businesses that send in entries.</p> <p>Recognise only the efforts of the best – The achievement of winners often look complex and do not, therefore, encourage confidence among businesses with less commitment to make progress.</p> <p>Focus on ecotourism – Many award programmes focus on small scale and specialist ecotourism projects, making environmental and sustainable issues seem rather remote to mainstream tourism operations.</p> <p>Focus on larger businesses – Because of the time and expense required to develop applications for awards, many smaller businesses are excluded from submitting applications.</p> <p>No mechanism for monitoring performance – Most award programmes provide a snap shot of a businesses performance, but do not examine the way in which businesses progress over time.</p>

## Certification programmes

First developed	1992?
Main emphasis	Environmental efficiency
Sectoral relevance	Hotels and accommodation providers Destinations Increasingly tour operators
Examples	Green Globe 21 (Global) Blue Flag (Global) Green Tourism Business Scheme (Scotland) Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia) Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica)
Strengths	<p>Third party verification plays a key role in many programmes.</p> <p>A technical advice function or network of consultants is a key component</p> <p>An annual review or reporting procedure which ensure that the momentum continues among those companies that display the logo is common to most.</p> <p>Demonstrate commitment to consumers through the award of a logo Detailed written guidance is provided to help companies assess the status of their programmes</p> <p>Quantifiable data from which performance improvements can be assessed is usually collated</p> <p>Most review their criteria on an annual or biannual cycle, thus enabling them to evolve over time</p> <p>Most claim input from stakeholders</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Focus mainly on the environmental aspects of tourism and specifically on the brown environmental aspects</p> <p>Expense – unless supported by Government, most programmes are expensive and exclude the smaller operators</p> <p>Significant time input - Most certification programmes require the collation of a substantial volume of data that requires at least some specialist knowledge. Both the volume and technical nature of information required are likely to be a deterrent to the smaller companies or those with limited environmental interest</p> <p>Focus on ecotourism or other niche markets – The greatest improvements in the tourism industry will be brought about by</p>

influencing change through the mass tourism market. It is this aspect of the industry that has both the greatest footprint and – relatively – the greatest opportunity to improve. Low yields also make it a prime target for programmes that can deliver cost savings in the first instance at least.

Focus on hospitality or hotel businesses – Most schemes focus on the operations of the larger international hotel companies that comprise only a tiny percentage of the total population of tourism businesses.

Marketing effort is limited - Most programmes have a limited budget and have not focussed on raising consumer awareness.

Focus on management processes rather than actual performance. As a result, a company that is relatively polluting, but has an excellent environmental management system in place could qualify for a logo where one that produces relatively low levels of emission, but does not have a formal management system would not.

## **EMERGING TOOLS**

### **Indicators and benchmarking**

First developed:	Post 1992
Main emphasis:	Measuring progress towards sustainable development. Relative ease of measuring environmental as opposed to social criteria means that these predominate.
Sectoral relevance:	Destinations Hotels Technical operations of tour operators
Examples:	WTO indicators of sustainable tourism IHEI/WWF-UK benchmarking initiative with hotels English Tourism Council indicators of sustainable tourism in the UK.
Strengths:	Provide a quantifiable assessment of progress towards sustainable tourism within an individual unit or across a whole destination  Transparent and methodological process  Allows an individual business to compare its performance year-on-year and to plan for continual improvements.
Weaknesses:	Technical nature of data required may exclude smaller operators Lack of technical support and lack of third party verification Lack of a single focal point from which to collate data at a centralised level.

## **Lifecycle assessments**

First developed	1990?
Main emphasis	Tourism destinations
Sectoral relevance	Too early to state
Examples	British Airways Holidays work in St Lucia
Strengths	Focus on impacts of all tourism activity Quantify relevant importance of different impacts Destination specific
Weaknesses	Complex and difficult to implement Not fully developed or tested.

## ANNEX 3 – SUMMARY OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

### **CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (COSTA RICA)**

This standard is based on a firm understanding of the importance of ecotourism principles and many aspects of the standard are drawn from detailed research into the principles of ecotourism and a firm understanding of the importance of Costa Rica's environment and culture to its prosperity. The standard includes a firm commitment to certify only those companies that comply with rigid environmental standards.

### **ECOTEL (HVS INTERNATIONAL)**

The Ecotel standard is based on criteria used by the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the Rocky Mountain Institute.

### **NATIONAL ECOTOURISM ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME (AUSTRALIA)**

This programme focuses exclusively on ecotourism holiday products rather than destinations or businesses. The standard is based on an understanding of the real credentials of ecotourism operations. The programme builds on the national and local nature of ecotourism operations and also builds in an awareness of the importance of client feedback within such programmes.

### **NORDIC ECOLABELLING (NORDIC COUNTRIES)**

This programme has been developed using the guidance provided by the ISO 14024 standard 'Environmental labels and declarations – Guiding Principles'. These principles include the requirement that 'criteria should be objective, reasonable and verifiable; that interested parties should be given the opportunity to participate and that account should be taken of their comments'. The reliance of this programme on the ISO 14000 series of standards means that it has many similarities to Green Globe 21 (see below), but does not incorporate stakeholder analysis as a key criterion.

### **GREEN GLOBE 21**

Further information on Green Globe 21 can be found at <http://www.greenglobe.org>. The following information outlines the company and destination programmes.

#### ***THE GREEN GLOBE 21 COMPANY PROGRAMME***

Green Globe 21 membership is open to any travel and tourism company of any sector, size or location. Sectoral guides are provided to help companies achieve the Green Globe 21 standard and companies that sign up for membership can get additional help at additional cost from a network of consultants.

The Green Globe 21 company standard has evolved from the ISO 14001 international standard for environmental management systems. It uses the management system recommended by ISO 14001 as its core process. Key concepts enshrined within this system are pollution prevention and continuous improvement in the management system. The Green Globe 21 standard differs from the generic ISO 14001 standard by specifying the environmental aspects that tourism businesses should address (ISO 14001 requires businesses to identify their own environmental impacts independently), and also by integrating a section on stakeholder consultation (only implicit in ISO 14001).

The Green Globe 21 process has two key requirements for any type of company. Initially companies sign up for membership and make a commitment to achieve the standard within a 12 month period. Within this 12 month period, they must apply for and participate in a certification or audit process and once they have completed this successfully they may use the enhanced branding (the Green Globe 21 logo with a tick).

The main points of the Green Globe 21 company programme are as follows:

- The company makes the initial enquiry to Green Globe 21 and is provided with a copy of the requirements of the standard.
- If the company signs up for Green Globe 21 membership, it is provided with a copy of the standard and sector specific guidance on meeting those requirements (this latter documentation is currently under development and is only available for the accommodation and tour operator sectors). It is expected to begin the process of establishing an environmental management programme immediately.
- During the period between signing up for Green Globe 21 membership and gaining certification to the Green Globe 21 standard, companies must develop and implement a full environmental management system which comprises a number of processes designed to:
  - ensure compliance with local, regional and national regulations,
  - assess the environmental aspects of the company in a series of pre-set key performance areas,<sup>7</sup> and
  - ensure consultation with and encourage feedback from key stakeholders on their environmental programmes and on the significance of its impacts to this group (including customers).
- After a period of no more than 12 months, the company must go through an assessment process (audit). This is undertaken by a third party and qualified auditing company and takes an average of three days. The audit process checks that the operations of the company comply with its environmental policy statement, that the environmental management system is operating appropriately, that the company is making continuous improvements, and that there is a process for stakeholder consultation. If the company complies with the conditions it is awarded the Green Globe 21 certification logo (the logo with a tick), if it fails to comply it is given the option of rectifying the situation.
- Thereafter, each company will be subject to an annual check (pre-arranged) and occasional (unannounced) spot checks by the auditing company to ensure continued compliance. The length of the pre-arranged check comprises a two-day audit for larger companies, but obviously varies according to the scale of the operation.

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<sup>7</sup> These are: Energy efficiency, conservation and management, Management of fresh water resources, Ecosystem conservation and management, Management of social and cultural issues, Land use planning and management, Air quality protection and noise control, Waste water management, Waste minimisation, reuse and recycling, Storage and use of hazardous substances.

## ***THE GREEN GLOBE 21 DESTINATION PROCESS***

The overall aim of the Green Globe 21 Destination process is to develop a sustainable tourism programme for a location. The six key stages of the programme are:

Stage I	Scoping Study (Preliminary Environmental Review)
Stage II	Environmental Policy Development and Destination Visioning (Creation of a Shared Vision by all Stakeholders)
Stage III	Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Action Plan (Environmental Aspects Identification, Evaluation and Action Plan)
Stage IV	Implementation (Management of Significant Impacts and Organisational Structure & Communication)
Stage V	Capacity Building and Training Programme (Training, Awareness and Competence)
Stage VI	Award of Destination Recognition (Third-Party Certification Audit)

The steps involved in developing the sustainable tourism destination programme are:

1. Get the commitment of the Lead Agency to proceed and undertake a baseline assessment through a Scoping Study. Establish the Destination Management Group to oversee the development and implementation of the SDMS.
2. Carry out a Destination Visioning programme to determine the views of stakeholders and to build these views into the development of a sustainable tourism destination programme.
3. Create an environmental policy for the destination and establish the overall objectives for the sustainable tourism programme and the priority areas for action.
4. Assess the impacts on the environment through a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
5. For each key performance area the process will be:
  - Communicate objectives to stakeholders and communities
  - Measure current performance against set benchmarks; and
  - Define an Environmental Action Plan - a programme of actions for improvement by setting targets, timelines and responsibilities and minimising impacts identified in the SEA.
6. Award Green Globe Destination recognition
7. Monitor results and review periodically and redefine targets and objectives where appropriate.
8. Communicate results and achievements to all stakeholders.
9. Strive for year-on-year improvement in environmental performance.
10. Annual re-assessment by Green Globe to ensure continuous improvement is being made according to the Environmental Action Plan



# ANNEX 4 – STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

## **STAKEHOLDERS CONTACTED**

(Bold indicates stakeholder responded)

Airtours

British Airways

**British Airways Holidays**

British Hospitality Association

**Centre for Science and Environment/Taskforce on Business and Industry**

**Conservation International**

**English Tourism Council**

**Inter-Continental Hotels & Resorts**

**International Federation of Tour Operators**

International Hotel & Restaurant Association

**International Hotels Environment Initiative**

Jersey Tourism

**Marketing Manchester**

P&O

Scandic Hotels

**Scottish Tourist Board/Green Tourism Business Scheme**

**Thomson Holidays**

**Tourism Concern – UK**

Tourism Concern - Gambia

Touristik Union International GmbH

**United Nations Environment Programme**

Voluntary Service Overseas

World Tourism Organisation

## QUESTIONS EXPLORED

1. A number of eco-labelling and certification programmes have been developed for the travel and tourism industry over the last five years. Thinking about eco-labelling and certification programmes in general, do you think these have value in helping the tourism industry move towards more sustainable practices?
2. Do you think other mechanisms (regulation, best practice, etc.) have greater potential than eco-labelling/certification programmes to bring about changes in the practices of the tourism industry?
3. Which eco-labelling/certification programmes have you heard of?
4. Does/has your organisation participated on the Board or Steering Group for any of these eco-labelling/certification programmes in the last two years?
5. Did/has your organisation been invited to comment on the content of any of these eco-labelling programmes in the last two years?
6. COMPANIES ONLY Did/has your organisation joined or participated in any of the eco-labelling programmes over the last two years?
7. COMPANIES ONLY In your opinion, did the programme help your business to implement strategies and programmes to improve the sustainability of its practices?
8. How important do you think it is that eco-labelling programmes consult with companies, NGOs and other stakeholders
9. Are you able to identify one or more eco-labelling programmes that you consider have considerable potential to bring about more sustainable forms of tourism?
10. Do you think that NGOs and environmental organisations should recommend any eco-labelling programme to travellers or tourism companies?
11. Have you heard of the Green Globe 21 environmental management programme?