



Sustainable Tourism Development in the Baltic Sea Region


*Overview of existing tools and methods
for labelling sustainable tourism*

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**Wolfgang Günther
Imke Meinken
Karen Winkler**

Institut für Tourismus- und
Bäderforschung in Nordeuropa GmbH
Wrangelstr. 16, D -24105 Kiel
Email: info@nit-kiel.de, www.nit-kiel.de

Overview

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Client:	Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Steingrube Ernst-Moritz-Arndt Universität Greifswald Institut für Geografie Makarenkostraße 22 D - 17487 Greifswald
Concept and development:	 <p>The Institute for Tourism and Recreational Research in Northern Europe, Kiel</p> <p>Wolfgang Günther Dr. Imke Meinken Karen Winkler</p> <p>assisted by Magdalena Scherk</p>
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Preface

The agora toolbox is part of the work package 2 (WP 2) which aims to provide and implement evaluated methodologies and to give strategic recommendations on sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Consequently, the purpose of the toolbox is to deliver the corresponding methodologies. Moreover, in accordance with the overall aim of agora to develop and promote sustainable tourism in the rural areas of the BSR, the toolbox naturally needs to provide tools that allow for and lead to sustainable tourism development.

Sustainability has to consider three dimensions

Sustainable tourism must simultaneously fulfil the requirements of the environmental, social and economic dimension of sustainability. Sustainable tourism planning therefore aims much broader and deeper than just environment-friendly tourism or the mitigation of negative effects. Sustainable also means economically successful, but in a long lasting balance with the social and ecological needs of the destination.

Still, despite the many definitions of sustainable tourism, the major problem remains to make these operational for practical planning and management. For addressing the ecological dimension of tourism, tools such as certification criteria or ecotourism marking criteria may be employed, for example. The social dimension of sustainability is, among others, connected with local employment as well as impacts on or support for local cultures and lifestyles. The economic dimension refers to e.g. stability of employment over seasons, contribution to local

economy and regional gross domestic product, control or leakage from the regional economy etc.

Most tools presented in the agora toolbox are methodologies designed to facilitate and optimise tourism development in general as sustainable tourism development basically employs the same methodologies. Sustainability primarily comes into the picture as a guiding principle while using the tools. Therefore, the tool box documents also give advice, as far as possible, on how sustainability can be considered in the implementation process.

Selection process for selected tools

In order to select the most appropriate and required tools and methods for developing sustainable tourism in the BSR, a determination of requirements was undertaken through the Baltic 21 Tourism Task Force (TOUTF) Network. Based on this, a pre-selection of thirteen tools was proposed to interested parties for the agora pilot projects with the request to select the most essential tools according to their perspective. This resulted in the final selection of the six following tools:

Content of the agora toolbox

- ◆ **Tools for integrating sustainable tourism development with spatial planning at local and regional level:** Public participation, environmental assessments and conflict resolutions schemes are important tools to implement sustainable tourism in spatial planning processes. Selected tools will be described and their implementation will be

demonstrated in a case study. A handbook will summarise the most important findings to assist developers of sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea Region.

- ◆ **Sustainability Check for tourism projects:** In tourism, there are many so-called sustainable projects and many external funds which depend on this requirement, but no unique standard for the assessing the sustainability of these projects. Therefore, the aim of the sustainability check is to develop a testing tool for the sustainability of tourism projects which can be used for assessment during proposal, implementation and post-implementation phase.
- ◆ **Market research as capacity planning tool in tourism:** Market research is an important area in tourism as information on the requirements of consumers and competitors' activities play a major part in any tourism development and marketing. This part of the toolbox provides an overview about different issues to consider when undertaking market research and which steps need to be undertaken in order to do so. Clearly, market research in itself is not sustainable, but the information gained from it helps to use economic, natural and social resources more effectively and therefore also in a more sustainable way.
- ◆ **Developing sustainable tourism products:** In order to successfully develop sustainable tourism in the BSR, one of the most basic prerequisites is to develop products that are in line with market requirements without threatening the social and natural resources of the destination. Due to the fact that many issues need to be considered in product

development, this toolbox provides detailed advice on the necessary steps in the process and illustrates where sustainability can be integrated into tourism products.

- ◆ **Labelling sustainable tourism products:** Once a sustainable tourism product is created, the next task is to communicate the product as well as its sustainability to potential customers. Applying for a sustainable tourism label can be a means of doing so as this clearly conveys the sustainability aspect of the product. Furthermore, labels also act as quality promises to the consumers because most labels require the fulfilment of certain standards. Therefore, different label types and methodologies will be illustrated in this part of the toolbox.
- ◆ **Strategic cooperation in tourism:** This issue is increasingly gaining importance as tourism suppliers are required to cooperate with others in order to overcome challenges such as an increasing competition or changing consumer demands, for example. Furthermore, tourism with its fragmented nature and interdependent product parts simply necessitates the cooperation of tourism providers. Therefore, this part of the toolbox will deal with the topic in detail. Moreover, it will also illustrate how cooperation can contribute to sustainable tourism development through its integrative approach and through the more efficient use of resources when these are pooled together.



Apart from the first tool each of the topics will be worked on in three steps: First of all, a general overview of each topic is provided. The second step will then consist of an evaluation of the tools and methods described in the overviews regarding their suitability for the agora project. As a last step, a guidebook will be prepared for each topic which will help to develop sustainable tourism in the BSR. The results of steps 2 and 3 will also be made available on the agora website.

The present document represents the first step for the 'Labelling sustainable tourism products' part of the agora toolbox.

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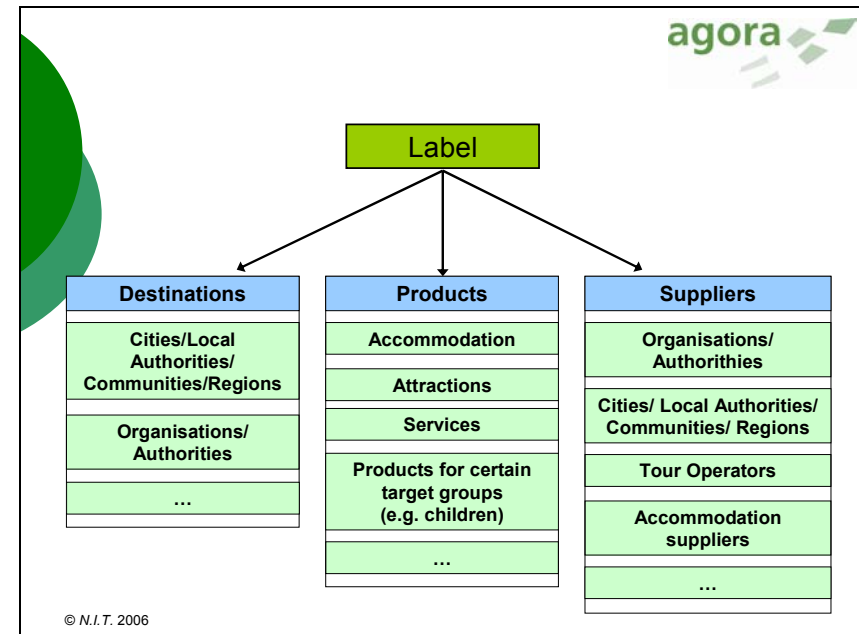
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1 Introduction

Within the tourism industry, there are many different labels for all types of tourism related activities or products. Labels come all in different sizes and types, have different geographical reaches and use different approaches; hence, the whole situation concerning labels is very unclear. In order to overcome this disarray and to use labels successfully, the objective of this part of the agora tool box is to provide a manual on labelling sustainable tourism. This document represents the first step in reaching this objective and provides a general impression of existing tools and approaches to labelling sustainable tourism.

As depicted in Fig. 1, labels for sustainable tourism can designate different things that usually fall into three categories: destinations, products and suppliers. The examples shown for each type of label are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the many possibilities for labelling. Furthermore, Fig. 1 illustrates that one label can have several purposes, i.e. it can stand for destinations as well as suppliers, for example. Additionally, it is also possible that several labels decide to form one umbrella label which then represents all of the sub-labels. One example for this will be shown later on (see section 3.14).

Fig. 1: Overview of label types



The topic of labelling has become increasingly important for the tourism industry over the last decades as a means for providing a competitive advantage in order to match demand and supply. Moreover, labelling allows suppliers to objectively evaluate their own product and if necessary to improve it. From a consumer's point of view, labelling also provides guidance through the myriad of offers on the market and creates transparency and comparability.



In order to classify the many different labels on the market, it has to be decided, which label characteristics are the most important, i.e. according to which factors the labels should be categorised. For the purpose of this document, these are considered to be the following:

- ◆ The type of label, i.e. whether the label tests destinations, products or suppliers (or combines two or more of these purposes);
- ◆ The labelling system i.e. what methods are applied: non-binding guidelines, voluntary self-commitments, mandatory and optional criteria, indicators or certification (the systems differ from each other in terms of the pressure on participants to comply with the rules for each label and the formality as well as the comprehensiveness of the labelling system);
- ◆ The geographical reach of the label, e.g. international, European, national or regional/local

Especially the last two factors have certain implications for the usability of labels with regard to the above mentioned benefits for customers (orientation and transparency) and suppliers (assessment/improvement of product offer and competitive advantage).

To reach the aim of this document, i.e. to provide an impression of existing tools and approaches to labelling sustainable tourism, desk research in terms of literature review and Internet research was undertaken. In doing so, the main emphasis was given to finding suitable sustainable tourism labels with regard to the above mentioned three issues: type of label, labelling system and the geographical reach. This document does not intend to

provide a complete list of all existing labels; it rather aims to demonstrate the spectrum of different approaches to labelling by giving selected examples.

Following this introduction, **chapter 2** contains a table that summarises all labels included in this paper and indicates the type, method and geographical reach of the respective label. The detailed description of each label can be found in **chapter 3**. **Chapter 4** provides a future outlook on the issue of labelling for sustainable tourism and **chapter 5** gives details of other relevant information sources. Finally, the **appendix** contains further information about the selected labels.

2 Overview of selected labels

Fig. 2: Overview of selected labels

Labels	What is tested?			How is it tested?					Geographical reach			
	Destinations	Products	Suppliers	Certification	Indicators	Mandatory & optional criteria	Voluntary self-commitments	Non-binding guidelines	International	Europe	National	Regional/Local
Viabono	X	X	X			X					X	
Green Globe 21	X	X	X		X	X			X			
Destination 21	X				X	X					X	
Blue Flag	X	X				X			X			
PAN Parks		X	X		X					X		
Naturally Rügen		X	X			X						X
Nature's Best		X	X			X					X	
Forumandersreisen		X	X			X					X	
TUI criteria for nature-experience tours		X						X				X
European Eco-Label			X			X				X		
The Green Key			X			X				X		
TOI (Tour Operators' Initiative)			X				X		X			
EMAS II			X	X						X		
VISIT	X		X	X						X		





3 Description of labels

In the following, all labels shown in the overview in chapter 2 will be described in detail according to the following framework:


- ◆ Name of the label
- ◆ What is tested?
- ◆ How is it tested?
- ◆ Geographical reach
- ◆ Evaluation system
- ◆ Evaluated issues
- ◆ Control mechanism
- ◆ Validity
- ◆ Costs
- ◆ Responsible body
- ◆ Other comments (if not applicable, the row was deleted)
- ◆ Similar labels (if not applicable, the row was deleted)
- ◆ Source


3.1 Viabono

	Viabono
What is tested?	Destinations, products and suppliers: local authorities, hotels /gastronomy, camping sites, nature parks, holiday apartments, canoe tourism suppliers, youth hostels, package tours
How is it tested?	Mandatory & optional criteria (approximately 18 mandatory and 22 optional questions)
Geographical reach	National (Germany)
Evaluation system	Minimum number of points to be reached, i.e. 2/3 of total, for mandatory questions and overall
Evaluated issues	Waste, energy, water, noise, mobility, nature and landscape, architecture and settlement, information, well-being of guests, regional economy chains, environmental management
Control mechanism	Guest surveys (samples), follow-up of complaints
Validity	3 years
Costs	One-off basic fee, varies from 100 € to 500 € Annual marketing fee, varies from 6 € to 1.250 €
Responsible body	Viabono Trägerverein e.V. / Viabono GmbH Full members: Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club e.V., Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club e.V., BAVC Bruderhilfe e.V. Automobil- und Verkehrssicherheitsclub, Bundesvereinigung Kanutouristik e.V., Bundesverband der Campingwirtschaft in Deutschland e.V., Deutscher Hotel- und Gaststättenverband e.V., Deutscher Heilbäderverband e.V., Deutsches Jugendherbergswerk e.V., Deutscher Landkreistag, Deutscher Naturschutzring, Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund, Deutscher Tourismusverband, forumandersreisen e.V., Landesamt für den Nationalpark Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer, Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V., NaturFreunde Deutschlands e.V., Ökologischer Tourismus in Europa e.V., Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V.


	Viabono
	<p>Further supporters of Viabono: Bundesverband mittelständischer Reiseunternehmen e.V., Bundesamt für Naturschutz, Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, Bundesverband der Deutschen Tourismuswirtschaft e.V., Deutsche Bahn AG Bahn-Umwelt-Zentrum, Deutscher Städtetag, Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V., Umweltbundesamt, Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband e.V.</p>
Other comments	<p>Viabono is not only a label, but also a marketing cooperation with comprehensive marketing activities. For more information please visit the Viabono website</p>
Similar labels	<p>Nature's Best (www.naturesbasta.se): also provides a comprehensive marketing platform (see also section 3.6)</p>
Source	<p>www.viabono.de</p>

3.2 Green Globe 21

	Green Globe 21
What is tested?	Destinations, products and suppliers: Travel and tourism companies, communities/destinations, design and construction of tourism infrastructure, ecotourism products
How is it tested?	Indicators and criteria: each of the four standards requires assessment in different areas through criteria that have to be fulfilled, indicators are applied through benchmarking of the environmental and social sustainability performance within each standard.
Geographical reach	International
Evaluation system	Three levels (that build on each other): A: Green Globe 21 Awareness (Affiliate) B: Green Globe 21 Benchmarked C: Green Globe 21 Certified
Evaluation issues	The Company Standard, for example, requires: an environmental and social sustainability policy, compliance with the prevailing legislative framework, environmental and social sustainability performance (assessed through the benchmarking process), an operating environmental management system and continual consultation and communication with the public and clients.
Control mechanism	Participants start with level A or B and have to complete these consecutively before they can attempt level B or C. The extent to which the above criteria have to be fulfilled depends on the level. After a level of the label has been awarded, an annual renewal and assessment is required.
Validity	One year
Costs	Different costs for each of the standards and the different levels (Level A is relatively inexpensive, Level B and C are relatively expensive and do not include the costs for site inspections. Overall, costs vary from ca. 100 € to 12.000 €).

	<p>Green Globe 21</p>
<p>Responsible body</p>	<p>Green Globe 21 The label was developed by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) in 1993. The following organisations are partners of Green Globe 21: Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand (TIANZ), China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST). SHELL Gas LPG is Green Globe's first corporate partner.</p>
<p>Other comments</p>	<p>The Label is based on the principles of sustainable development as defined in the Agenda 21 and provides a labelling system for a very wide range of tourism and travel issues in many countries.</p>
<p>Source</p>	<p>www.greenglobe21.com</p>




3.3 Destination 21

	Destination 21
What is tested?	Destinations
How is it tested?	Indicators (37 indicators that are allocated to 8 objectives), mandatory & optional criteria
Geographical reach	National (Denmark)
Evaluation system	Three stages: approval (by Destination 21 to participate), qualification phase (situation analysis in relation to the 8 objectives), operational phase (to reach all 8 objectives). The whole process takes four years in total.
Evaluated issues	As described in the 8 sustainability objectives: local organisation and cooperation, capacity building towards sustainable development, promotion of the Destination 21 philosophy and practice, natural and cultural heritage assets, local culture and authenticity visibility, resource use and pollution, local employment, development of sustainable tourism products.
Control mechanism	Yearly report and inspection
Validity	Unlimited
Costs	According to efforts undertaken by the respective destination.
Responsible body	Destination 21 (Board, steering committee and secretariat). Founded by Danish Outdoor Council, the Destination 21 regions, Danish Camping Board, Danish Tourist Board, HORESTA, Confederation of Employees in Trade, Transport and Services (HTS), Cooperation between Danish tourist associations and tourist agencies, Joint Council of the Danish Tourist Trade
Other comments	The label has been discontinued due to financial problems, but was tested in 8 pilot projects throughout Denmark. The label has been included in this overview because it provides a comprehensive and integrated approach to labelling sustainable tourism destinations.


3.4 Blue Flag


	Blue Flag for beaches and marinas
What is tested?	Destinations (beaches) and products (marinas)
How is it tested?	Mandatory & optional criteria (29 for beaches, 22 for marinas), some criteria only apply to certain regions.
Geographical reach	International (35 countries are currently participating and 3 countries (Chile, Romania, Russia) are currently testing the label in the pilot phase)
Evaluation system	All mandatory requirements have to be fulfilled and as many as possible from the optional criteria
Evaluated issues	Environmental education and information, environmental management, safety and services, water quality
Control mechanism	During season the respective national environmental protection agency (i.e. the public authority) controls the bathing water quality data. The national Blue Flag organisation and the International Blue Flag Coordination furthermore perform control visits to the Blue Flag sites.
Validity	One season
Costs	Approximately 30 € per beach/marina for the award of the Blue Flag, procedures and costs vary according to country
Responsible body	Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) FEE is an international umbrella organisation with one national member organisation per country. There are also affiliate organisations (The Field Studies Council, UK and HORESTA, DK) as well as some honorary members (individual persons).
Other comments	The evaluated issues are linked to tourism, but do not assess the overall tourism-related performance of a destination. In other words, the label only reflects one section of the quality, not the overall quality of the destination. Nevertheless, the Blue Flag represents a well-known and worldwide accepted label.
Source	www.blueflag.org/Criteria/Beaches ; www.blueflag.org/Criteria/Marinas

3.5 PAN Parks


  	PAN Parks
What is tested?	Products and suppliers: Protected areas of more than 20.000 ha, regions around protected areas and business partners (local, national and international businesses)
How is it tested?	Indicators: There are five principles and each has several criteria with respective indicators.
Geographical reach	Europe (including Russia, Romania and Bulgaria)
Evaluation system	Three stages in the verification process: verification of the protected area, verification of its sustainable tourism strategy and verification of the local business partners.
Evaluated issues	Natural values, habitat management, visitor management, sustainable tourism development, tourism business partners
Control mechanism	Verification is carried out by teams of independent experts according to the Verification Manual.
Validity	Verification renewal is carried out every 5 years, monitoring on an annual basis.
Costs	The PAN Parks Foundation and the applicant share the costs of verification. There is funding available for verification in the form of a PAN Parks Verification Grant. However, the PAN Parks Foundation wants the protected area's management to contribute to the costs of verification to demonstrate commitment and so that the PAN Parks Foundation may allocate funding for more site verifications.
Responsible body	PAN Parks Foundation (founded by the WWF and the Molecaten Group, DK)
Other comments	The PAN Parks Label is unique in the sense that it aims to provide a quality brand for well-managed protected areas.
Similar labels	European Charter for sustainable tourism (by EUROPARC Federation) (www.europarc.org): The two labels are similar as they both provide concepts for managing tourism in protected areas in harmony with the suitable management of natural resources and for the socio-economic benefits of stakeholders. Furthermore, both are based on the concept of partnership between protected areas, tourism and other businesses and the local population and try to support conservation and socio-economic development through tourism.
Source	www.panparks.org

3.6 Naturally Rügen


	Naturally Rügen (Natürlich Rügen)
What is tested?	Products and suppliers: Accommodation (hotels, holiday apartments, camping), gastronomy, products and raw materials (corn, beef, pork, lamb, poultry, eggs, potatoes), services and trade (retail). Criteria for crafts, culture and view of place/ambiance are in preparation.
How is it tested?	Mandatory & optional criteria: For all categories, there are certain basic requirements which must be fulfilled. Furthermore, there are mandatory criteria (for products and raw materials, these are the only criteria, i.e. they have no optional criteria). For all other categories, there are also general optional criteria and specific optional criteria which apply to certain subtypes of products and suppliers, e.g. family-orientated hotels. The number of criteria varies according to the respective issue to be labelled.
Geographical reach	Regional/local (Germany)
Evaluation system	All basic and mandatory criteria have to be fulfilled and approximately 30% of all optional criteria
Evaluation issues	For all products and suppliers (apart from agricultural products), the following general issues are evaluated: product range, service and information quality, natural environment, network compatibility and ambiance/architecture/design.
Control mechanism	Control is exercised through three levels: Level 1: Self-control and documentation in single businesses Level 2: On-site control through appointed employees and organisations/institutes and control of documents Level 3: Review of conducted controls through the owner of the trademark or the awarding body
Validity	2 years
Costs	There are yearly fees for the conducted controls and for using the label (licensing fees). Additional costs can arise for participation in certain additional marketing activities (basic marketing activities are financed through the licensing fees).
Responsible body	The Administrative District Rügen (Landkreis Rügen), in cooperation with the Rügen Tourism Association and a regional bank (Sparkasse Rügen)

	Naturally Rügen (Natürlich Rügen)
Other comments	<p>This type of labelling represents a form of regional marketing. The development process of the label has been completed and its implementation has been announced for the near future. The label links tourism (the most important economic sector on the island of Rügen) with other upstream and downstream sectors such as agriculture, services, production and others.</p>
Source	www.ruegen.de/qualitaet_ruegen1.html


3.7 Nature's Best

	Nature's Best
What is tested?	Products and Suppliers: Tour operators and tour operator products (i.e. the tour operator's top five products, preferably 'typical' products. If these five products meet the criteria, the tour operator will be trusted to label further of his products/tours, provided they meet the criteria).
How is it tested?	Mandatory & optional criteria; further division into criteria for the tour operator and the tour product.
Geographical reach	National (Sweden)
Evaluation system	All mandatory criteria have to be fulfilled and at least ten percent of the optional criteria.
Evaluated issues	Support for local economy, environmental sustainability, promotion of discovery, knowledge and respect, contribution to conservation of and respect for destinations
Control mechanism	During the application phase, the tour operator undertakes a self-assessment. After this, the labelling committee assesses the tour operator and the five products/tours. Later assessment is mainly undertaken by customer feedback.
Validity	3 years
Costs	The application fee (one-off fee) varies in relation to the company's turnover: ca. 50 € – 320 €. The annual fee also varies in relation to the company's turnover: 100 €– 1.600 €.
Responsible body	Swedish Ecotourism Society, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Swedish Travel and Tourism Council
Other comments	This label undertakes comprehensive market activities and represents a joined approach of tourism and environmental organisations.
Similar labels	Viabono (www.viabono.de) (see section 3.1.)
Source	www.naturesbasta.se

3.8 forumandersreisen

 forumandersreisen	forumandersreisen
What is tested?	Products and Suppliers: Tour operators and their products
How is it tested?	Mandatory & optional criteria
Geographical reach	National (Germany)
Evaluation system	All mandatory and some optional criteria have to be fulfilled.
Evaluated issues	General sustainability criteria and ecological, economical and social criteria are given for the tour product (travel to and from the destination, the destination itself, accommodation, activities) and the tour operator (responsibility for customers, communication with customers, office organisation and membership).
Control mechanism	The assessment of the application documents is undertaken by an external organisation in coordination with an internal control board that consists of a maximum of three people that are chosen by the members.
Validity	One year
Costs	235€ (reduced fee: 55€, the reduction can only be given within the first 3 years of membership), Internet fee: 150 € (mandatory)
Responsible body	forumandersreisen e.V. The association is backed by several partners: Viabono, Reisemedizinisches Zentrum des Tropeninstitut Hamburg, Reisepavillion Hannover, Netzwerk Lebendiges Lernen, ECPAT Germany, VISIT, Ecological Tourism in Europe and Deutscher Naturschutzring.
Other comments	There is a continual development of the criteria catalogue. A yearly catalogue with selected member products is published for travel agencies and consumers. Further marketing activities are also carried out for all members.
Source	www.forumandersreisen.de


3.9 TUI criteria for nature-experience tours


	TUI criteria for nature-experience tours
What is tested?	Products
How is it tested?	Non-binding guidelines (5 ecological criteria)
Geographical reach	Local
Evaluation system	Not applicable
Evaluated issues	Concept development, support of local cooperation partners, environmentally friendly transport, increase of awareness for natural and cultural resources, active participation of guests
Control mechanism	Not applicable
Validity	Not applicable
Costs	Not applicable
Responsible body	TUI Deutschland
Other comments	The criteria are used by TUI to design their products according to the above mentioned issues.
Similar labels	TUI criteria for environmentally friendly whale watching (http://www.tui-deutschland.de/de/umwelt/Naturerlebnisreisen/Ausfluege/Kriterien-Whalewatching.html)
Source	www.tui-deutschland.de/de/umwelt/Naturerlebnisreisen/Ausfluege/Ausflugskriterien.html

3.10 European Eco-label


	European Eco-label for tourist accommodation service & camp site service
What is tested?	Suppliers: tourist accommodation and camp site services
How is it tested?	Mandatory & optional criteria (37 mandatory and 47 optional)
Geographical reach	Europe (including Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein)
Evaluation system	All mandatory criteria must be fulfilled (if this is not possible an explanation has to be given). The criteria in the optional section need to be fulfilled according to the requirements set out in the scoring system.
Evaluated issues	Energy, water, staff training, guest information, eco procurement, dangerous chemical substances, waste, further issues.
Control mechanism	Each criterion foresees different means of verification: self declaration from the applicant, declaration from suppliers and third parties such as technicians, supporting documentation such as booklets, invoices, letters sent to public or private authorities, etc., site inspections carried out by the Competent Body.
Validity	3 to 5 years depending on the product group (the validity for the product group 'tourism' is not separately specified).
Costs	Application fee: 300 - 1300 € (25% reduction for SMEs and applicants from developing countries); annual fee: 500 - 25000 € (0.15% of annual sales volume; 25% discount for SMEs and applicants from developing countries, 15% for companies registered under EMAS or certified under ISO 14001)
Responsible body	The European Union and the respective body in each European country.
Other comments	The same label is also used EU-wide for other product groups such as cleaning products, appliances and clothing, for example.
Similar labels	Nordic Ecolabelling (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland) (www.svanen.nu/eng): This label is similar to the European Ecolabel as it also labels 60 different product groups.
Source	http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm ; www.eco-label.com

3.11 The Green Key


	The Green Key
What is tested?	Suppliers: Hotels, camping sites, hostels, summer houses, restaurants, leisure facilities, and conference facilities.
How is it tested?	Mandatory, essential and optional criteria (number varies according to country)
Geographical reach	Europe (Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, France, Greenland, Lithuania), further countries are preparing to join
Evaluation system	Mandatory criteria must be fulfilled in all establishments in all countries before they can be awarded the label. Essential criteria must be fulfilled in all establishments in all countries within a certain time frame. Optional criteria should be considered a pool of elements that can be incorporated in the national criteria. Each country develops national criteria consisting of all mandatory and essential criteria. On top of this come all relevant optional criteria. 'Relevant' means 'relevant according to national legislation, infrastructure, policies, and climate'. Each country can add further criteria if necessary - but never remove mandatory or essential criteria.
Evaluated issues	11 issues: environmental management, staff involvement, guest information, water, washing and cleaning (or housekeeping and detergents), waste, energy, food and beverage, indoor environment, parks and parking areas, green activities, administration
Control mechanism	Each national steering group approves all applications from new businesses. Periodically, each awarded business receives a control visit from the national Green Key operator. The international Green Key performs spot checks in all countries.
Validity	12 months
Costs	The yearly assessment costs are approximately 500 €. Costs for control visits are paid by the association.
Responsible body	Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and a national steering group in each country. The steering committees consist of representatives from authorities, non-governmental organisations and business associations.
Other comments	The Green key is unique in the sense that it focuses on environmental education.


	<p>The Green Key</p>
<p>Similar labels</p>	<p>Ecolabel for Tourism Enterprises (Umweltzeichen für Tourismusbetriebe) (Austria) (www.umweltzeichen.at); Green Certificate (Latvia) (www.eco.celotajs.lv). These two labels are similar to the Green Key as both are national labels for tourist accommodation only.</p>
<p>Source</p>	<p>www.green-key.org</p>

3.12 TOI


	TOI (Tour Operators Initiative)
What is tested?	Suppliers: Tour operators
How is it tested?	Voluntary commitment
Geographical reach	International
Evaluation system	To become a member, tour operators have to sign a commitment to adopt the principles of sustainable tourism and to implement these principles through a corporate sustainable tourism policy. As part of this commitment, members also agree to monitor and report their progress.
Evaluated issues	Three areas in which guidelines are established: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to sustainable development and management of tourism 2. Principles of sustainable development and management of tourism 3. Public awareness and communication
Control mechanism	Assessment of the application documents
Validity	Not applicable
Costs	Annual membership fee in relation to annual turnover: ranges from 410 € to US\$ 4140 €.
Responsible body	Tour Operators Initiative Members of TOI are the following tour operators: Accor (France), Atlas Voyages (Morocco), Aurinkomatkat-Suntours (Finland), DiscoveryInitiatives (UK), Dynamic Tours (Morocco), Exodus (UK), First Choice (UK and Ireland), FreeWayAdventures (Brazil), Hotelplan (Switzerland), KEL 12 (Italy), LTU-Touristik GmbH (Germany), Premier Tours (USA), Sahara Tours International (Morocco), Settemari (Italy), Studiosus (Germany), Thomas Cook (France), Travel Walji's PVT (Pakistan), TUI Group (Germany), VASCO Travel (Turkey), Ventaglio (Italy) Support is also given by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNECSO and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO).
Other comments	The TOI is a worldwide voluntary association of tour operators which commit themselves to sustainable tourism development and management and regular reporting.
Source	www.toinitiative.org


3.13 EMAS II

	EMAS II (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)
What is tested?	Suppliers: all types of businesses and (public) organisation
How is it tested?	Certification: EMAS provides fixed procedures in the form of an environmental management programme for evaluating, reporting and improving the environmental performance of companies.
Geographical reach	Europe: 15 EU member states and 3 European Economic Area member states, i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Furthermore, all candidate countries are implementing the scheme in preparation for their accession to the EU.
Evaluation system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of an environmental review 2. Establishment of an environmental management system 3. Preparation of an environmental audit 4. Provision of a statement detailing the organisation's environmental performance
Evaluation issues	Environmental performance
Control mechanism	An independent verifier certifies that the organisation's environmental policy, the environmental audit and the environmental statement comply with the rules of the EMAS regulation.
Validity	Three years
Costs	Registration fees can vary from 0 to 1.500 €, the latter applies to large companies. In general, the regulations foresee a reduced registration fee for small and medium sized enterprises to encourage a higher participation rate of these businesses. Other cost include costs for the external verifier: these are private consultants and therefore charge the usual market prices for consultancy services.
Responsible body	European Union and the respective bodies in each country
Other comments	EMAS provides a complete and legally-based certification system for environmental management within organisations and can therefore be considered as a very rigorous labelling process.

	<p>EMAS II (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)</p>
<p>Similar labels</p>	<p>ISO 14001:1996 (www.iso.org/iso/en/iso9000-14000/understand/inbrief.html): the ISO 14001:1996 label is similar to EMAS II as the latter has been built upon the ISO standards, but EMAS goes beyond the standards in several ways.</p>
<p>Source</p>	<p>http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/emas/about/summary_en.htm</p>

3.14 VISIT

	VISIT (Voluntary Initiative for Sustainability in Tourism)
What is tested?	<p>Destinations and suppliers: the 12 VISIT labels certify accommodation, beaches, restaurants, tourist attractions and other types of tourism businesses.</p> <p>Participating labels are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Legambiente Turismo (www.legambienteturismo.it/eng/index.html) ◆ Blue Flag International (www.blueflag.org/blueflag), ◆ Steinbock Label (www.oe-plus.ch/) ◆ La Clef Verte (www.laclefverte.org) ◆ Das Österreichische Umweltzeichen für Tourismusbetriebe (www.umweltzeichen.at) ◆ El Distintivo de Garantía de Calidad Ambiental (http://mediambient.gencat.net/eng/empreses/ecoproductes_i_ecoserveis/inici.jsp) ◆ Green Certificate (www.eco.celotajs.lv/) ◆ EcoLabel Luxembourg (www.emweltzenter.lu/emweltzenter/oekofonds/ecolabel/virstellung.htm) ◆ Den Groenne Noegle (www.green-key.org) ◆ The Milieubarometer (www.milieubarometer.com) ◆ Green Tourism Business Scheme (www.green-business.co.uk) ◆ Nordic Swan (www.svanen.nu)
How is it tested?	<p>Certification: 21 VISIT standards were developed from the ISO 14024 standard for 'Type I Eco-labels'. These were subsequently recognised by participating eco-labels as their own standard.</p>
Geographical reach	Europe

	VISIT (Voluntary Initiative for Sustainability in Tourism)
Evaluation system	<p>To assess whether the 12 eco-labels comply with the VISIT Standard, the following documents are checked by an independent project partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A signed declaration on the compliance with each of the 21 requirements together with a list of documents to show evidence. ◆ The complete list of environmental performance and management criteria for each label. ◆ A detailed description of the application, verification and certification procedure. ◆ The full up-to-date list of certified tourism products in Europe. ◆ Additional print material and information on the eco-labels' websites.
Evaluated issues	<p>Mainly environmental criteria in the areas of management, waste, chemicals, water and energy in relation to the above mentioned types of tourism operations</p>
Control mechanism	<p>At least one on-site visit every three years</p>
Validity	<p>Three years</p>
Costs	<p>Depend on the individual label chosen for participation</p>
Responsible body	<p>The VISIT Project Partners are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ECEAT (European Centre for Eco Agro Tourism) ◆ ECOTRANS e.V. (Network for Sustainable Tourism in Europe) ◆ NFI (Natufreunde International) ◆ RPA ER (Agenzia Regionale Prevenzione e Ambiente dell' Emilia-Romagna) ◆ Statterreisen Hannover e.V.
Other comments	<p>VISIT is an example of an umbrella label which has been formed by several national labels.</p>
Similar labels	<p>Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas (www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/tourism/certification/network-of-americas.html): This is similar to VISIT as both initiatives provide an umbrella label for several other labels.</p>
Source	<p>www.yourvisit.info</p>

4 Future outlook

As already indicated in the introduction to this text, the situation regarding sustainable tourism labels is not very transparent. First of all, there are a large variety of eco-labels on the market that certify many different tourism products and services, but especially accommodation; this leads to a situation where few labels have a clear profile in the consumers' minds. Secondly, most tourism eco-labels have a rather low participation rate, so that the overall market share of eco-labelled tourism products was less than 1% in 2004 (ECEAT/ECOTRANS 2004¹).

Hence, the most important tasks for the future are to:

- ◆ increase the number of certified sustainable tourism products,
- ◆ raise consumer awareness and demand for these products,
- ◆ reduce duplication of efforts and resources in the field of sustainable tourism (ECEAT/ECOTRANS 2004).

These challenges need to be overcome to make labelling for sustainable tourism more successful. In order to do so, the cooperation and commitment of all industry stakeholders is needed as only a collective effort is able to overcome all of the mentioned challenges.

¹ ECEAT/ECOTRANS (2004): The VISIT Initiative: Tourism eco-labelling in Europe – moving the market towards sustainability. Available at <http://www.yourvisit.info> [Accessed 18.01.2006]

5 Further sources

Further relevant sources on the topic of labelling for sustainable tourism can be found under the following links:

- ◆ www.yourvisit.info: provides detailed information about the VISIT initiative as well as on the issue of labelling in tourism generally.
- ◆ www.gentle-tours.org: is a worldwide, European based Internet portal with a searchable database for sustainable travel offers.
- ◆ www.eco-tip.org: provides an inventory and comparative analysis of 104 eco-labels, awards and self-commitments in tourism.

6 Next steps

This document has given an impression of the topic of labelling for sustainable tourism. Based on this, the next step will be to undertake an evaluation of the described types of labels for agora. In a third step, this evaluation will ultimately result in a guideline on labelling sustainable tourism products for the Baltic Sea region.

The results of both these steps (as well as on all other parts of the agora toolbox) will be made publicly available on the agora project website <http://www.agora-tourism.net/>.



7 Appendix

Viabono - See Appendix **A** on the attached CD

Green Globe 21 - See Appendix **B** on the attached CD

Destination 21 - See Appendix **C** on the attached CD

Blue Flag - See Appendix **D** on the attached CD

PAN Parks - See Appendix **E** on the attached CD

Naturally Rügen - See Appendix **F** on the attached CD

Nature's Best - See Appendix **G** on the attached CD

Forumandersreisen - See Appendix **H** on the attached CD

TUI criteria for nature-experience tours - See Appendix **I** on the attached CD

European Ecolabel - See Appendix **J** on the attached CD

The Green Key - See Appendix **K** on the attached CD

TOI - See Appendix **L** on the attached CD

EMAS II - See Appendix **M** on the attached CD

VISIT - See Appendix **N** on the attached CD