

Ecotourism in Europe vs. tourism

**Seminary:
Creation of conditions for a certification system for
ecotourism in the Baltic Sea region
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**Ecotourism is a goal,
ecolabelling is just a tool.**



Agenda

1. Ecolabelling in tourism and ecotourism
2. Ecolabels on the European tourism market
3. Ecolabels and final, tourist destinations
4. Ecolabels, tour operators and ecologists
5. Closing remark



Ecolabelling in tourism and ecotourism

- Three levels of ecolabelling within the tourism industry¹:
 1. Sustainable tourism with proactive and practical design to reduce environmental impacts.
 2. Nature-based tourism where the environment is the main component.
 3. Ecotourism with a considerable environmental education component and conservation of natural and cultural environment.
- Although both ecolabelling and ecotourism includes the word eco, **one does not automatically imply the other.**²
- It is not surprising that **people mistake ecolabelling in tourism as only concerning ecotourism** when in fact the labelling consists of all three layers mentioned above.³

The question is: What can we do in order to avoid such situation?

^{1,2,3} S. Jägerlind Puuri, M. Henriksson , J. Brun Johansson, Ecolabelling on package tours, Jönköping 2010, p. 7.



Ecolabels on the European tourism market

- **70 ecolabels** on the European tourism market in 2002.⁴
- **40 ecolabels** only for hotels in 2011.⁵
- **Three major issues with the current ecolabels effectiveness⁶:**
 1. There seems to be **too many ecolabels** on the market, which **confuses the customers rather than informing them.**
 2. **Many ecolabels fail in reaching their purpose**, namely to boost environmental practices and purchases.
 3. Many of the current ecolabels in all industry, not just the tourism industry, **tend to be singled focused**. This means that instead of a holistic certification, **only one part of a product or service is ecolabelled.**

^{4,6} S. Jägerlind Puuri, M. Henriksson, J. Brun Johansson, Ecolabelling on package tours, Jönköping 2010, p. 9.

⁵ Energia w obiekcie turystycznym, Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju, Warszawa 2011, p. 8.



The Green
Key





Ecolabels on the European tourism market

- There is a danger that people may mistake:
 - **ecolabels** with **trademarks**,
 - **ecolabels in ecotourism** with **ecolabels only for tourist accommodation services**.
- Ecolabels in ecotourism have to provide **clear, precise,** and **simple information in relation to their criteria**.
- **There is a strong demand for international cooperation in order to create a well-known ecolabel for the ecotourism.**



Ecolabels and final, tourist destinations

- Very few tourists are aware of the existence of ecolabels.⁶
- Despite their informative value, **ecolabels are not sufficient for determining final choices, unless they present positive qualities of environmental offers in terms of convenience and clarity about customer personal benefit.**⁷
- Ecolabels should associate environmental aspects and quality.⁸

The Blue Flag



^{6,7,8} A. Budeanu, Sustainable tourist behaviour – a discussion of opportunities for change, International Journal of Consumer Studies, 31(2007), p. 504.



Ecolabels, tour operators and ecologists

- Tour operators have to be **open** and **redy for ecolabelling**.
- Ecologists should **support** tour operators.
- **Ecolabels should include a financial aspect** since tourism without profit or a financial agenda is most likely to fail no matter if it acts on environmental and sociocultural benefits.⁹

⁹ S. Jägerlind Puuri, M. Henriksson , J. Brun Johansson, Ecolabelling on package tours, Jönköping 2010, p. 7.

**Concerning ecolabels in ecotourism
we have to be sure that related
environmental,
sociocultural and economic costs are
minimized while benefits are maximized.**



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