



LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME

**ECO-ROUTE. – A ROUTE TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH ECOTOURISM LABELLING**

**LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR  
ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION IN EUROPE**

## **Summary**

Today, there are well over 100 different brands of eco-labels and awards in the world, most of them found in Europe, especially in Germany. The majority only deals with sustainable tourism, and more specifically, with accommodation. The concept of “ecotour-ism” on the other hand furnishes a perspective that includes a wider array of the tourist industry’s economic and social aspects, like travel, activities and food. The ECO-ROUTE project has created an inventory to include and promote only the genuine eco-tourism labels, which in actuality, are few in numbers. It is necessary however that a few additional labels are also to be referred to, as they could provide additional knowledge that would be suitable for our purpose. Some labels, standards and certificates deal with a very limited part of the tourism industry, such as guiding, food, or equipment. As a result, these could be included as part of the requirements listed under the ecotourism label.

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## Background

The aim of the project is to assist sustainable economic development in rural areas by offering education and capacity building for local people. This will enable them to develop a high quality ecotourism product. This report reviews the ecotourism labels in addition to: the criteria, the activities, the legal framework and the associations behind those labels. Using these reviews as the base, it will be easier to develop proper training packages for the target group of Ecoroute. In order to help develop ecotourism businesses and find clients, we think there is the need for a reliable and widely-recognised quality certification system to be introduced, initially in the four participating regions to be followed by the rest of Europe.

## Methods

One partner in each of the four participating countries has carried out research in their respective region. Research was conducted on the Internet, published material, personal interviews and telephone conversations with selected representatives of the competent authorities and organisations. The Ecotourism Society has also examined the situation in the rest of Europe regarding existing ecolabels. The WTO report “Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainable tourism” has been of invaluable help.

## Ecolabels of Tourism in Europe

Most ecolabels certify environmentally preferable products. A few certificates include social and economic criteria, but not enough to be called ecotourism labels. The quality of the tourist product is not of high priority as far as most ecolabels are concerned. This can be a disadvantage as most clients chose their holiday not because it is environmentally sound but because they think they will get a fun experience that is also based on high quality services.

Most ecolabels deal solely with accommodation and very few of which actually label tours or tour operators. The Ecoroute project will use *ecotourism* as a means of rural development, creating more jobs and boosting economic activities in rural areas, rather than just focusing on accommodation or employing labels that just focus on environmental aspects. Keeping all of the above in mind, the following genuine ecotourism labels listed below are of highest interest for Ecoroute, especially if they emphasise quality.

## Ecotourism labels

### Nature's Best

NATURE'S BEST is a quality label for Swedish Ecotourism, launched during the UN International Year of Ecotourism in 2002. The label has been tailored to guarantee a very high quality of tour products, combined with contributions to nature conservation, environmentally friendlier ways of travelling and care for the cultural heritage of the destination. NATURE'S BEST is a trademark for the best Swedish nature tour operators and their finest products.

### These are the basic requirements for the Nature's Best label

1. Respect the limitations of the destination
2. Support the local economy.
3. Make all the company's operations environmentally sustainable.
4. Contribute actively to conservation.
5. Promote the joy of discovery, knowledge and respect.

6. Quality and safety all the way through.

See appendix 1 and/or [www.naturesbest.nu](http://www.naturesbest.nu)

### **The Green Globe 21 International Ecotourism Standard**

The GREEN GLOBE 21 International Ecotourism Standard is based principally on the Australian Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation [Certification] Program (NEAP) Standard combined with elements of the GREEN GLOBE 21 Benchmarking performance system. Criteria have been adapted to ensure their applicability in an international setting and both the Standard and Certification Program incorporate the fundamental principles for sound ecotourism certification identified in the Mohonk Agreement. The Standard was developed in consultation with select tourism/ecotourism certification experts and was piloted with a number of ecotourism operations from a wide range of countries and products.

The principal objective of the GREEN GLOBE 21 International Ecotourism Standard is to facilitate environmentally sustainable ecotourism. This Standard provides a basis for assessing a baseline environmental management performance standard for ecotourism products and recognising best practice ecotourism.

#### **Ecotourism: definition and key principles**

The Green Globe 21 International Ecotourism Standard has adopted Ecotourism Australia's definition of ecotourism:

*Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.*

However, a more definitive "definition" of ecotourism is the expansion of this statement into a core set of principles with specific performance indicators (i.e. the key ecotourism performance areas).

The core set of eight principles are that ecotourism product should:

1. Focus on giving visitors the opportunity to personally and directly experience nature (Natural Area Focus);
2. Provide opportunities to experience nature in ways that lead to greater understanding, appreciation and enjoyment (Interpretation);
3. Represent best practice for environmentally sustainable tourism (Environmental Sustainability Practice);
4. Contribute directly to the conservation of natural areas (Contribution to Conservation);
5. Provide ongoing contributions to the local community (Benefiting Local Communities);
6. Be sensitive to, interpret and involve the culture/s existing in the area (Cultural Respect);
7. Consistently meets consumer expectations (Customer Satisfaction) ; and
8. Be marketed and promoted honestly and accurately so that realistic expectations are formed (Responsible Marketing).

These principles have been used to develop the Standard criteria – with specific indicators for each of these eight performance areas. The criteria support the major principles and are based on a hybrid of ‘process’ (i.e. creating a documented procedure) and ‘performance’ (e.g. that sewage treatment meets certain effluent standards) standards.

Although some criteria are relatively general and rely on a commitment by the operator to implement a process to meet a desired outcome (e.g. provision of an interpretation plan in order to stimulate better designed interpretative activities, leading to quality experiences) there is distinct emphasis on specific performance indicators. These are technically prescriptive and deliberately target real environmental outcomes. These criteria include quantification of environmental performance for most of the key environmental indicators. This allows recognition and encouragement of ecotourism product that makes measured environmental improvements which result in a more sustainable world.

Green Globe 21 has more than 400 participants but just 6 of them are yet certified according to the ecotourism criteria.

Read more on <http://www.greenglobe21.com> where you also will find the criteria.

## **Forum Anders Reisen, Germany**

The aim of the members of “Forum Anders Reisen.” Is to build up a sustainable form of tourism. The products of these small and middle classified tour operators set great store by the environment and the people of a single destination. Journeys are strongly orientated towards nature and of particular quality. Innovative and creative ideas are the warranty for holidays with pleasure and recreation. These tour operators have in mind not only to satisfy the demands of their guests but also the consequences of travelling around for the environment and the people in the destinations visited.

### **The model**

The members of the “Forum Anders Reisen.” aspire to a model of tourism which is acceptable by ecological means, realisable by economical means and also ethical and social justified for the local communities (sustainable tourism).

### **The aims**

The first aim is the improvement and spreading of the model of sustainable tourism. This aim has to be attained by a qualitative and quantitative growth of the “Forum Anders Reisen” and its members. This will be achieved by:

1. control of the journeys of the members by means of constant development of the catalogue of criterions
2. amplified stimuli for the members to engage themselves
3. target promotion of members
4. concrete power-package for the members
5. strengthening of public relations
6. development and consolidation of the federal structures

### **The criteria**

*You can find the criteria to be a member on the website, but they are just in German. For you who can read German you will find an abstract in appendix 5.*

## Estonia –the Natural way

<http://www.ecotourism.ee/eng/index.html>

The English version does not work at the moment

## PAN Parks Initiative

### **PAN Parks is a tool to improve nature protection**

The idea is to introduce a marriage between nature conservation and tourism on a European scale. In other words, the initiative aims to put economic value into European nature, thereby offering a means of protection. PAN Parks aims to create economic incentives for conservation of nature by changing tourism from a threat into an opportunity by building partnerships with nature conservation organisations, national parks, tourism businesses, local communities, and other interest groups on a local, national and international level. The PAN Parks concept provides a nature conservation based response to the growing market for nature-oriented tourism.

The quality PAN Parks brand stands for:

- an expanding network of well-managed protected areas with high conservation value;
- areas which are widely known by Europeans as natural capitals of our continent, which they know and are proud of;
- ‘must see’ sites for tourists and wildlife lovers representing responsible, high quality nature-based experiences for visitors;
- wider public and political support for protected areas through changing attitudes and stimulating their economic value;
- new income for parks, and in particular, new employment opportunities for people in rural areas

### **The Criteria**

The Principles 1-4 were endorsed in 2002 while a draft of Principle 5 is still not yet finally decided. The first three principles apply to the Protected Area and its management body. Hence, it is the protected area that becomes the actual PAN Park. Principles four and five set criteria for a sustainable tourism development strategy and for participation of local partners. In this case, it is the strategy, developed by Park managers and relevant interest groups in the region, which will be evaluated. The sustainable tourism development strategy is a cornerstone, ensuring that tourism supports nature conservation, and guaranteeing that tourism is not introduced in sensitive areas.

### **Principle 1: Natural values**

PAN Parks are large protected areas, representative of Europe's natural heritage and of international importance for wildlife and ecosystems.

### **Principle 2: Habitat management**

Design and management of the PAN Park aims to maintain and, if necessary, restore the area's natural ecological processes and its biodiversity.

### **Principle 3: Visitor management**

Visitor management safeguards the natural values of the PAN Park and aims to provide visitors with a high-quality experience based on the appreciation of nature.

#### **Principle 4: Sustainable tourism development**

The Protected Area Authority and its relevant partners in the PAN Parks region aim at achieving a synergy between nature conservation and sustainable tourism by developing and jointly implementing a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy.

#### **Principle 5 :Business partners**

(Draft submitted to Supervisory Board) PAN Parks' business partners as legal enterprises are committed to the goals of the protected area in their region and the PAN Parks Organisation, and actively cooperate with other stakeholders to effectively implement the region's Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy as developed by the local EPPO (see Principle 4).

Three parks have now the label. On <http://www.panparks.org> you can find the full criteria documents.

### **Europarc**

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a partnership between a protected area and all those with a stake in how tourism in that park's region is run. It also contains elements of a quality label as the park also commits itself to producing a comprehensive strategy and implementing an action plan for managing tourism. As such the Charter is a valuable management tool for ensuring that tourism development in Europe's protected areas is sustainable.

The Charter was drawn up under the leadership of the EUROPARC Federation, and based on five years of research and consultation. Its practical application was demonstrated in "pilot parks" across Europe, seven of which achieved full Charter status in 2001. Since then, ten more protected areas have joined this initial group.

The European Charter can be awarded to any protected area independent of its size or conservation status, whilst PAN Parks need to have a minimum size of 20,000 hectares and have a high wilderness factor. The European Charter and PAN Parks are two independent but complementary initiatives supporting the strategic objectives of IUCN's Parks for Life.

<http://www.european-charter.org>

### **Romanian Ecotourism label**

The aim of the project: to create is to promote and implement a system of accreditation for ecotourism, for eco-business (tour operators), eco-destinations (protected areas, rural communities) and eco-lodging (rural pensions).

Target groups for the project are tour operators, destinations (protected areas administrations, local administrations, local NGOs) and pensions owners. Secondary target groups are the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism, the Ministry of Water and Environmental Protection, The National Association for Travel Agencies and The Public Central Authority for Forestry – The Protected Areas Department. The project will be implemented at national level.



By developing an ecotourism label the following changes are expected:

1. Implemented practical mechanisms for nature conservation and sustainable local development (including financial mechanisms) at destinations level
2. A different mentality of the business sector regarding the environmental protection and local communities
3. An increased quality of the ecotourism services
4. Certified tour operators and eco-destinations will be promoted at the international level by AER
5. An increased number of foreign tourists
6. A further development of rural areas
7. To identify new eco-destinations

Expected results of the project are that 20 – 30 tour operators and at least 4 eco-destinations will be involved in the process of certification. Responsible for developing the label is

The label is developed by the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER).

### Dutch label for ecotourism

There is a work for the Dutch government with the aim of developing a label for ecotourism. This project has not yet published any results of the work.

### STEP

The Sustainable Tourism Eco-certification Program™ (STEP) is a voluntary certification initiative developed by Sustainable Travel International for tourism providers *who are based out of the U.S.* This user-friendly system measures travel companies' environmental, economic, and social-cultural impacts, helping them to minimise their negative impacts and enhance their positive impacts. STEP also provides consumers with an easy way to identify tourism providers who are committed to the triple bottom line of respect for the environment, social responsibility and economic profitability.

Read more on: [www.sustainabletravelinternational.org/ecocertification/index.html](http://www.sustainabletravelinternational.org/ecocertification/index.html)

### Other Quality Labels for Tourism

**Quality labels for tourism activities similar to ecotourism are not common. For just accommodation, however, quality labels exist in most countries. It can be useful to look at the horse shoe label when an ecotourism label is introduced in other countries.**



#### The Horse-shoe label, Hungary

In Hungary most equestrian establishments enlarge the tourist supply, by offering special equestrian services. The establishments that offer “ordinary” equestrian tourist services, use the “horse-shoe” emblem to show the quality of the services. According to the labeling system, if the given establishment uses 1 horse-shoe it means that it fulfills the basic service

conditions. An increase in the number of horse-shoes shows the enlargement of the type and quality of services.

The Commissions of the Hungarian Equestrian Tourism Association make the proposal for the number of horse-shoes. The Association approves them, according to the quality of the services.

**Main labelling aspects:**

- A. Environmental aspects**
- B. Aspects of horse-keeping and suitability**
- C. Aspects about equestrian services**
- D. Personnel aspects**
- E. Other programs and possibilities**

**Labelling Categories:**

These aspects are estimated using a one to five point system and following the points of the main aspects are being calculated from the sub-categories' average points. The establishments are labeled by points between one and five, according to the score result. Total obtainable score is: 25 points (the sum of the average points of the main aspects)

**Objective parameter of the labeling system**

	5 average score of the main aspects severally *	Number of participating horses	Number of types of services (min.)**	Compulsory foreign language knowledge	Score
<b>5 horse-shoes</b>	>4	>12	>3	+	<b>22-25</b>
<b>4 horse-shoes</b>	>3.8	>10	>3	+	<b>19-21</b>
<b>3 horse-shoes</b>	>3.4	>8	>2		<b>17-18</b>
<b>2 horse-shoes</b>	>3	>6	>2		<b>15-16</b>
<b>1 horse-shoes</b>	>2.4	>5	>1		<b>12-14</b>

\* (1) Environmental aspects, (2) Aspects of horse-keeping and suitability, (3) Aspects about equestrian services (4) Personnel aspects, (5) Other programs and possibilities.

\*\* Education, cross-country riding, coach driving, exhibition, special services: hunting horse-riding, therapy horse-riding, breeding

See more in Appendix 2 or on <http://www.equi.hu/eng/>. The information about the labelling is still not published (March 04).

**Others**

Significant numbers of lodging houses possess horses, assure equestrian possibility, but because of the low number of their horses can not apply for horse-shoe label. If these establishments offer services of high standards they can alternatively use the “**rural tourism**” label.

Those equestrian establishments, which can not be included in the horse-shoe label system, do not possess equerry, use extensive horse-keeping and assure yurt for their guests. These yurts can not be compared to the traditional accommodations. At the same time these establishments have significant attractions, and gain “**nomad**” label in the labeling system.

The „*stud*” belongs to that category, which provide horse-breeding as a main profile, but also deal with tourism, as an executive activity. Their services contain the following activities: stud visiting, introduction, but there are also possibility for horse-riding and coach riding.

There is an initiative for the establishment of the „**equestrian tourism labeling club**”. The members of this category will be those equestrian service providers, who are providing the best quality in services.

## Quality labels in the countries participating in Ecoroute

In **Romania** no label for sustainable tourism exists. Stars and flowers (for rural areas) are used instead in order to classify the quality of accommodation. **Greece** has standards for agrotourism businesses, alongside “The Local Agreement on Quality Control” (LAQC), the latter of which has not really taken off yet. In **Hungary** rural accommodations are categorized by “*sun-flowers*” signs, according to their quality levels. In **Sweden** a classification of accommodation with stars was introduced only recently.

## Labels for Sustainable Tourism

### VISIT

VISIT (Voluntary Initiative for Sustainability in Tourism) is an initiative to support the development of tourism Ecolabels in Europe and to show how they can effectively promote sustainability to consumers and to the tourism industry. VISIT promotion activities support those certificates which guarantee a high level of environmental quality of their products in their countries. The newly developed VISIT standards allow such schemes to be recognized. Members in VISIT label mainly accommodation. VISIT includes the Nordic Swan that labels hotels in the Nordic Countries, mainly in **Sweden**. **See appendix 2.**

Many more labels for sustainable tourism exist in Europe, in particular in Germany. VISIT seems to be the most interesting of several reasons; perhaps most of all as there are ambitions to cooperate across borders.

### The Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS)

The Green Tourism Business Scheme is the largest accreditation body of tourism related businesses in Europe and have over 500 members in the UK, including amongst others, accommodation providers, visitor attractions, tour operators and conference facilities. For the moment it is, however, mainly accommodation and destinations that have got the label. GTBS cooperate with VISIT in Europe.

### What is Green Tourism?

Green tourism is a term used to describe best environmental practice within the tourism sector. It covers issues such as business efficiency, environmental management, waste, transport, as well as topics like social responsibility and biodiversity. By agreeing to the GTBS code of conduct and through impendent assessment of their activities our members have made a commitment towards reducing the impact of their business on the environment.

### Quality and the Environment

All members of the GTBS have also achieved a quality grading through a recognised industry standard such as VisitScotland or the AA & RAC standards.

### **Accreditation**

To gain a GTBS award, businesses are assessed once every two years by IEMA registered environmental auditors, who have considerable experience within the tourism sector. The businesses are graded against over 120 measures of best practice, reflecting a balance of environmental, economic and social issues. These cover everything from good management and communication to efficient lighting and heating, as well as things like nature conservation, local crafts and produce, renewable energy and community support and involvement.

[www.green-business.co.uk](http://www.green-business.co.uk)

*For more ecolabels see appendix 3.*

## **Standards for human resources (skills certification) and for provision for equipment.**

### **Sweden**

Sweden has certification of rafting and mountain guides. The latter is not used very much and no requirements exist for tour operators to use these. Rafting guides, however, have to have a certificate to guide commercial tours. See below.

### **Hungary**

In Hungary there is no Legal Framework for certification of guides. Anyone can organize such training or education. However, the Hungarian Rambler's Association (HRA) is the largest organization dealing with education and training of the touring guides. Their certification exists in different levels and in different outdoor activities, like hiking, climbing or biking. The guides are not educated in a specific geographic area, just in the different kind of activities. Therefore mostly the National Parks prefer to employ own guides that don't necessarily have a certificate.

For more information visit: [www.fsz.bme.hu/mtsz/szakmai/okt99.htm](http://www.fsz.bme.hu/mtsz/szakmai/okt99.htm) (just in Hungarian)

### **Romania**

The Tourism Operators must have tourist guides licensed by Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism in accordance with HG 305 from March 08, 2001. There are the definitions of: local guides (for local activities), national guides (at national and international level) and specialized guides (for certain segments of tourist services such as mountain services, art, supervisor, animation, natural habitat, fauna, flora, ornithology, mountaineering, sky, snow sledge, rowing, swimming, yachting, flying, hang glider or paragliding, and other specializations requested on the tourism market). The conditions and criteria respecting the selection, education, license and employment are established by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism.

### **Greece**

**Certification of Mountain guides** are done by the Hellenic Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (HMCF). The programme includes continuous training that can take up to 10 years to be completed in various stages, including both theoretical and practical work. The certification is not yet recognized by the state but measures are taken to get this happen.

**Certification of Rafting Guides and Trainers** are done by the Hellenic Association of Tourist and Travel Agencies (HATTA). It is a very new certification and it is done in 4 different levels.

A number of specialized tour operators on “adventure tourism”, such as Trekking Hellas and No Limits, offer a number of training courses for amateurs on hand-gliding, hiking, rafting, sailing, kayaking, rappel and climbing. Trekking Hellas also offers two training courses for professionals leading to certifications as guides. These include:

- a. **Rafting guides to be employed by tour operators** (also offered by No Limits)– the training includes a 6-day intensive course and practical experience gained during several weekends throughout a year. It must be noted that these certifications carry a certain recognition amongst tour operators but are not officially recognized.
- b. **Sailing courses that lead to a recognized license** – the courses last for 2 months. The candidate is taught theoretical and practical information about boats, navigation and sailing and participates in 7 day sailing trips and 1 night sailing trip.

## **Legal Framework of Ecotourism**

As an ecotourist operator you need access to nature and different kinds of protected nature areas. You also need to follow laws that regulate the different activities. The legal frameworks which may regulate ecotourism are presented below.

### **Sweden**

To operate tourism companies in Sweden is free and require no permits in general. However, local health authorities have requirements regarding how to handle cooking and serving food and how to treat waste and sewage. There are also some regulations to protect the client’s money if a tourist company goes bankrupt. This is handled by “Kammarkollegiet”, The Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency. In addition you have to follow special regulations if you keep animals like sledge dogs, horses and reindeers.

#### **The Right of Public Access**

The Swedish right of public access is not a law, nor is it an absolute right. It may rather be regarded as an opportunity, one that makes it possible for everyone to enjoy the countryside. But it is an opportunity that requires responsibility, consideration and good judgement.

The right of public access can be concisely expressed in the phrase, "Do not disturb, do not destroy". Rules describing the kinds of consideration that must be shown are incorporated into Sweden's environmental law, and apply to everyone who exercises the right of public access.

#### **Individual right**

The right of public access applies to all individuals. But the right does not extend to tour operators and other organisations. The right of public access cannot automatically be cited in support of organised non-profit or commercial activities on anyone else's land. Swedish environmental law imposes strict demands on those who conduct organised activities in nature. Such activities are allowed in the countryside only if they do not result in damage or inconvenience to landowners, or if the landscape and animal life are not damaged.

#### **Requirements of environmental law**

Swedish environmental law includes regulations regarding care and consideration that apply to all activities in the countryside. Those who arrange organised activities on someone else's land are obliged to:

- acquire necessary knowledge of what the right of public access involves
- take adequate measures and exercise sufficient caution to avoid damage and inconvenience to others
- choose an appropriate location in order to reduce the risk of damage and inconvenience
- inform all participants about the right of public access and the responsibility that follows with it.

### **Prior consultation**

If there is a risk that an activity could lead to an alteration of the environment, the appropriate municipality or county administrative board must be consulted in advance. This applies equally to events repeated at regular intervals and to certain types of facility for outdoor recreation and ecological tourism. For larger or repeated events, the affected landowner should always be consulted, as well. Any individual or organisers of outdoor activities who causes damage to the environment or to private property in connection with outdoor recreation may be liable for damages.

<http://www.naturvardsverket.se/allemansratten>

### **National Parks and nature reserves**

The regulations vary in the national parks, but generally it is prohibited to disturb and destroy - which also applies to all the Swedish countryside under the right of public access. In several parks you are not allowed to light fires, to camp or to bring a dog which is not on a leash. You may not gather stones or plants, but it is permitted to pick berries and mushrooms just like in other parts of the country. Apart from the national parks, Sweden has a large number of nature reserves and protected areas. In both national parks and nature reserves commercial activities, like organised tourism, are forbidden or have restrictions and often require a permit from The County Administrative Boards. For the moment the government plan to ease these restrictions quite soon. As long as the commercial activity doesn't harm the protected area organised tourism will be allowed.

### **Safety regulations**

There are very few safety regulations for tourism. However, to organise whitewater rafting you have to be certified. See SJÖFS 1997:18. Also [www.sjofartsverket.se](http://www.sjofartsverket.se).

### **Fishing and hunting**

As in most countries there are quite strict regulations for these activities. In [www.fiskeriverket.se](http://www.fiskeriverket.se) (in Swedish) you can read about fishing regulations and The Swedish Associations for leisure fishing , [www.sportfiskarna.se](http://www.sportfiskarna.se) (in Swedish) can help with advice. In The Swedish Hunting associations website you can read about regulations for hunting, [www.jagareforbundet.se/juridik/](http://www.jagareforbundet.se/juridik/) (just in Swedish).

## **Hungary**

In Hungary there are no legal regulations about tourist activities at nature conservation areas. The nature reservation act, as a general framework, does not contain any comments about the activities, which can be realized at nature conservation areas. However, some legal rules regarding the reserve areas can be found in the year 1996. no. LIII act, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. This act deals with those areas in general, which are attractive and worth to show to visitors. The Directorates of the National Parks have the authority to determine the ecotourist activities, which could happen in the parks.

## **The Right of Public Access**

The right of public access is allowed in all nature areas, which are open and not enclosed or marked with table “no trespass”. **Everyone has the right to go into nature in the countryside.**

Behaviours and rights at countryside are regulated through the Hungarian civil law (1959. IV. act). Visitors can move and act free as long as they do not cause damage or loss and do not disturb others in the exercise of their rights.

## **Individual right**

The rights of public access to forests apply to all individuals who are walking, hiking or biking without permission of the owner of the forest. These visitors have the right to collect branches/firewood, mushrooms, berries and not protected plants. These rights are concerned in the tour groups also.

Equestrian public access to forests is only possible with the permission of the landowner through a civil law contract. For example in Szigetköz region there is a good cooperation between owners of the forests and equestrians. Legal status of the issue is inordinate, only the law about forests (1996. évi LXV act, 82 §) lays down some directives.

Rights regarding to water sport activities at private lakes are almost unlimited. Ecotourism activities concerning water sports at non-private waters are possible after the regulations of the interior ministry directive 13/1996. (VI. 28.) BM, which regulates all law enforcement tasks at waters and the role of the water police. Underwater sports and jet skiing are critical issues, which are banned at the most of rivers and lakes.

## **National Parks and nature reserves**

Entering to and make activities in a national park, is regulated by the directorates of the national parks. The directorates have exclusive rights to determine about ecotourism activities.

Directorates support all activities which are concerned with the foreshown of the flora and fauna. They also support scientific research activities at their parks. Since directorates are often managed bureaucratically, they handle some individual or particular initiatives difficult. So it is useful for ecotourism tour operators to go into long term agreements with directorates.

## **Safety regulations**

Safety issues are regulated in the civil law (1959. IV. act) and in a government directive about the travel contracts 214/1996 (XII.23.) Most of the tour operators in eco-tourism cannot fulfil the required conditions, for example only 3-4 enterprises in Hungary have the right to organize rafting, but much more are acting in this market.

## **Fishing and hunting**

Hunting in Hungary is regulated by the 1996. LV. act and the concerning 79/2004 (V.4.) governmental directive. The right of hunting belongs to the owner or owners of the field, who can delegate their rights to other persons or hunting associates. Hunting in protected areas is theoretically possible, the competence of regulation belongs to the territorial environmental office. To sum up: at all protected areas, the assigned national park directorate makes decisions concerning hunting; and at all other areas, the hunting associates keep guard on hunting.

1997. XLI. act regulates fishing in Hungary with some other governmental directives. Everybody needs a fishing permission for fishing at lakes or rivers, except private lakes. Fishing associations sell these permissions in limited number in all settlements affected by fishing activity. Permissions are valid for limited time and there are always restrictions for the maximum daily catch. The maximum validity period of these permissions is one year.

## Romania

Tourism operators must have a license in tourism - in accordance with Ordinance no 170 from April 3, 2001. The Executive Manager of these operators must to be licensed by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism.

Non-governmental organizations dealing with tourism activities must have the approval of the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism before to start their activities and must to respect the conditions from the Ordinance no 26 from January 26, 2000.

### ***HG 230 / 2003: The development of ecotourism in protected areas***

The Public Central Authority for Tourism in collaboration with The Public Central Authority for Environment Protection, The Public Central Authority for Forestry and The Romanian Academy are elaborating the strategy for the development of ecotourism in the biosphere reservations, national parks and natural parks. The Public Central Authority for Environment Protection establishes the administrative structures for all the biosphere resorts, national parks and natural parks.

### ***OUG 236/2000: protected natural areas, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna conservation.***

The administration of protected natural areas relays to:

- The Central Public Authorities for the Environment Protection and The Romanian Academy for the protected areas that were declared by laws adopted by the Government
- County and local public authorities for protected areas that were declared trough decisions of these authorities

These authorities establish a public or private institution for the effective administration of these protected areas. The national network of protected areas includes for example scientific reservations, national parks, monuments of nature and natural reservations. According to the same act, caves are classified in 4 different categories depending on the level of protection.

In National Parks, the administrative authorities give authorisation to entrepreneurs to pursue activities, on the basis of the recommendations from the Royal National Academy of Sciences.

### **The General Sportive Hunting and Fishing Association**

– has the role of coordination and control regarding the hunting and the fishery fund and the hunting fund. It issues the permits and license for hunting and sport fishing, as well. It may organize:

- Competitions of sportive fishing, target shooting and dog hunting
- Hunting and fishing activities for foreign citizens
- Training for persons that want to practice hunting and fishing

During any activities of hunting or fishing, the regulations of Low 103/1996 regarding the hunting fund and protection of the hunt must be respected.



## Greece

There is no sufficient legal framework for the development of ecotourism. Act 2742/1999 for Regional Planning and Sustainable Development defines, among other things related to land use planning, the establishment of Agencies for the Management of Protected Areas. One of the objectives of these Agencies is to promote and support ecotourism in the protected areas, providing a quality label to businesses operating in accordance with the Agency's regulations. Act 3044/2002 (article 13) defined the establishment of 25 such Agencies; one of them is established in the pilot area, the river mouth of Kalamas and Aherontas. However, both the human and financial resources available to these agencies are very restricted and thus, their function is problematic. The agencies are legal entities of private law and are supervised by the Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works. The latter has commissioned WWF for the conduct of a study to act as a guide for ecotourism management in protected areas, which gathered international good practice and offered suggestions for the sound operation of the Agencies for the Management of the Protected Areas.

Moreover, the legal –and regulatory- framework is very insufficient with respect to quality certification of ecotourism and tourism generally (apart from the classification of tourist accommodation units). It is also considered that another weakness of the Greek legal framework is the lack of incentives in the Development Law 1650/1986 which would promote the protection and sustainable management of the natural environment, apart from those in place for large areas such as National Parks. It is worth noting that the General Secretariat of Tourism was part of the Ministry of Development till recently (March 2004), when the new government set up the Ministry of Tourism. It is yet unknown whether the Master Plan for Ecotourism will be enacted on the initiative of the newly formed Ministry, or whether a more effective strategic tourism planning system will be in place.

### **The Right of Public Access**

Regarding the right of public access to the countryside, trespassing of private land is forbidden but only if the property is fenced. However, Law 1337/1983 defines that fencing of private properties is forbidden in the case public access to coastal areas, forests and other interesting sites is obstructed.

### **Safety regulations**

With respect to safety regulations for ecotourism activities there are no explicit legal provisions. All tour operators must be licensed by the National Tourism Organisation, while safety regulations lie with local and regional Tourism Police or is based on special guidelines issued for specific activities (this is further discussed in the certification of skills and equipments in section 3).

### **Other relevant legislation**

As far as environmental protection is concerned, there is a Ministerial Decision (Official Government Journal 1289/28-12-1998) which defines that development plans envisaged in protected areas (Natura 2000 sites) must be preceded by an Environmental Impact Assessment study. On the basis of the latter, permissions for development plans are granted or not. Finally, regarding hunting and fishing the Greek Law is harmonised with EC directives and defines special reserves for game and specific seasons when this is allowed.

# Who can certify ecotourism?

## Sweden

The Swedish Ecotourism Association (SEF) has initiated the Nature's Best ecotourism quality label. SEF is a NGO and has developed the label and is also responsible for the whole labeling system. The Swedish government has given a substantial economic support to the process of developing the label, but in the long run the label has to finance itself. The Swedish Travel and Tourism Council, and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, a NGO, are partners in Nature's Best. [www.naturesbest.nu](http://www.naturesbest.nu), [www.naturesbasta.se](http://www.naturesbasta.se).

The Swedish Standards Institute, SIS, is otherwise the main body for labeling products and services in Sweden. It is a non-profit organization with 1300 members. [www.sis.se](http://www.sis.se)

## Romania

- The General Board for Control and Authorization under the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism has the following tasks:
  - Authorization of the economic agents and specialized personnel in tourism, respectively: issues license for tourism agencies, classify the reception structures, issues tourism patents for specialized personnel, and license for qualified guides.
  - Performs the classification of beaches and tourist destinations, participates in the homologation of sky slow up and mountain routes.
  - Performs the control of quality for tourist services
  - Participates in the activities of classification of coach for tourist transportation
  - Collaborates in the elaboration of the development of tourism strategy
  - Collaborates in the elaboration of legal norms concerning the tourism domain.
- RENAR (Romanian Accreditation Association) is responsible for the certification of quality certification bodies and must respect the stipulations of Law 608/2001 regarding products conformity assessment. RENAR, is a private association, of public interest, non profit, having its activity governed by Law no 245/2002. RENAR is the National Accreditation Body in Romania and it is recognised by the Romanian Government and operates on its behalf.

Website: [www.renar.ro](http://www.renar.ro)

One NGO that deals with ecotourism is The Initiative Group for Ecotourism (IGE). This is a partnership for nature conservation and tourism in Romania. It is incorporating protected areas, tourism associations, non-governmental associations (acting in local development and nature conservation), nature conservation projects and tourism agencies. <http://www.eco-romania.ro> See also above about their efforts to develop an ecotourism label.

## Hungary

In Hungary the tourist labelling belongs to the Hungarian Standardisation Body's duty. In general, that civil organisation initiates the label who'd like to introduce it, i.e. Hungarian Equestrian Association initiated the horse-shoe emblem for the equestrian establishments. After it, the Standardisation Body makes the official arrangements about the introduction.

According to the regulation of 45/1998.(VI.24.) *Ministry of Industry and Trade* – about the classification of public and private accommodations – the notary and the Consumer Protection Inspectorate controls the labelling aspects.

## Greece

As discussed earlier, the legal and regulatory framework for ecotourism certification in Greece is poor. There are ad hoc working teams with representatives from competent tourism authorities and the Hellenic Organisation of Certification formed, in order to devise and propose standards (eg. for agrotourism, see section 3.1); these standards, however, are merely optional standards which are piloted for a period and there is no commitment on behalf of the competent authorities to adopt and impose them. Moreover, certifying bodies must obtain the permission for granting labels from the National Certification Council. The standards of the Hellenic Organisation of Certification are revised after 3 years of pilot implementation and, in the case they are subjected to public scrutiny, they might become a model (compulsory) and possibly enacted.

The investigation for the report has clearly shown that several competent authorities (i.e. the General Secretariat of Tourism, the Hellenic Organisation of Certification, WWF) recognise the need for a quality certification system to be introduced and they are very keen in co-operating with ECOROUTE and disseminate the project results. It was also stressed that a major difficulty is devising quantifiable standards that can be monitored and evaluated against a set of appropriate indicators.

## Literature and other sources

### **Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainable tourism**

The World Tourism Organisation has made a world-wide Inventory of Ecolabels. You can buy the book including a CD on [http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame\\_sustainable.html](http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html).

### **Mr Herbert Hamele**

The research team for the report above was headed by Mr Herbert Hamele at ECOTRANS, a European Network for Sustainable Tourism Development in Germany.

**Code of Conduct for Tour Operators in the Arctic, WWF International Arctic Programme.** (<http://www.ngo.grida.no/wwfap/core/about/guidelines.html>)

**Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management,** (UNEP Publications, IUCN, WTO), 2002.  
[http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/library/sust\\_prot\\_areas.htm](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/library/sust_prot_areas.htm)

**EAA Code of Practice for Ecotourism Operators.** The Ecotourism Association of Australia (EAA). (<http://www.bigvolcano.com.au/ercentre/eaacode.htm>)

### **Sustainable Development of Ecotourism - A Compilation of Good Practices**

This publication has been prepared on the occasion of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002. It is the second volume within the series of Good Practices published in the area of Sustainable Development of Tourism. The 55 case studies taken from 39 countries present a

wide range of successful ecotourism initiatives. Each of them is presented in a systematic form, describing stakeholders involved, objectives and strategies, funding, sustainability and monitoring aspects, problems encountered and solutions found in each project, etc. The sustainability aspects are further detailed according to specific elements of ecotourism such as: conservation, community involvement, interpretation and education, as well as environmental management practices. This compilation is of great value for tourism professionals from both the public and private sector, who can learn from these experiences and adapt them to ecotourism activities in their own country.

### **Contents :**

- Some examples of the 55 case studies included:
  - Strategic and Participative Management Plan for the Protected Area of the Valdes Peninsula, Argentina
  - Ecotourism Poles: A National Framework for Local Ecotourism Development, Brazil
  - Redberry Pelican Project (RPP): Conservation through Research, Education and Tourism, Canada
  - Environmental Protection and Ecotourism Development in Emei Mountain Scenic Area, China
  - Agrotourism in Cyprus
  - Kapawi Ecolodge and Reserve: Community Ecotourism Project, Ecuador
  - European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, Germany
  - The Josvafo Village Walk in the Aggtelek National Park, Hungary
  - Community-based Ecotourism Development and Conservation in the Togean Islands, Indonesia
  - Wetland Conservation Project in Muthurajawela, Sri Lanka
  - Community Participation in Ecotourism Development in the Bazaruto Archipelago, Mozambique
  - Forest Resource Management in North-West Russia: The Karelia Project, Russia

and many more. Cost: EUR 35

### **Sustainable Development of Ecotourism - A Compilation of Good Practices in SMEs**

This compilation contains 65 case studies received from 47 countries about exemplary practices in small ecotourism businesses (SMEs). The cases provide rich details on methodologies and business approaches applied successfully by a wide range of ecotourism companies; they provide a valuable well of information that can serve for generating ideas and adapting sustainable ecotourism practices to the specific local conditions elsewhere. The experiences presented in this book come directly from the field, from the people who have developed these initiatives and who are daily in charge of these business ventures. They reflect well the complexity of small businesses, the great challenges and opportunities they face, and the endless creativity that this business allows for.

**Contents :**

- Cross-border cooperation in the Ohrid and Prespa Lakes region (Albania, Greece and Macedonia)
- Cabalgatas por Salta: Mountain excursions on horse-back (Argentina)
- Yacutinga Lodge (Argentina)
- Biolandhaus Arche: Mountain Hut (Austria)
- Heinrich-Kiener-Haus: Mountain-hut (Austria)
- The Guide Tours Ltd (Bangladesh)
- Okavango Polers Trust (Botswana)
- Ghanzi Trail Blazers - Ked Trading LTD (Botswana)
- ODYSSEIA-IN Sport & Travel Agency - Incoming tour operator (Bulgaria)
- Nature Ribaritsa Association (Bulgaria)
- Mount Cameroon Ecotourism Organization (MtCEO) (Cameroon)
- Ecotourism Project in Ebodje, a small fishing village (Cameroon)
- Jamie's Whaling Station Ltd. (Canada)
- Turismo Rural Weche-Ruca: Mapuche ethnic tourism (Chile)
- El Almejal Ecolodge (Colombia)

and many more. Cost: Euro 35



## *Appendix 1*

### **Nature's Best: A system of labelling Ecotourism**

The Swedish Ecotourism Association has launched a powerful labelling system that brands locally connected quality tourism, a greater degree of nature preservation, a more environment-friendly way of travelling and a greater care for the nature and culture of the destination. This will be a strong brand, common for all competent operators who organise exclusive eco friendly activities. The aim is to provide travellers with a tool to help them find the operators who work with truly unique nature and cultural experiences, both within Sweden and abroad.

### **What is Ecotourism ?**

Already in 1994 the World Wildlife Fund, WWF, summarised Ecotourism as being:

”A responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people.”

In Sweden, Ecotourism has many faces: The excitement of getting face to face with a bear in the deep forests of Hälsingland, slowly rafting down the clear waters of Klarälven, galloping through the troll-woods of Östergötland, snorkelling-safari in the waters by the steep cliffs of Kullaberg, meeting the Laplanders at the springs of the wild river Vindelälven, slowly kayaking over the mirror like waters in the Archipelago of Stockholm or catching a salmon in the rushing rapids of a stream are just to mention a few examples.

Different types of Ecotourism may vary, but the common denominators are:

- Tours that are organised by companies that specialise in their destination and employ staff good at sharing their knowledge in a pleasant, promoting and informative way.
- Tours that put as little pressure on local nature and culture as possible and are usually carried out by small groups of people possessing a huge sense of responsibility for the natural environment.
- Tours using locally sourced transport, food and lodging, all of which are as environmentally friendly as can be, depending on available local conditions.
- Tours that contribute to the local economy as much as possible.
- Tours that in different ways support local culture and the preservation of nature.

The result is often a more enjoyable trip for all parties involved. The traveller gets to experience more, the local population gets its economy strengthened and the operator gets more and more interested customers, from a segment in steady growth within the travel

industry. Moreover the destination's nature, culture and people are treated with respect and consideration.

Read more on [www.ekoturism.org!](http://www.ekoturism.org!)

## **Why do we need a branding system for Ecotourism?**

More and more customers are requesting details about the trip and the operator. Is the bear-safari really on the bear's terms? Do they treat the sledge-dogs well even after we have left the site? Is it really safe to go rafting here? How has this trip been set up in regards to nature preservation?

A lot of companies offer ecotourism. A credible and trustworthy system of labelling will show who is not just talking about it but also actually acts upon it. This way the customers can get help in choosing their operator.

Most Swedish operators of culture and nature-tourism are still relatively small and most often have small budgets to efficiently market their products. This makes it difficult for the interested customer to actually find them. A common labelling system will make it easier for all parties.

## **These are the basic requirements for branding of Ecotourism !**

### **1. Respect the limitations of the destination**

Ecotourism is about preserving, not destroying, whatever it is that the visitor has come to see. The carrying capacity, in ecological and social/cultural terms, of each destination must be respected. Nothing else will work in the long run. This requires that the operator possess comprehensive knowledge about the destination; works in close co-operation with other operators and are always extremely sensitive to the alarm signals from locals and environmentalists.

### **2. Support the local economy.**

Ecotourism means using local sources of goods and services. Preservation of nature easily becomes counterproductive if the local population is against it. A positive way of engaging the local community is if it can be made part of the organisation, or in other words, can benefit from the visitors. Therefore, every trip should in the best possible way contribute to the local economy - spending nights at local lodges, use local guides and purchase both products and services locally. The more the better.

### **3. Make all the company's operations environmentally sustainable.**

Ecotourism-branded Tour Operators should be in the forefront with regards to waste management and garbage disposal etc. We cannot take away the fact that travelling in itself creates some environmental impact. This is why the operators, that is part of the labelling system, always and continuously should look out for new and better ways to minimise the environmental impacts of their trips. Operators should encourage travel by collective means of transport, the use of lodges that are eco friendly and make sure that, where appropriate, waste management has been implemented.

### **4. Contribute actively to conservation.**

Ecotourism takes active responsibility for the biodiversity and the unique nature of a location – from virgin wilderness to agricultural farmlands. This means, directly or indirectly,

economically or practically, that it supports the preservation of nature in all its different forms.

**5. Promote the joy of discovery, knowledge and respect.**

Ecotourism implies travelling with a curious but still respectful attitude. Something built on knowledge and strong personal beliefs. The tour operators carrying the Ecotourism label will always focus on the personal relationship with the traveller. Competent and knowledgeable guides, adequate introductions to the destination and well thought-through tips to the visitor are all important components.

**6. Quality and safety all the way through.**

Ecotourism is quality tourism. The customer must be able to trust that the branded organisation keeps high standards from start to end. Every branded operator is characterised by: serious entrepreneurship, responsible and honest marketing, good payment-ethics and has the entire legal framework in order. Security should be handled seriously and customer satisfaction a main priority.



## *Appendix 2*

### **The VISIT Standards for Tourism Ecolabels in Europe**

**VISIT (Voluntary initiative for Sustainability in Tourism) is an initiative to support the development of tourism Ecolabels in Europe and to show how they can effectively promote sustainability to consumers and to the tourism industry. The VISIT promotion activities supports those certificates which guarantee a high level of environmental quality of their products in their countries. The newly developed VISIT standards allow such schemes to be recognised.**

#### **Tourists expect environmental quality**

Consumer expectations on environmental qualities, the existing Ecolabels for Tourism and the interests of responsible tour operators are complementary. For consumers the environmental quality of the tourism product is very important. Issues such as: clean beaches and clean water, no rubbish and pollution, protected nature, low noise are all very high ranking consumer requirements. Around one third of European tourists prefer to be able to reach a destination by bus or train, and would also prefer to have good public transport at the holiday destination instead of having to use the car. More than 40% of visitors would like to stay in environmentally-friendly accommodation. One in five tourists would like tour operators, accommodation operators and destinations to clearly indicate their higher environmental quality products with an Ecolabel.

#### **Ecolabels shall give a “better choice” to the consumers**

In the year 2000, research revealed 40 regional, national and international Ecolabels for Tourism operating in Europe. However, the effectiveness of these labels at reaching the consumer has been limited. The development of the European single market and the task of reaching such a large and wide audience requires joint efforts. Ecolabels can be successful if they certify really *good environmental quality* (“better than non certified”) and provide a suitable choice of products in their countries. In order to maintain effective consumer’s recognition, ecolabels also need to have a reliable verification procedure.

#### **Standards assure the quality of Ecolabels**

The development of common standards for Tourism Ecolabels in Europe allows those Ecolabels which are highly reliable to be recognised . International Standards Organisation terminology, this means fulfilling the requirements for so-called 'type I' or third party verified certificates. The VISIT standards for the Ecolabels' criteria require the verification of key requirements and procedures, on a third party basis. This ensures ecolabeled tourism products meeting the VISIT standards may not mislead consumers or make erroneous claims regarding their environmental quality.

In 2001/2002 a strong partnership with 10 regional, national and international Ecolabeling schemes was achieved within the VISIT project. Together with ECOTRANS as co-ordinator these labels developed common “VISIT standards for Tourism Ecolabels in Europe”. Work was based on the ISO 14024 standards for Type I Ecolabels. At the end of 2002 the

participating Ecolabels agreed on the VISIT standards. These consist of 21 key requirements which have a specific relation to tourism (see next page). The recognition of and compliance with these standards is now the precondition for the promotion of Ecolabels and their underlying products in 2003 by VISIT.

The following documents from each Ecolabel were provided to and checked by ECOTRANS as independent project partner:

- A written declaration on the compliance with each of the 21 requirements
- The complete list of environmental performance and management criteria for each label (2002)
- A detailed description of the procedure for application of these criteria, their verification and certification
- The full list of certified products in Europe (2002)

This information allow Ecolabels to be reliably identified which do or do not require specific product criteria and how they verify the compliance of their certified products whether by on site visits or other third party evaluations – very important key requirements of the VISIT standards.

## The VISIT Standards

### **21 key requirements for Tourism Ecolabels**

(Version 12/2002)

#### ***The VISIT Ecolabel***

1. *aims to contribute to **sustainable tourism** development in Europe and - as far as possible – to verify those products with advanced performance in terms of environmental qualities*
2. *aims to contribute to maintaining and enhancing **service quality** in tourism in Europe*
3. ***recognises** other Ecolabels meeting the VISIT Standards*
4. *has considered **product life cycle** issues when setting product environmental criteria*
5. *requires **attainable levels** and give consideration to relative environmental impacts (“per unit”), measurement capability and accuracy*
6. *is based on sound scientific, engineering, management and social principles. The criteria are derived from data that support the claim of **environmental preferability** (high environmental benefit and/or efficiency)*
7. *took into account during the process for establishing the criteria **relevant** local, regional, and global environmental issues, available technology, and economic and social **issues** avoiding compromising service quality*
8. ***reviews** the criteria and product functional requirements within a predefined period*
9. *declares that compliance with environmental and other relevant **legislation** is a precondition for the applicant to be awarded and to maintain the label*
10. *selected **product environmental criteria** which are expressed in terms of **impacts** on the environment and natural resources **or emissions** to the environment. Such performance criteria shall be expressed in absolute (numbers) or relative (%) figures and measure units (e.g. kWh, litre, volume, weight per product, room, bed, overnight stay, m<sup>2</sup>) and may also recommend the exclusion / non-use of special materials or substances*

11. *requires criteria in the following **environmental fields** as far as relevant in its area of operation and as far as relevant for the specific product group : purchasing, transport and mobility, energy, water, waste, chemical substances, air, noise, nature/landscape*
12. *for **accommodation** shall have the following **management** criteria which complement other Environmental Management Systems: Environmental commitment, Environmental co-ordinator, communication and training: guests, staff, public; Monitoring regularly energy, water, waste consumption/ overnight*
13. *is able to demonstrate **transparency** through the following stages of its development and operation: product categories, product environmental criteria, period of validity of criteria, testing and verification methods, certification and award procedures, compliance verification procedure, complaints procedure*
14. *legally **protects** the Ecolabel (i.e. the certification mark/logotype) in order to prevent unauthorized use and to maintain public confidence in the programme*
15. *is **voluntary** in nature*
16. *is open to all potential **applicants** of the predefined product group in the area of operation. All applicants who fulfil the product environmental criteria and the other programme requirements, are entitled to be granted a **license** and authorized to use the label*
17. *guarantees that all the elements in the product environmental criteria and product function characteristics are **verifiable** by the ecolabelling body*
18. *has a **verification procedure** which guarantees a high level of reliability. This includes **on site visits** at least every three years (*accommodation: once per certification period*)*
19. *has general rules guiding the overall operation of the programme. These general rules control the **general conditions for the awarding** of the licence and the use of the label*
20. *Issues awards on business performance against criteria which apply to the site for a predefined **period** of not more than three years*
21. *maintains a publicly available **list of products** which have been awarded the label.*

*(This list of requirements was supposed to be revised by the VISIT partners and Ecolabels in December 2003)*

## The VISIT Ecolabels

To date the following 10 Ecolabels fulfil the VISIT standards (*December 2002*). They are able to guarantee tour operators and guests both a high environmental quality and a strong commitment to environmental issues at their more than 1000 certified hotels, campsites, beaches or marinas.

### **Das Österreichische Umweltzeichen für Tourismusbetriebe (Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism)**

The Austrian ecolabel with the "Hundertwasser Logo" is the first state ecolabel for tourism in Europe (since 1997). To date Austria offers a choice of about 200 certified hotels, holiday apartments, youth hostels, private guest houses, campsites, mountain guest houses and restaurants.

### **Ecolabel Luxembourg**

This initiative was launched in 1997 by the Ministry for Tourism in Luxembourg in co-operation with representatives from the Ministry for Environment and private stakeholder associations. 23 places offer high-quality service and local products under the motto „Experience your environment and enjoy your holiday“.

### **Nordic Swan in Scandinavia**

The *Nordic Swan* is the official Ecolabel for products and services in the five Scandinavian countries Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland. It is a very well known at the Nordic population. Since 1999 consumers have also the choice of about 80 certified hotels, mainly in Sweden.

### **Den Groenne Noegle (Green Key) in Denmark**

This label was developed in the early 1990's by the *Danish Association of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Industry* (HORESTA). The purpose of the project is to improve the environmental awareness among hotels, youth hostels, conference and holiday centres, camping sites and holiday houses in Denmark; since 2001 also in Sweden, Greenland and Estonia. In 2002 more than 100 accommodation businesses are awarded.

### **Green Tourism Business Scheme in Scotland (& the UK)**

Scottish tourism businesses are encouraged to demonstrate achievements in environment and quality by joining VisitScotland's Green Tourism Business Scheme. The certification process started in 1998. In 2002, more than 400 members were certified with bronze, silver or gold. This amount represents about 10% of the available beds in Scotland and a range of visitor attractions and other tourism facilities.

### **Milieubarometer in The Netherlands**

Since 1998 more than 200 campsites, holiday parks, hotels, group accommodations and restaurants in The Netherlands have been awarded the Milieubarometer certificate with one of the three different categories (bronze, silver, gold). The gold level is equal to the high standards of "Milieukeur", the official state Ecolabel. In 2001 14 Center Parcs businesses in Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands were awarded with the Dutch certificate.

### **La Clef Verte in France**

Since 1999 the Clef Verte (Green Key) can be seen as a proof that environmental protection is not a contra-diction to a high level of comfort. More than 50 camping sites from Brittany to the Mediterranean coast are certified for their specific measures to maintain bio-diversity and for their effective preservation of natural resources.

### **Legambiente Turismo in Italy**

Since 1997 Legambiente, the leading Italian Environmental Association, has been operating an eco-friendly management scheme to improve the environmental quality of tourist businesses in a range of seaside, natural park and mountain destinations in several regions of Italy. 168 accommodation businesses as well as 51 bathing establishments at the beaches were certified in 2002.

### **Ibex-Label in Switzerland**

The Ibex-label of the "Ö Plus" association is given to traditional 3\* and 4\* hotels as well as to hotels with a special and strong orientation on ecological issues. Certified hotels show a high

engagement for all sustainability responsibilities: environment, social aspects to staff and society, as well as economic results. A hotel can achieve up to 5 ibexes. 11 hotels in three Swiss cantons have received 3, 4 or 5 ibexes in 2002.

### **Blue Flag**

The international Blue Flag campaign started already in 1985. Clean bathing water and beaches are key qualities for satisfying holidays at the sea or the lake. Since 1987 the Blue Flag is recognised as a symbol for good bathing water quality, clean beaches and environmentally acceptable waste disposal. In 2002, more than 2.000 beaches and 727 marinas were awarded all over Europe.

### **The "Green Certificate" in Latvia**

The aim of this project is to promote the development of environmentally friendly tourism in rural areas and provide for:

- Protection of ecosystems and maintenance of biological diversity,
- Preservation of natural landscapes, cultural and historical heritage,
- Mindful exploitation of natural resources,
- Control and prevention of environment pollution,
- Environment protection through offering nature friendly tourist activities,
- Improved quality of life of the local communities.

Currently the "Green Certificate" eco-label can be awarded to country B&B homes, vacation cottages, guesthouses and campings, which meet the requirements of the "Green Certificate" regulation and criteria.

<http://eco.celotajs.lv>

The VISIT Ecolabels encouraging best environmental practice

**Ecolabels recognised by VISIT are**

- **demanding**
- **reliable**
- **committed**

**The VISIT Ecolabels are demanding:** they make sure that their certified tourism products as far as relevant make efforts to-

- the protection of nature and landscape
- purchase local, environmentally-friendly products and organic food supplies
- reduce and limitation of energy consumption and drinking water, and the growing use of renewable energy sources
- proper treatment of sewage and the reduction and recycling of waste
- the use of public and environmentally-friendly means of transport

**The VISIT Ecolabels are reliable:** they achieve this through

- clear minimum standards in each environmental category which exceed the levels required by law
- effective environmental management requirements at the tourism companies, including staff training and providing environmental tips for visitors
- thorough inspection of tourist facilities applying for the environmental certificate, carried out by independent, trained experts
- a limitation of the validity of the ecolabel to a maximum of three years and through regular monitoring and updating of the criteria, in consultation with tourism, environmental and consumer organisations
- regular evaluation of environmental impact of their certified tourist facilities, in order to quantify environmental benefits.

**The VISIT Ecolabels are committed:** they co-operate with other initiatives to achieve more sustainable tourism development, which means benefits for all:

- high level of service quality and recreation for guests
- good jobs for the local population and economic success for businesses and destinations
- Maintenance of the cultural and natural diversity

## Contact

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***makes the difference !***

## *Appendix 3*

# **EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LABELS IN TOURISM (examples)**

### **1. International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA)**

UIAA has 80 country-members and has developed a range of labels described below; however, it is not in a position to impose them to its members.

- a) The **UIAA Environment Label** exists to promote high standards of conduct and responsible access for climbing and mountain activities. Any provider of organised mountain activities such as a training centre, trekking or expedition organisation, qualified instructor or guide who is committed to support and act according to the UIAA's Environmental Objectives and Guidelines can apply for the label. UIAA Environment Label holders are listed on the UIAA website and Journal; can use the UIAA Environment logo to demonstrate their commitment to internationally agreed good practice; and are giving their support for the UIAA's international work to protect the environment and access for responsible climbing and mountain activities.
  - b) The **UIAA Training Label** is for leader and instructor training and assessment schemes that meet the UIAA's model training standards. There are 4 model standards and others are under preparation and consideration. The Mountaineering Commission regularly reviews the standards and holds seminars for training experts and member associations seeking advice and guidance on good practice. To encourage good practice, and allow the possibility of mutual recognition of qualifications, member associations are invited to use the UIAA model standards in their leader and instructor training programmes. Member Associations wishing assistance to develop their training programmes, or wishing to apply for the UIAA Instructor Label are asked to review the relevant documents available in The UIAA website and apply to the UIAA Training Standards Working Group.
  - c) The **UIAA Guidebook Label** is for publications that follow the UIAA's standards for guidebooks. The standard is based on the minimum information that is needed to help climbers from overseas to understand the local difficulties and any special hazards or environmental considerations. There are several ways that an application from publishers for the Guidebook Label can be approved and these are outlined in the regulations available in the UIAA website.
  - d) The **UIAA Safety Label** can be awarded for mountaineering and climbing equipment such as ropes, carabiners, ice axes, crampons, helmets, etc., and manufacturers who meet the requirements of the relevant UIAA Standard. The UIAA Standards are based on the EN Standards (European Standards, also called CEN or CE Standards) and may have additional safety requirements including test methods. Only the additional safety requirements and test methods are given in the UIAA Standards, as the EN Standards are copyright protected.
2. **European Regulation EMAS** – with respect to the effectiveness of the environmental policy of a business.
  3. **ISO 14000 series** – for compliance with measures to reduce pollution.

4. **Green Globe (based on ISO 14001)** – developed in 1992 following the initiative of the World Travel and Tourism Council with the objective to sensitise tourist enterprises offering suggestions for cheap methods to improve their operations by using environment-friendly techniques. Green Globe has developed an ecotourism label in cooperation with Ecotourism Australia. See under “ecotourism labels” above.
5. **Ecotel** – a rather complicate labelling system developed by the US Environment Protection Service and Rocky Mountain Institute to label the commitment for environmental and sustainable resource management.
6. **Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (Australia)** – certifies excursions, sightseeing visits and accommodation units with great emphasis on customers’ opinions. Cooperates with Green Globe.
7. **Environmental Quality Seal** – operated by the German Hotel Owners Association.
8. **Blue Swallow of the Travel Compatibility Group** – for accommodation.
9. **Green Suitcase** – Ecological tourism in Europe, <http://www.oete.de/eng/suitcase.htm>. It has developed to Viabono, [www.viabono.de](http://www.viabono.de), basically a label for sustainable tourism in Germany, mainly accommodation and destinations.



## *Appendix 4*

### **GOOD PRACTISES**

These are examples of good practices. More of these will be described later in the project.

#### Lapplandsafari -- Traditional Sami cultural camp

**Main Principle(s):** Respects and Involves Local Community

**Practices:** - Collection of local culture and environment information

- Co-operation and communication with local peoples and authorities
- Delivery of authentic sustainable product

**Company:** Lapplandsafari

**Web-Site:** [www.lapplandsafari.se](http://www.lapplandsafari.se)

**Region:** Ammarnas / Vasterbotten / Sweden

**Operation:** Traditional Sami cultural camp and conference facilities

#### **General Summary:**

Lapplandsafari is run by the Vinka family, who has recreated a Sàmi mountain camp, Geunja. It's located in the middle of one of the largest preservation of nature areas in Europe, Vindelfallen in the province Vasterbotten. The camp has a Sàmi cone shaped peat hut in the yard and a sauna just by the lake. This is how a lot of Sàmi lived during the 19th century. A life in accord with nature, a life the Vinkas want to share with others.

The operation provides a first hand testimonial on the success that excellent research, cooperation and communication play in the development of an authentic Sami cultural product. This business operates within a protected area and demonstrates the long term benefits of implementing sustainable tourism practices.

#### **Operator's Testimonial / General Details:**

*Anki Vinka about the investment in building the Geunja and what meaning it has had to the area:*

#### **Background**

“After many years of working as a traditional activity operator, we wanted to work in a more sustainable way and with more focus on our Sàmi culture. We wanted to do this by building a Sàmi mountain camp using traditional methods and materials - this would be our principle for arrangements and conferences. We presented the idea to some of our major regular customers and asked if they were interested in helping us to save the Sàmi culture by continuing to engage us as an organiser and by buying our new product – Geunja. We received positive responds and some customers even helped us with technical design and project descriptions.”

#### **Collecting information**

“Then we went collecting useful information in the area -- such as measuring old edifices, taking photographs, visiting museums and talking to old people and relatives to obtain as much information and knowledge as possible. It was also important to find somewhere where the camp could fit into the nature and with right conditions – a spring, fishing grounds and hunting grounds – exactly as Sami were thinking 100 years ago. The perfect place was located in a nature reserve. We thought it would be a bit tricky because of all the strict rules about construction work and commercial business in protected areas. But we had no problem with that, thanks to all the excellent information we had found. We had, without knowing it, taken into account all the aspects that are required for a sustainable tourism project – the ecological, the social/cultural and the economical effects and benefits. The authorities considered the project favourable to the nature reserve.”

#### **Close co-operation and communication to be successful.**

“It's important to communicate with as many as possible, with the guests, the experts, the museums in the province and other contractors in the area. But above all, the older locals are anxious to share their

knowledge; you have to care about the details. Once the mountain camp was finished, we invited the whole village to show everybody what we had done, so everybody would feel that they were participating in the project. The whole village came, including the holiday cottage owners, and they were all very impressed. Today everybody in the village has only good things to say about Geunja and it has also spread to other areas through the holiday cottage owners.”

### **Real social history**

“We have inspired others enterprises to do similar things and today many people call us to get hints or help in different ways. It’s fun to be able to be a source of inspiration and see that many people have adapted our way of thinking and therefore are making better products. Here in the village, it’s very obvious that we are going for sustainable tourism. Now there are three other enterprises operating in the village, which are also approved by Nature’s Best. There is also a change of attitudes in the whole province. The authorities are talking about Eco-tourism/Sustainable tourism and see Geunja as an excellent example. Our success relies on real social-natural history. It’s very important that everything is authentic to be trustworthy. We are also working in small groups, partly because we don’t want to wear the area down too much. But it is mostly because we want to be good hosts who are looking forward to every single meeting with the guests and still are taking great pleasure in storytelling.

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## Vildmark i Varmland – lografting

**Main Principle(s):** Supports Local Economy

**Practices:** - Purchase of goods and services locally  
- Developing network of local businesses and stakeholders

**Company:** *Vildmark i Varmland*

**Web-Site:** [www.vildmark.se](http://www.vildmark.se)

**Region:** Torsby / Varmland, Sweden / river Klaralven

**Operations:** Provides rafting, canoe tours on river Klaralven - (includes building raft)

### **General Summary:**

*Vildmark i Värmland* (translated as Wilderness in Varmland) is a company located in Torsby, central Sweden, that offers nature based activities and experiences. Through timber rafting, canoeing and white water canoeing the company allows people to access nature in an sustainable way. Since 1979, *Vildmark i Värmland* has worked to minimise the burden on the environment by restricting the number of guests on their activities, by repairing and maintaining equipment, using local suppliers wherever possible and providing valuable information (in various languages) on how to move around the countryside. All this has been aimed at giving guests a pleasant experience while creating long-term sustainable activities in the countryside.

### **Operator's Testimonial / General Details:**

*Ing Marie Junler regarding the local characteristics of the company.*

### **Local networks that support everyone**

“The long distances we travel on the rafting trips mean that the principle of local buying must be applied on a longish geographic scale. Therefore we have chosen to buy everything we need as close as possible in order to support the local trade and industry. But at the same time we create a local network which will support us in the long run. Everyone gains by creating good possibilities for the people in the area. Today we buy merchandise locally and services from a local distributor of timber and from a local bus company. It isn’t always cheapest to buy locally but it gives other benefits, not only for us. After we put some pressure on a local supermarket, they started to buy bread from a bakery here in Torsby instead of from a big one in southern Sweden. And now they are able to sell fresh made bread every day. We try to influence other contractors in similar ways. For instance, now it is possible to buy elk meat from the district and we get more ecologically and locally produced

vegetables. It is also a way for us to show and act according to the policy about sustainable tourism in which Vildmark I Varmland stands for. And we noticed that our way of thinking is spreading.“

### **Personal contacts are worth more than the price**

“That we trade locally and provide packages of supplies to our guest is something very valuable for the local economy. Particularly to small distributors, such as the little shop in the village which otherwise might have closed down. Therefore we pay full price and in exchange they pack the provisions for us - it is a mutual way to profit, and it supports the shop and services in the district.

It's valuable to have personal contact with local contractors who can deliver what we need, when we need it. To be able to call a contractor Sunday night because we got more guests than we expected, is more worth than to buy cheaper from somewhere else.

A local establishment must be trustworthy. It means to have a healthy and professional business relationship with all distributors not by forcing them to drop prices or by being an impossible negotiator. You gain more by a network where people support each other.”

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Jósvalfő Village Walk in the Aggtelek National Park

**Main Principle(s):** Integrate the village of Jósvalfő and its immediate natural surroundings into the tourist programmes.

### **Practices:**

- organise village walk to international and national visitors in the area
- provide and offer other activities and programs such as:  
cave tour, cave concerts, eco-tours, zoology and botany tours, horse and carriage riding, village carnival, Jósvalfő Fruit Harvest; Nature cycling for local schools, Open school days, Gömör-Torna Festival – concerts, lectures, exhibitions;.

**Responsible organisation:** Aggtelek National Park, H-3758, Tengersizem oldal 1, Hungary

**Web-Site:** [www.anp.hu](http://www.anp.hu)

**Region:** Northern Hungary

**Operation:** Village Walk

### **General Summary**

Jósvalfő village can be found within the Aggtelek National Park in the Northeast part of Hungary. This area was declared as a UNESCO World heritage Site, where the visitation of the caves and their karts formations has been practiced for a long time. This programme was created to combine the elements of the nature conservation, history and traditions in this area. The “Village Walk of Jósvalfő” programme includes 21 stops that can be visited with a trained guide. Some great features and examples of the traditional village architecture and agriculture, an art and handicraft collection can be found in Jósvalfő.

### **Background**

The initial idea of Jósvalfő Village Walk came from a local citizen, Béla Berecz (that time a national park employee), but was supported by a variety of local stakeholders. A period of village research and the accumulated experiences of village development added up. All this and the intention on the NP's side to enhance ecotourism led to the project development.

It was a low-cost project that required mainly negotiations among all the partners and a training programme. The whole project was financed by the Aggtelek National Park.

*Stakeholders:* Aggtelek National Park, project coordinator; Municipality of Jósvalfő, co-founder of the Village Museum; Szinlő Ltd., co-founder of the Village Museum; Zoltán Házi, owner of the Baradla Galéria; István Hangó, pastor; István Gereguly, bee farmer; Csaba Bárkényi, baker; local people, guides

### **Objectives and strategies**

The main objectives of the project were to provide marketable alternative ecotourism programmes additional to the cave tours and to create a package programme including the potential sights and events in this area. The imitators also aimed to develop a programme that presents the natural beauties combined with traditional architecture, life style and agriculture; a practical approach to the “man and biosphere” idea. By these initiatives they could provide alternative jobs for the local people.

### **Benefit of the programme**

By the introduction of this programme some problems arose, which should have been solved for the successful operation, such as: passive attitude of local people; funding; little publicity of the new activity; and aging population, loss of values and knowledge. For the sake of the cause the imitators organised direct discussions with the local individuals and implicated for funds. For solving the aging population they provided jobs for youngsters and for measuring the benefit of the project, surveys and questioners were conducted and analysed by the programme officers.

By implementation of this village walk programme a marketable alternative ecotourism programme was created. This interdisciplinary programme is presenting the natural beauties, traditional architecture, life style, and agriculture inside. The relationship between local communities and the NP’s management improved and also a training opportunity was provided.

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## **Írottkő / Geschriebenstein Nature Park**

**Main Principle(s):** to implement a complex development of the region observance of sustainable development with the co-operation of the settlements’ local authorities, civil organisations and local population.

**Practices:** Education and interpretation of nature conservation, guided tours in the area of the Nature Park, artist retreat, museums and educational trails

**Company:** Írottkő nature Park Society, Jurisics tér 8. Kőszeg H-9730

**Web-Site:** [www.naturpark.hu](http://www.naturpark.hu)

**Region:** Kőszeg and area, West Transdanubian Region, Hungary

**Operation:** provide tourism activities which ensure both the conservation of the landscape and the economic bases of the region

### **General Summary**

Írottkő /Geschriebenstein Nature Park is located on the outskirts of the villages of Rohonc and Léka on the Austrian side, and in Hungary it lies in the administrative area of six settlements (Bozsok, Cák, Kőszeg, Kőszegdoroszló, Kőszegszerdahely and Velem) – apart from the Kőszeg Landscape Protection Area. The Írottkő /Geschriebenstein Nature Park is a coherent cultural region with significant natural assets that lies across the Hungarian-Austrian border. The legal framework of nature parks does not exist like in other western countries. The definition of Nature Park refers to a particularly valuable and typical landscape unit, which has protected natural assets but is not a strictly protected and isolated area. Within the area and framework of the Nature Park integrated regional development is intended build on the principle of sustainable development and its existence is due to the co-operation of settlements and other participants in the region.

The driving force of the establishment and the operation of the Írottkő Geschriebenstein Nature Park on the Hungarian part was the *Írottkő Nature Park Society*. At present it has 72 members, including private individuals, enterprises, the local councils of the area, the Fertő-Hanság National Park Directorate, the Szombathely Forestry Inc., as well as associations concerned about the environment of beautifying the city or involved in public life.

## **Background**

The idea of the nature park, realised within the framework of Austrian-Hungarian co-operation, emerged in the 1980s. The Naturpark Geschriebenstein (Austria) was opened in 1996 and the Írottktő Natúrpark (Hungary) in 1997.

Between 1995 and 1998 two sub-project was financed by the Phare CBC fund. One was the implementation study in which the Nature Park's development guidelines were defined, and the other the development of a cycle route connecting six settlements on the Hungarian side. In addition to the Phare CBC, co-financers were the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Hungary, as well as the Regional Tourism Committee, the County Council, Kőszeg Town Council and Savaria Tourist.

## **Objectives and strategies**

The aim of the Írottktő Geschriebenstein Nature Park is to protect assets to preserve the culturally and naturally coherent region and save cultural heritage and conserve nature to preserve the rural landscape and to protect natural habitat and species. The Nature Park intends to maintain the region with the involvement of the local population and tourists, through economic activities that are in harmony with the region's ecology, special infrastructure, training and education, and by forming and environment-conscious approach and providing a wide range of information.

## **Benefit of the project**

Apart from the early problems this project is a very successful one. The local citizens were also involved into this initiative and they were informed about the goals of the programme. The most important results achieved during the Nature Park Society's five years of existence is the establishment of a regional information centre serving the information needs of both local people and tourists. Tour guides and language courses were organised for workers in tourism. Kőszeg-Vashegy Wine Route was also developed to make the region's wine culture and its wines better known. In 2000, partly financed by the Phare CBC, a communal waste disposal site was built; a thermal swimming pool, a drinking fountain and three educational path were established; a campsite, a sports and recreation park, a cyclists rest and first aid centre were created, and tourist publications were issued.

The imitators of the project created and granted the title of "Official Írottktő Nature Park Product", for promoting the launch and marketing of unique local product. In the frame of the project tourist information boards were erected in all settlements in the Nature Park and in the Kőszeg Hills, and publications and maps were prepared to present the natural and cultural assets, programmes and services of the Nature Park.

## *Appendix 5*

### **Forum Anders Reisen**

The Criteria – an abstract

#### **Preamble**

All the members of the forum strive for a tourism form that is ecological and economical sustainable, with ethic and social rules towards the local communities (sustainable tourism).

#### **Social responsible travels**

The forum members are responsible for the development of the structure that the region already knows. They accept guests in their own space, with respect for the other's culture, habits and religion.

In order to ensure a success of the destination one will go for "Faire payment" and will sign long term contracts. The economical interest will not prevail over the ethical ones, being very ethic for the involved population.

In order to ensure an increase of the value, the regional economic interest will be promoted. The typical infrastructure of the region will be used to a great extent.

### **Environmentally friendly travel**

#### **Accommodation**

The accommodation represents a link towards the knowledge of the regional culture. This is why people prefer

- buildings and architecture well structured in the region
- ecological materials.

#### **Air travel**

The members of the forum know how damaging for the environment air travel is. This is why the holiday periods length and distance of travel must have a reasonable relationship. These rules have to be followed:

- a) There will be no flights offered for distances under 700 km
- b) During flights between 700 to 2,000 km the journey period is at least 8 days
- c) For the flights above 2,000 km the journey is at least 15 days.

#### **Group size**

The participant's number will be limited, according to the destination and the way of travel. For group travel, it is recommended for groups to be between 1 and 20 persons.

#### **Travel forms**

The following ways of travel will be excluded:

1. Off Road Tours with 4WD and motorcycles
2. Snow mobiles
3. Sightseeing tours with small aircrafts
4. Heli Skiing

**Responsibility towards the clients:**

The journeys of the forum members are designed to offer intense experiences and relaxation. These are achieved through:

1. favouring slow ways of travel in the destination
2. small groups
3. direct links with the public means of transport
4. typical food to the region and small scale accommodation
5. The clients have the opportunity to learn to know other persons and themselves. They can develop their personality if they are encouraged to take responsibilities and to be active themselves.

## Appendix 6

### Possible ecotourism products to label

- **Nature tours/Wildlife watching**, for example for wolf, moose, polar bear, whale, seal, turtles, birds, flowers etc. Qualified naturalist guides required.
- **Adventure sailing** with knowledgeable guides that take the clients exploring in the natural harbours
- **Scubadiving, snorkeling**
- **Caving**
- **Bike tours**
- **Participating in shepherds life** in the mountains. Participation in harvesting different kind of crops. For the westerner in an industrial hectic environment it can be great to experience, in their eyes, old fashioned life styles.
- **Offering instructions** in traditional crafts, general environment and nature-related courses, outdoor survival training and courses in life-quality (targeted to individuals, families, executives, schools etc)
- **Forest schools ?** (Hungary)
- **Participation** in archaeological work
- **Sea kayaking**
- **Canoeing tours**
- **Fishing and hunting**
- **Trail riding**, equestrian activities
- Eco-friendly activities combined with **spa activities**
- Guided **hiking tours** or tours in horse and carriage
- Guided **mountain trekking**
- **Dog sledge tours** or tours in reindeer sledges
- **Skitours** between huts or inns.
- **Rafting**

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### Ecotourism products labelled in Sweden

**Here are all the approved Swedish ecotourism operators - offering travel experiences out of the ordinary.** To learn more about the tour operators and their tour products you can visit [www.naturesbest.nu](http://www.naturesbest.nu). *(Not all of them have descriptions in English yet. Many of the operators have a farm or a lodge, but to be able to get the label they have to offer something more than just the accommodation and food. There have to be organised tours of some kind.)*

1. Enjoy the archipelago in Blekinge at **Tjärö Turiststation STF** while you learn how to sail or to go sea kayaking - or just sit and paint the oak forests on the island with your water-colours. <http://www.svenskaturistforeningen.se>



2. Added value canoeing tours in the Fegen water system in Halland, in south-western Sweden, or roe deer hunting in the Halland forests, at **Alvhaga Vildmark AB**.  
<http://www.fegen.nu/>
3. **Segerstads Fyr** in World Heritage Area of Southern Öland offer lodgings, intense bird life in the garden of the light-house and special interest bird watching courses.
4. **Lilla Karlsö** is a small island in the Baltic that is a nature reserve that offers exceptional birding and botany experiences.
5. If you want to learn how to go sea kayaking, or just glide along the Swedish Bohuslän west coast – contact **Orust kajak** in Bohuslän.
6. **Trollmarker** is a farm in southern Sweden that offers farm stays and trail riding combined with spa activities.
7. **Bitterna Lamm** has been breeding the Swedish fine wool sheep for more than 20 years. They offer instructions in the following crafts: Felting, weaving, sewing furs and leather, spinning, dyeing with plants, butchering, cooking, preparing lambmeals, västgötameals (local meals) and breeding sheep. They also offer bicycle and hiking tours.
8. Float down the river Klarälven on a lograft you construct yourself, with **Vildmark i Värmland**: here you will find soft adventures during log rafting for one or more days.
9. **Fredros Gård** in the county Värmland, beautifully situated between the lakes of Mangen and Treen is renowned for their excellent fishing (perch, pike, trout and salmon).
10. In the heart of Sweden with its beautiful lakes and forests you will find the manor **Sikfors Herrgård** built in 1849. Here you can for example go hiking, canoeing, fishing or ice skating. Labelled is a gourmet weekend with mushroom picking and participation in the cooking.
11. The Stockholm archipelago in a sea kayak. **Äventyrsresor AB** organise guided kayak outings and group excursions among 24000 islands and skerries. [www.aventysresor.se](http://www.aventysresor.se)
12. Unwind from big city stress and enjoy the silence of the forest, or the call of the black-throated Diver at dawn in the **Vargas Vildmarksldodge** in Hälsingland. Here even the smaller nature experience gets full attention, with good food and warm hosts.
13. **Outwild** is a pioneer within the Swedish wildlife watching to see the great carnivores. Meet the bear, on its own conditions, during a three day bear-watching safari in Hälsingland.
14. Stay at a farm in the middle of the forests of Hälsingland, and combine your stay at **Larsbo Gård** with guided hiking tours or tours in horse and carriage.
15. Mountain courses for families, guided mountain trekking, outdoor survival training and courses in life-quality are to be found at **Grövelsjöns Fjällstation**, a mountain lodge in the of county Dalarna. Other mountain lodges labelled are **Sylarna** and **Vålådalen**. You will find them all on <http://www.svenskaturistforeningen.se>
16. Go horseback riding in the mountains of Jämtland with **Vemdalens Islandshästar AB**. Well conceived tours of two or more days, with good food and Sami culture, for small groups. If your are an experienced rider, maybe you should try the longer Sami "raids" between Tjallinge and Vemdalen, but make sure you book well in advance
17. **ATI Fjällsupport** organise courses in nature and mountain knowledge in the county of Jämtland. [www.fjallsupport.com](http://www.fjallsupport.com)
18. During winter visits to the mountain resort Åre you can go on dog sledge tours with **Hundspannsturer i Ottsjö** for shorter and longer winter trips, in small groups and with a

lot of joy of discovery and good company. **Åre sleddog adventures** is a similar operation. [www.aresleddog.se](http://www.aresleddog.se)

19. Moose-hunting can also be ecotourism. **Pro Hunting AB** close to Östersund, organise good and long-term sustainable moose-hunting tours in the county of Jämtland.
20. Mountain trail riding on Icelandic horses, hiking with packhorses or cave exploration expeditions into Sweden's longest cave - all you have to do is choose. **Rid i Jorm** in the village of Jormvattnet in the county of Jämtland will handle everything else.
21. An unforgettable week behind a team of dogs through the white mountains of Västerbotten. **The Silent Way** organise long tours that are often fully booked by foreign guests.
22. Exclusive moose and/or forest fowl hunting is provided by **Naturupplevelser i Lappland**. This is a highly quality conscious company, which cares for both the local natural values and the people who live there.
23. Meet the Sámi culture with **Lapplandsafari** in Ammarnäs in Västerbotten. Book a day trip or a week tour to Geunja - a genuine Sámi mountain camp. Take your company conference here, or make a school trip to Ammarnäs. **Anådalens Saemien Sijte** has a Sámi mountain camp further south. [www.anadalen.com](http://www.anadalen.com)
24. Meet nature in the mountains of Vindelfjällen on horseback with **Fjällhästen** in the county of Västerbotten. They organise trail rides on Icelandic horses, both in the snow and in the summer mountains. Similar tours are organised by **Ammarnäs fjällens Islandshästar** [www.afir.nu](http://www.afir.nu)
25. **Ammarnäs Fiskecenter** organise guided fishing tours in the Swedish mountains far north. <http://www.ammarnas.net/fiskecentrum/>
26. With Aurora Borealis Adventures you can go on long and short dog sledge tours through the winter forests around the river Vindelälven in Västerbotten
27. The village of Jokkmokk is the starting point for many mountain adventures. **Jokkmokkguiderna** is one of the area's most knowledgeable operators, who among other things also organise dog sledge tours through the area's mountain forests and over the wide mountain ranges of the World Heritage Area of Lapponia.
28. **Saltoluokta Fjällstation**, a mountain lodge that combines old traditions with new ways of thinking. "Single in Salto", family weeks, gourmet-food days, painting and mountain courses are some of their approved tours. [www.svenskaturistforeningen.se](http://www.svenskaturistforeningen.se)
29. Experience old Sámi traditions with **Vägvisaren - Samiska Upplevelser** in Gällivare, who during summer organise several days of mountain hiking with pack reindeer and during winter organise exciting tours in reindeer sledges
30. Go white-water rafting down the untamed rivers Kalix and Torneälv with **Guide B-O**. Or try his dog sledge tours with grouse hunting and trapping.
31. Reindeer sledge safaris in Jukkasjärvi- Soppero, with your own Sami guide together with **Nutti Sámi Siida** in Jukkasjärvi. Or shorter reindeer sledge tours, filled with Sámi culture and food, close to the world famous Icehotel.