

Ecoroute: Work package 4 For Trainers in ecotourism

The contents of this Work Package 4 is used by Nature's Best experts to train trainers of service providers. Work package 6 is also used in teaching trainers since it is the basic documentation of the Nature's Best system and what the system requires from service providers.

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Introduction - How to promote and implement ecotourism

This is a Trainer's help to organize transmission of ecotourism know how to service providers. It focuses on how to promote ecotourism in areas where natural and cultural heritage is suitable for sustainable tourism. It uses the Natures Best concept from Sweden, which has proven to be a practical tool to create quality labelled ecotourism products. In Sweden this approach leads to a labelled service provider and makes it possible for customers to differentiate a service provider that is an ecotourism provider from others.

The Trainers help can be used to organize training in ecotourism and as a method for introducing a labelling system similar to Natures Best. By using this Trainers help, Ecotourism for service providers WK 6 and Swedish Natures Best experts it is possible to "translate" Natures Best for use in other countries.

These are the basic steps taken to create an ecotourism labelled product and certified service provider in Sweden. They are based on the existence of Nature's Best schooled trainers.

- 1. Informing regional stakeholders and service providers of ecotourism and Nature's Best (2 – 4 hour seminar)*
- 2. Lectures and workshop for Nature's Best applying service providers (3 day seminar). Special advice sold on request to service providers that want more help in the labelling process and company/product adaptation to label*
- 3. Certification procedures, approval and marketing.*

These 3 topics are described in detail in this paper. One Power Point presentations is available for trainers when teaching service

providers and one is available for informing about ecotourism and labelling.

If all 3 steps are taken (like they are in Sweden) the service provider will have invested time and money to become a certified ecotourism service provider within a labelling system that is marketed nationally and internationally. The service provider will have improved products or developed new products. They will have adjusted their activities to become more sustainable towards nature and cultural heritage and towards the local community. They will be more sustainable and have more cost effective products, an improved image and they will be marketed together with other high quality service providers. They will reach new customers that are prepared to pay for quality and that appreciate rules and behaviour that promote sustainability.

An important dimension of the Natures Best concept is to make ecotourism exciting and fun. We do not believe in long lectures and boasting environmental and cultural commitment for people on holiday. We want them to have fun and while having fun they gain knowledge and respect for nature, culture and people they meet.



Comments:

The process of promoting and labelling ecotourism



Informing regional stakeholders and service providers of ecotourism and Nature's Best



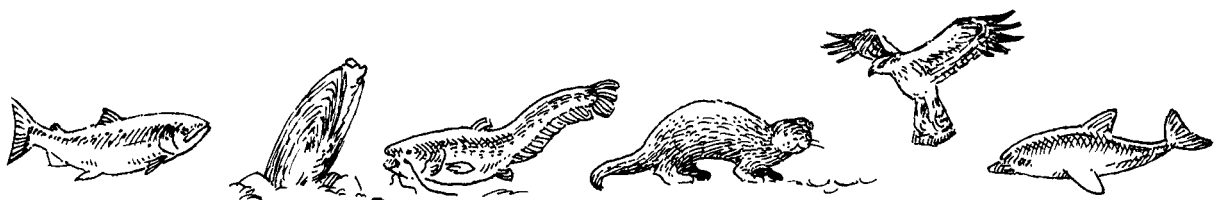
Lectures and workshop for Nature's Best applying service providers



Certification procedures, approval and marketing



Sustainability



1. Informing service providers and other stakeholders of ecotourism and the labelling system

It is essential to sell in the concept of ecotourism and labelling to a region as a first step towards creating ecotourism service providers. Local authorities and people working with tourism, nature and culture preservation together with interested service providers must be made aware of each other and how to coordinate efforts. Many of the labelling criteria involve coordination with authorities and society as a whole. During these meetings it is important to use speakers that can inspire and readily explain ecotourism and labelling to interested service providers. They need to see the direct and indirect benefits of ecotourism for their business. Direct benefits include, for example, improved marketing opportunities, better product quality and higher turnover, while indirect benefits such

Note! In Sweden we have seen that extra advice/training on top of the 3 day mandatory course is often necessary to produce a good application for service providers. This helps them choose and design the right products and explains more thoroughly what is meant in the application document. Training, visiting, studying and certifying service provider will take 6 – 12 months to accomplish.

as improved image could result from a labelling/certification scheme. They need to know how much time and money the labelling costs. They need to see examples, listen to others that have been labelled and even visit places where ecotourism that can be compared with their activities has proven economically beneficial.



Introduction to ecotourism and Natures Best

(Power Point presentation is available)

Hold a 2 – 4 hour seminar where a region or country can meet ecotourism and decide whether or not to invest in the ecotourism development package. **Aim: to motivate decision makers to invest time and money in a labelling system and to interest service providers' in creating eco tourism products.**

Topics:

Nature and culture conservation

- Environmental goals of Europe
- Cultural goals of Europe

Risks with tourism

- endangered species and habitat
- destruction of cultural places
- destruction of nature
- tourism impact on local society

What is Sustainable tourism and Ecotourism?

- A photographic journey in ecotourism
- EU definition – sustainable tourism
- WWF definition ecotourism

How to create sustainable tourism through ecotourism

- The Natures Best method
- Ecotourism examples – Natures Best service providers
- How to translate the Natures Best concept
- Discussion and commitment
- cooperation among Natures Best service providers
- contacts

Comments:

2. Lectures and workshop for Nature's Best applying service providers (3 day seminar).

A basic course in ecotourism of 2 - 3 days is mandatory within Natures Best before a service provider can be labelled. Such a course is reviewed below. A course can be organized in many ways and must take into consideration work conditions for service providers and educational structures. Different tourist seasons and work loads affect how service providers can follow teaching programmes. Countries and trainers will have their own ways to get information and knowledge across to service providers. It is important to note the difference between teaching in an academic

Basic 3-day course in ecotourism

This is a course that can be used to educate trainers and service providers alike. **Aim: to motivate service providers to seek Nature's Best labelling, to explain how it works and what the benefits are. It can also work well to let new trainers learn more about the system and service providers by participating.** A 9 hour course can be conducted by only including the most important subjects. They are underlined in the programme below. Work package 6 is used to extract base facts for lectures.

What is ecotourism? Swedish Ecotourism Society explains key issues and tells why Natures Best was started.

Natures Best - six basic criteria; expert on criteria and nature preservation lecture on the basic labelling criteria, travel destination analysis, environmental plan, quality, guiding, nature protection and local acceptance.

To market Natures Best and to sell ecotourism; The Webb, service providers homepages, joint advertising, the international market. Experts explain what you can demand of Natures Best and what Natures Best demands from you.

Question time

In depth advice; During 2 work sessions participants can get extra help in smaller groups. Experts will be working with participants on 4 different topics: environmental plan, Destination analysis plan, to be a

Note! To be able to accomplish labelled service providers in the next steps, a Nature's Best system must be in practice. But the next steps can also be used to exemplify how a labelling system operates if implemented.

world and in exporting know how to create economically, socially and ecologically sustainable service providers. It is advisable to start with a course for many service providers and then follow up with more individually suited expert advice.

For service providers it is important to know about the labelling process to be able to weigh benefits against costs in time and money.



host and quality/marketing. 1 hour with each expert is allowed.

Natures Best in practice Label experts describe what happens when a service provider is examined by Nature's Best. A labelled service provider describes what the application process has been like.

Questions; Ask questions about application process, criteria etc.

A labelled service provider; describes what Natures best has meant to them

Natures Best application advice; Expert gives some concrete advice on application and describes events within Natures Best the coming year

Local net working among Natures Best service providers. Experts describe established cooperation among Natures Best providers.

Final questions; evaluation and summary

Comments:

Service provider one day individual course

(Power Point presentation is available)

To succeed service providers often want a more individually adopted course. One that adopts to the individual service providers reality. We have seen that application forms become much better if this type of course is held. The course can include a group of service providers that are divided into work groups. The trainer will often continue to help service providers after this course over the telephone. In this course interaction with service provider is sought after. Work package 6 can be used to extract teaching material and work shop questions.



Topics:

Presentation of service providers (1 hour, depending on group size):

- service providers presents his or her company
- service providers formulate questions they want to have answered during course, questions are written down by lecturer

Presentation of trainers (30 minutes):

- trainers presents themselves
- trainers formulate questions they need answered for the process to continue (type of natural and cultural heritage, social situation, conflicts, seasons etc.). Questions are written down.

Lectures (2.5 hours):

- Why labelling? (Sustainability, profit, image, net work with other service providers, strong position towards authorities etc.)
- What can be labelled? (Activities, exceptions, use of engines, quality aspects etc.)

- Destination analysis plan and environmental plan

Workshop (2 hours):

- Service providers are divided into groups of maximum 4 persons (geographic closeness is good)
- Make a SWOT-analysis for areas development of ecotourism
- The following questions are also to be answered:
 - + What natural and cultural heritage can we exploit through ecotourism?
 - + What activities do we have that are possible to label?
 - + What activities can we develop for labelling?
 - + What are the obstacles for developing and/or labelling products?
 - + How do we want to proceed with the ecotourism process?

Summarizing (1 hour)

- Workshop results
- Check questions asked before course (are they all answered?)
- What do we do next (action plan)?



Comments:

3. Certification procedures, approval and marketing



Application process - 1 hour information

Service providers will want to know how the application process works. These are the facts that needs to be addressed by trainers. This information can be given when convenient during any of the mentioned courses. But preferably at the first information meeting. Read more about procedures in Work Package 6.

<p>Time table for certification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- latest date for application form- application board decision- receiving diploma- dates for basic courses <p>Order your CD Starter package. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- criteria- forms- explanations	<p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Application process- Yearly fee <p>Time needed for process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Application process- Studies <p>Useful information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- advisors recommended- membership in the Swedish Ecotourism Society
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Starter Package

When applying for Natures Best the service provider receives a CD with criteria, forms and practical information. We call this the Starter package and it helps to create the agreement the Service provider and Natures Best sign. Here all criteria are spelled out in a number of statements that the service provider has to consider and to a large extent approve. The information in Work Package 6 is mostly what the starter package includes.

Latest date for application

2 times a year the application board meet and decide on applications. This means application forms have to be ready approximately 2 month before the board meet. This gives Natures Best officials time to go through the applications and visit each applying service provider. This also means there are 2 events when service providers receive diplomas. These events are made so they will attract media attention. At least 2 basic courses are organized each year.



Comments:

