



LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME

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

**NATIONAL REPORT ON REVIEW
OF ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION IN GREECE**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report investigates the context of ecotourism development in Greece and outlines the legal and regulatory framework for ecotourism certification in Greece. The sources of information used in the report were the Internet, published material, personal interviews and telephone conversations with selected representatives of competent authorities and organisations.

2.0 THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAME WORK FOR ECOTOURISM

Initially, it was investigated if there is a definition for ecotourism adopted in Greece. At the international level there have been many theoretical approaches for defining ecotourism. Each approach examines the impact and contribution of ecotourism, to various extends, against a set of parameters, such as:

- Nature protection;
- Protection of cultural heritage;
- Sustainable development;
- Well-being of the local community;
- The opportunity to offer enjoyment to tourists from active participation in activities offered in natural settings;
- Sensitisation and promotion of environmental consciousness and training.

The Greek National Committee of Ecotourism of the General Secretariat of Tourism, in the context of the above parameters, adopted the definition proposed in the Master Plan conducted to provide the national framework for ecotourism development and management in Greece (produced for the General Secretariat of Tourism by Agrotouristiki S.A., a private consultancy, in November 2003). This is:

Ecotourism is tourism developed in areas of ecological interest which does not exceed the carrying capacity of the area and promotes the protection and sound management of the natural and cultural environment –in accordance with effective legal and regulatory measures- and social cohesion.

The legal framework for tourism development is considered adequate with respect to competent authorities for tourism control, standards for tourist accommodation units and incentives for tourism development. The main laws include:

- Act 797/1986 regarding the designation of areas of controlled tourism development;
- Act 2160/1993 regarding general regulations for tourism and the competent authorities;
- Acts 1892/1990 and 2234/1994 regarding the special incentives for tourism development.

However, there is no sufficient legal framework for the development of ecotourism.

National parks and nature reserves

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, which is a protected nature reserve. However, both the human and financial resources available to these Agencies are very scarce and hence, their operation 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 the World Wildlife Fund (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 (early 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 promoting ecotourism will be in place.

Other relevant legislation

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.

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).

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.

3.0 EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR LABELLING OF ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

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. There is also a Committee of Countryside Activities formed by the Hellenic Association of Tourist and Travel Agencies (HATTA), which comprises 12 of the most active tour operators who organise “adventure tourism” packages. This committee, however, is mostly concerned with the financial management and other administrative issues of the HATTA’s members.

It is worth noted that in the context of the Operational Programme “Competitiveness”, coordinated by the Ministry of Development, there is a measure for the diversification of the Greek tourist product through the promotion of alternative, mild forms of tourism with a total budget of 49 million Euro.

A list of labels that exist in Greece for the certification of accommodation, skills and equipment with respect to ecotourism activities is described below; none of this is enacted and mandatory.

3.1 Standards for accommodation of people and activities

Greek Standards for agrotourism businesses (Standards 1417/29-12-2003, Hellenic Organisation of Certification)

These standards were produced by the Hellenic Organisation of Certification in cooperation with the National Tourism Organisation (NTO), Agrotouristiki S.A. and the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Strategic Planning Centre “Pindos”. It includes definitions adopted by NTO for agrotourism, agrotourist destination, product and businesses, and a general description of the prerequisites mostly, rather than quantifiable standards, an agrotourism business must comply with. These include:

- Compliance with legal and regulatory framework (i.e. licensed);

- Follow up building construction and functionality regulations – compliance with architectural character and environment of the area, provision of access to disabled people, adherence to health and safety regulations, telecommunication service and information provision to customers, maintenance and repairs;
- Contribution to environment protection, pollution reduction, sound resource management, and sensitisation of customers towards sustainable environmental management;
- Promotion of local traditional characteristics, such as decoration, cuisine, customs etc;
- Emphasis on human resources, i.e. promotion of a friendly atmosphere by the hosts through their active involvement in running the business, occupation of skilled workforce and support of continuous and vocational training (keeping a record of skills, as well as introductory and continuous training offered to employees);
- Provision of ample information to the customer, continuous monitoring and evaluation of their comments, creation of a customer database;
- Promotion of networking and innovation – participation in collective and voluntary bodies, promotion of cultural activities and use of ICT for innovative, locally-adapted solutions.

Local Agreement on Quality Control: a non-profit agency ensuring high-quality tourism (the example of Tzoumerka, Epirus)

The Local Agreement on Quality Control (LAQC) idea is used in various parts of Greece and was developed on a voluntary initiative supported in the context of LEADER II. It is expressed through the creation of a civil, non-profit agency in which a variety of tourism enterprises such as hotels, restaurants, traditional food or crafts businesses may participate. They enter a ‘quality contract’ with each other, which commits them to respect, preserve and disseminate the local tradition and heritage; to respect tourists and protect them from exploitation; and to refrain from unfair competition among themselves.

The Tzoumerka LAQC brings together 24 businesses from 7 mountainous villages, with a population of 6,800 inhabitants. The region suffers from economic decline and depopulation, with a GDP that is less than 70% of the national average. Tourism, especially winter tourism, is a fast developing sector in the area, offering a good prospect for economic regeneration. A small but dynamic group of local entrepreneurs, most of whom were involved in the local LEADER programme, decided to proceed with a LAQC, encouraged by their Regional Development Agency. The aim was to make their area known and establish its identity as a high quality resort with a traditional flavour, accessible to middle-income tourists; and to benefit collectively from services which individual businesses cannot afford, such as expert advice, training, advertising, participation in tourism fairs and publication of brochures.

The members of the Tzoumerka LAQC must meet at least two out of five quality criteria or “**mountain peaks**” set out by their contract. The five criteria are:

1. traditional character of the furniture and equipment of the premises;
2. high standard of service offered to tourists;
3. high quality of food and drink, including traditional produce, dishes and wines;
4. compliance with traditional architecture; and
5. a commitment to environmental protection and cleanliness.

The certification of the members of the LAQC, and their monitoring on the basis of quality peaks, is carried out by a committee consisting of representatives of the Regional Authority, the Prefecture Authority, the local authorities and the Regional Development Agency. The representation in the Committee of public authorities guaranteed the development of a valid and recognisable label. The ambition of all LAQC members is to become certified in all five peaks. The mountain peaks are displayed on the premises of each business, and all businesses certified through the system are shown on an information board at the entrance of each village.

The first two years of the Tzoumerka LAQC have not been easy. The 24 entrepreneurs had to put aside the suspicion and mistrust that naturally grows in small places, when the pie is small and the competitors many. The culture of collectivity had to be developed and this took time. The benefits of the LAQC have begun to appear, and the mentality of the local businesses has already changed substantially. The LAQC members are enjoying better business and are proud of their new role as guardians of local tradition and defenders of quality. The members of the LAQC have succeeded in starting collective negotiation with tour operators; have had a joint presence in two big tourism fairs in Athens and Thessaloniki; and have published a tourism brochure for their area. They intend to create a joint booking system on the Internet, and to organise training courses for the entrepreneurs and their staff. They hope to take part in EC programmes and initiatives.

Another worth mentioning initiative is the Ecocinema, which was introduced in the island of Zakynthos (Zante) in 2001 with the collaboration of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos, local authorities and the Cinema Club of the island. It is an international film festival devoted to environmental cinema, which aims to promote environmental protection and sensitisation. The National Marine Park of Zakynthos (NMPZ) is the first of its kind established in Greece with the aim to protect the critical nesting habitat of the endangered loggerhead sea turtles *Caretta caretta* and to promote sustainable development for the Park's area. NMPZ is a member of the Europarc Federation (see annex).

Also, there is in Greece the National Park of Dadia, which features very rich biodiversity and has been enacted as a protected natural area in 1980. The Park has an ecotourism information kiosk and is a member of the Protected Area Network (PAN) Parks, a network supported by WWF. In October 2003, PAN Parks approved a concept to develop a PAN Park Research Network (PPRN). The objectives of the

PAN Parks Research Network are to conduct and promote state-of-the-art social and natural science related to the mission of the PAN Parks Foundation and WWF, and deliver usable knowledge to PAN Parks managers and the public.

Finally, it is noted, as an example suggested in an interview with the person in charge of the Tourism Sector in the Hellenic Organisation of Certification, that there has been an effort last year in the Region of Thessaly, and in the context of the Ministry's of Development Innovation Programme, to develop a regional, widely-recognised label for agrotourism, with no success yet.

3.2 Standards of human resources (skills certification) and for provision of equipment

Certification of Mountain guides by the Hellenic Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (HMCF) - from a discussion with the Board President on 15-04-2004.

HMCF has been established in 1932, has a membership of about 90 Local Associations of Mountaineering and Climbing and is a member of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA – Union Internationale des Associations d' Alpinisme, www.uiaa.ch). Since 1936, the Federation has a programme for certification of mountain guides and mountain escorts. 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 stages involved are:

- “Amateurs School”, which intends to familiarise one with mountains and may last up to 15 weekends, during which period instructions for survival, orientation, climbing etc. are given.
- “Medium level School”, “Trainers’ Assistant School” and “Trainers’ School” to be taken in this successive order. They involve various theoretical courses and mainly participation as instructors in excursions in the mountains, which are organised by the Local Associations of Mountaineering and Climbing. Trainees must also have a good record in sports, such as skiing and other winter sports. Trainees that successfully complete training in the first 2 Schools become mountain escorts. Those who continue their training and participate in a 10-day training trip in Europe become Mountain Guides. The difference between escorts and guides is in the responsibilities each have, the size of the group and the altitude to which they are allowed to accompany groups. There is also the Greek Association of Mountain Guides established, which tries to get certified through the International Federation of Mountain Guides.

The reason why training to become a mountain guide may take such a long time is because a training group is formed when there are at least 12 trainees, so the groups are set up on an ad hoc basis depending on interest.

The HMCF is currently in negotiations with Schools of Tourism Occupations in order to upgrade their training programme by including it in modules of the Schools, so that trainees get diplomas officially recognised by the state. There has been some efforts for training and certifying in the context of EC-funded projects, but this has been piecemeal action. HMCF has cooperated in a few projects offering trainers and the training package they have in place, giving diplomas to participants. Implicitly, HMCF wishes to withdraw from the responsibility to train mountain guides and concentrate on their main aim, which is to promote mountain racing sports, such as hiking, skiing and climbing among its members. In the HMCF Board there are Mountain Guides who are consulted as experts on safety standards; HMCF may then propose these standards to the General Assembly for approval.

Finally, the President of HMCF remarked that the tourist industry interest in the region of Epirus focus on Zagoria and Tzoumerka mountains. There are Local Associations of Mountaineering and Climbing in the Prefectures of Ioannina, Arta and Preveza but not in Thesprotia.

Certificate of Rafting Guides and Trainers from the Hellenic Association of Tourist and Travel Agencies (HATTA)

In Greece, over 30,000 people participate in rafting annually; however, there is not an official state certificate granted to rafting guides. For this reason the Committee of Countryside Activities of HATTA, introduced in November 2003 a training course for rafting guides in order to promote quality and safety in rafting. One school has been organised so far by HATTA, in which approximately 100 participants were certified.

The following certificates are granted from HATTA:

1. **Rafting Guide–Level 1** - This diploma is awarded to those who take the level 1 course organised by a tour operator with HATTA's permission; to get the diploma one must be over 18, high school educated and successfully take the written exam (5-day theory course), and have participated in a 3-hour river drafting, of difficulty level 3, guided by a qualified Trainer (this is a minimum requirement). Other prerequisites include health tests, first aid certificate of at least 12 hours training, and participation in at least 10 rafting trips in rivers of difficulty level between 2 and 3. The courses taught include equipment and personal gear, instructions for preparation and use of rafts, survival, safety and health lessons, technical skills, swimming, other practical knowledge about rivers, communication, reaction in hazardous situations and environment protection.
2. **Rafting Guide–Level 2** - This diploma is awarded to a candidate who has participated in at least 3 river passages with rafts in rivers with difficulty level above 3+ guided by a qualified Trainer and a Trainers' Trainer. The candidate must be over 20, hold a Rafting Guide-level 1 certificate, and successfully take 3 written exams (1 in theory and 2 in practice). Other prerequisites include health tests, current first aid certificate of at least 12 hours training, successful completion of survival and safety courses, and participation as a guide in at least

20 rafting trips in rivers of difficulty level over 2+ in the 2 years prior the examination. The diploma holder is qualified as a guide in all difficulty level rivers.

3. **Trainer of Rafting Guides-** To become a trainer one must be a Rafting Guide-Level 2 for at least 2 years and follow the HATTA' s seminars for trainers-examiners. The candidate must be over 21, hold a current first aid certificate of at least 12 hours training, and have participated in a number of training courses and exams for Rafting Guides-Levels 1 and 2 and in rafting in rivers of difficulty level 4 with the presence of 2 Trainers' Trainers. The candidate must successfully take 3 written exams (1 in theory and 2 in practice with emphasis on safety).
4. **Trainer of Rafting Guides Trainers -** This is the highest certificate awarded and requires high organisational skills and deep knowledge of training programmes. The candidate must be also competent in kayaking and monoraft in medium difficulty rivers. The candidate must be over 24, have a current fist aid certificate, be a Trainer of Rafting Guides for at least 2 years and have supervised a sufficient number of training courses and exams for rafting Guides. He is qualified to supervise up to 4 candidates undertaking the course to become Rafting Guides' Trainers.

A number of specialised 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 recognised.
- b. **Sailing courses that lead to a recognised 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. Sailing courses and diplomas are also offered by several Sailing Associations; the most acclaimed is the one granted by the Hellenic Federation of Sailing. However, none is officially recognised by the state, but there is a list of recognised sailing licenses, which Port authorities consult in order to issue sailing permissions to boats.

Moreover, the Hellenic Federation of Hand Gliding organises training courses for qualifying its members as trainers; the last one organised, however, was in 1997. The Ministry of Education organises training schools for camping escorts and there are also some public and private Institutes of Vocational Training for countryside activities (secondary education). Generally speaking, tour operators prefer guides certified by private companies because of the unorganised courses and the rather poor

quality of training offered by the public Institutes of Vocational Training; this is because the latter concentrate mainly on theory and offer very little practice. Finally, the Secretariat of Youth in cooperation with Agrotouristiki S.A. (a private consultancy for agrotourism development) has introduced the so called “green classes” aiming at environmental sensitisation amongst school children.

3.3 Equipment labelling

There are safety standards and regulations regarding labelling of equipment but in the framework of free trade it is impractical to impose a single label. For example in mountain gear, different manufacturers are certified through ISO 9000 series and in general many also apply for the UIAA Safety Label (see annex), but not necessarily. Also, in interviews with entrepreneurs involved in ecotourism activities, it was stressed that for example regarding horse-riding and rafting, the safety standards and regulations imposed and controlled by the Tourist Police of the Region of Epirus are very hard to attain. It is also quite difficult to get customers’ insurance because of the high danger involved in adventure sports.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

This report has shown that the legal and regulatory framework for ecotourism development in Greece is vague and in particular regarding certification there is a big gap. Overall, there are no skilled and certified guides, apart from a few who get licences or a certification from abroad or from non-formally recognised certification bodies in Greece. Moreover, it seems that there is limited demand by tour operators for hiring qualified guides (on many occasions they don't consider it necessary to pay for skilled, certified guides). It was also argued by a member of the Committee of Countryside Activities of HATTA that a quality certificate recognised by the state and granted to an entrepreneur would implicitly result in reduced quality in the longer term, because the entrepreneur, relying on the fact that his/her business has the label, would eventually compromise quality.

It was noted by some of the people interviewed that there is an issue in the Greek mentality regarding holidays by the “sea and sun”, whereas environmental sensitisation and an attitude of nature exploration are lagging behind in customers' choices and preferences. Some stressed also that Greek customers are not really concerned with quality labels; and that the introduction of a widely-recognised quality label requires big investments and a commitment to its promotion and maintenance by entrepreneurs and other stakeholders involved. It was argued that it is hard to persuade entrepreneurs, on the one hand, of the added value of adopting a quality label for accommodation or skills; and on the other hand, to safeguard that entrepreneurs would not be “secured” behind the label and would continue to maintain and enhance quality after having been granted the quality label.

However, the initial findings from piloting the questionnaire for the survey of ecotourism activities in the Greek pilot area has shown that there is a demand for ecotourism activities. Moreover, 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 reliable and widely-recognised quality certification system to be introduced and they are very keen in cooperating with ECO-ROUTE and disseminate the project results. It was also stressed by an employee of the Hellenic Organisation of Certification that a major difficulty is devising quantifiable standards that can be monitored and evaluated against a set of appropriate indicators.

Thus, it seems that the added value of a training package leading to a recognised certification, in particular regarding accommodation and skills related to ecotourism activities, is indisputable and there is a strong feeling that the ECO-ROUTE training package will be very welcomed by the target beneficiaries in Greece.

ANNEX – A LIST OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LABELS

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 (www.uiiaa.ch); 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.
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.
7. **Ecolabel for Hotels (Scandinavia)** – based on ISO 14024 and concentrates on environmental management.
8. **Green Tourism Business Scheme (Scotland).**
9. **Environmental Quality Seal** – operated by the German Hotel Owners Association.
10. **Blue Swallow of the Travel Compatibility Group** – for tour operators.
11. **Green Suitcase** – European Union of Ecotourism.
12. **Europarc Federation**, (www.euraparc.org) which is an umbrella organisation of Europe's protected areas, with about 340 members, uniting national parks, regional parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in 37 countries, with the common aim of protecting Europe's unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes.
13. **Protected Area Network (PAN) Parks** (www.panparks.org) founded by WWF in partnership with the Dutch leisure company Molecaten in 1997; its vision is to create a European network of wilderness protected areas, improve nature protection through sustainable tourism development and provide a reliable trademark which guarantees nature protection and is recognised by all Europeans.
14. **Green Dragon, Wales, UK** (www.greendragonwales.com)-the standard addresses SMEs and involves 5 levels, which when reached the company may be successful in obtaining ISO14001 or EMAS. The 5 levels include the following:
 - Level 1 requires commitment to environmental management;
 - Level 2 involves identifying and complying with environmental legislation & maintaining environmental records;
 - Level 3 involves identifying and improving the environmental Impact of the organisation & starting to report on environmental impacts;
 - Level 4 requires the development of a formal environmental management system & reporting on environmental achievements; and
 - Level 5 incorporates all the formal elements of continual environmental improvement & reporting on environmental impacts and achievements.