

Destination

21



*Introduktion to:*

# DESTINATION 21

– a labelling scheme for tourist destinations with sustainable development

This publication is based on:

The master thesis: *"Towards Sustainable Destinations: An analysis of the Danish destination recognition scheme - Destination 21"* by Niels Ramm, 2000, for the MSc. Environmental Management Policy of the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics, Lund University, Sweden.  
*"The destination 21 manual - a labelling scheme for Tourism Destinations with sustainable development"*, which is the authoritative guide on the elements, processes and requirement of this scheme.

Written by Niels Ramm.

Number printed: 2000

Photo: The Image Bank Ltd.

Print: Saloprint a/s, ISO 14001 and EMAS-registration.

Paper: Ecolabelling - the Nordic Swan.

Maj 2001.

This publication is available through:

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# Destination 21 - a labelling scheme for tourist destinations with sustainable development

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# Destination 21 - a labelling scheme for tourist destinations with sustainable development

## Why destination certification schemes?

Tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry when measured by gross output, value added, capital investment, employment and tax contributions. It serves to provide a multitude of benefits to both hosts and visitors. The benefits however, come at a price, particularly to the host destination. If poorly managed, tourism can have serious, adverse effects upon the environment, physical appearance, economy, health, safety, and social values of the destination community.

The number of people travelling internationally is expected to increase from the current figure of over 600m people to about 1.6bn by the year 2020 and earnings from international tourism will rise from US\$443bn in 1997 to more than US\$2 trillion by 2020, according to the World Tourism Organisation. Taking these explosive growth rates into consideration, it becomes clear that the tourism industry poses and will continue to pose an ever-increasing threat to the ecological and socio-cultural environment, as more and more of the global population have the opportunity to travel exposing fragile environments to the both positive and negative impacts of tourism. The perpetual paradox of tourism is that it consumes the resources it is most dependent on.

On an international level the need for sustainable development was recognised in 1987 by the Brundtland report that defined it as *'meeting the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. While not specifically

addressing tourism, it began to stimulate increasing concern and initiate change designed to mitigate some of the growing negative impacts of tourism. This report formed the basis from which the Agenda 21 was developed during the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Although Agenda 21 does not address the impacts of tourism directly, the global tourism industry responded in 1997 to a by now well established need to develop sustainably in the report *'Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development'*, which defines sustainable tourism as;

*"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.*

*Sustainable tourism products are products, which are operated in harmony with the local environment, community, and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries not the victims of tourism development".*

Certification programmes for tourism destinations reflect the need to address the concept of sustainable tourism development on a higher level than previous initiatives. Destination certification programmes require that the goal of sustainable development is achieved at the destination level, thus all stakeholders of the destination with a vested interest in tourism must cooperate and integrate their efforts in order to achieve

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sustainable tourism development, and in turn receive recognition for these efforts. Hence Destination 21.

## An Introduction to Destination 21

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The Danish Tourism Board in association with the Outdoor Council and the Tourism Development Centre (TUC) began the development of a destination-labelling scheme in 1997 in order to promote sustainable tourism development at a destination level.

The development of the recognition scheme was born out of the need to address the lack of a strategy for sustainable tourism in Denmark. As well as to provide an association or forum in which Danish tourism actors are able to obtain information and guidance and exchange knowledge and skills in their efforts to develop their industry on a sustainable basis and in accordance with the principles outlined in Agenda 21.

Destination 21 can be seen as a combination of a sustainability label for the tourism product and a sustainability management system for the processes involved in the tourism industry.

Another purpose was to develop a labelling scheme for Danish tourist destinations that provides tourists with an assurance the destination is continually striving to comply with Agenda 21's concepts of sustainable development.

The scheme is based upon a geographically defined area in which the municipality or municipalities strive to implement Local Agenda 21's principals in their tourism policies. It is the scheme's aim to not

only promote sustainability within the planning framework for tourism and the associated products and services, but also the development of sustainability for the entire region. Therefore in order to ascertain the status of Destination 21, the region must not only work with the tourism infrastructure but also with all other resources and industries within the region. The Destination 21 Association strives to safeguard the destination's continued basis for existence by involving the natural environment, economic and cultural conditions, increased integration between the tourist trade, the local business community and public administration as well as actively involving the local population.

## Fundamental Principles of the Scheme

- the scheme is a voluntary recognition label for destinations pursuing sustainable tourism development.
- the governing committee of Destination 21 sets the scheme's objectives and framework.
- the scheme is under continuous development in regards to constantly increasing the standard of sustainable tourism development on a destination level.
- a tourism destination is understood to be a conglomeration of several tourism businesses in conjunction with public involvement. Individual businesses cannot apply for certification.

## Development of Destination 21

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Initially research was carried out to establish the state of certification schemes on the tourism market and it became

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very rapidly clear that there were a great number of initiatives, addressing a wide variety of environmental aspects associated with tourism. However, there weren't many schemes that addressed sustainable tourism development in a comprehensive manner entailing both a process and performance approach that actually reached the consumer.

Thus, a decision was made to develop a national destination-labelling scheme that would utilise both approaches. It was thought that Denmark was in a unique position to undertake such a project due to its geographical characteristics and cultural homogeneity, as well as there being traditionally a good cooperation between the private and the public sector.

Partly due to this good track record of industry and governmental cooperation it was decided to use a bottom up approach in the development of the Destination 21 scheme, in which partners from the industry (the pilot destinations) would form the basis of the development process.

The criteria for the selection of the pilot destinations were relatively simple requiring only a statement of interest and an outlining of current activities and policies in the tourism sector.

The pilot destinations were to form representative groups of stakeholders that would partake in the development process the Destination 21's framework consisting of a variety of sustainability goals with relevant indicators and actions required to attain these. This development process would take the form of meetings and workshops where the participants would develop these goals

based upon their own experiences and local requirements.

It was anticipated that this grassroots approach would develop a set of criteria that would be most relevant and suited to the Danish conditions. This was also reflected in the choice of the seven pilot destinations, which represented a wide geographical coverage of Denmark, as shown in figure 1, and thus a wide coverage of diverse environmental conditions and knowledge.

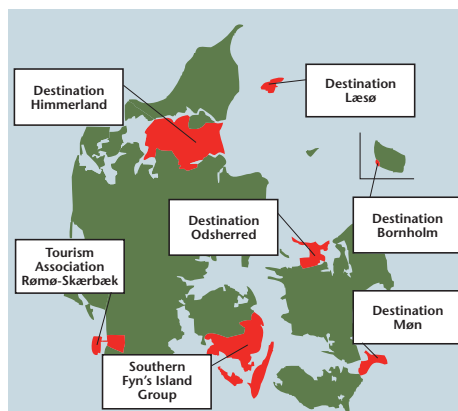


Figure 1  
– The Pilot Destinations and their relative locations

### **The 'Top-down' and 'Bottom-up' Approach**

Destination 21 is a scheme utilising a combination of a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approach, although the main emphasis during the development phase was placed upon the bottom up approach. The top down approach addresses environmental issues involving a government regulatory and policy framework that sets and enforces, for instance, discharge and emission limits

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and decreases the free rider effect of voluntary initiatives.

This done by the setting of Environmental Quality Standards (EQS's), which in essence can only be determined at the destination, regional, national or international level. These EQS's can for example be in the form of set standards of air, water and beach quality. A destination authority, in the case of Destination 21 the representatives of stakeholder groups, can therefore influence the local environmental quality by adopting or even developing EQS's.

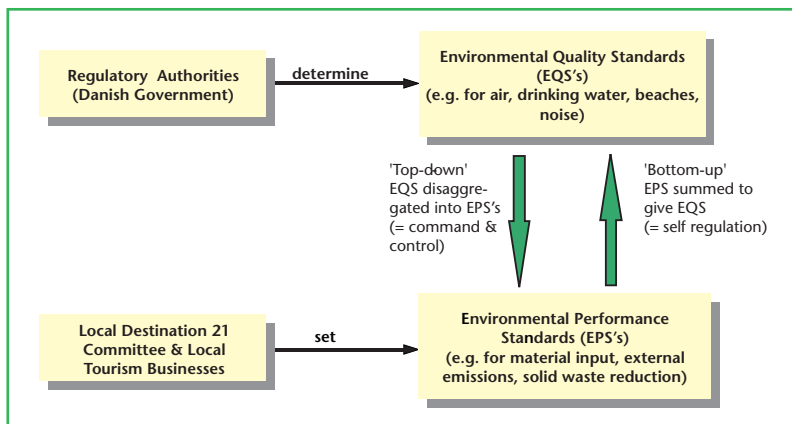
The Destination 21 framework is based upon EQS's established at a legislative level, these are the baseline requirements that need to be met in terms of water, air quality, emission and pollution levels, etc. It is at this point that the scheme is characterised by elements of the 'top-down' approach.

The 'bottom-up' approach, also referred to as voluntary industry initiatives is characterised by Environmental Performance Standards (EPS's). These EPS's can be very much businesses orientated

in terms of the environmental effect of operating the enterprise. Thus a business can endeavour to control its inputs, by purchasing materials coming from renewable, local or recycled sources and reduce its outputs such as air emissions, effluent discharges and the generation of solid waste. Effectively, businesses can set their own targets and monitor their attainment of these. It is in this sense that a voluntary self-regulatory bottom-up approach is exercised. On a municipality level for a destination examples of bottom-up initiatives include the development of alternative less polluting transportation means, such as the development of bicycle tourism products and the associated infrastructure i.e. (bicycle paths, tracks and routes). As well as the development of other sustainable tourism products, for example the promotion of locally cultivated ecological agricultural produce.

The relationship between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches is shown by figure 2. In terms of the Destination 21 scheme, the 'bottom-up' approach was used in that the destinations were

Figure 2.  
The relationship between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to environmental regulation



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heavily involved in the development of the criteria they, later, when using the scheme, need to fulfil. Additionally the destinations will have a great deal of autonomy in the setting of initiatives and activities in order to fulfil the required criteria and thus meeting the Destination 21 standards.

## ***Supporting Organisations, Financing and the Organisation Structure***

The pilot project Destination 21 can be described as a joint government and industry initiative, as the financing for the development and the initial administration comes from both the governmental level (the Danish Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Environment) , and from the industry itself:

- HORESTA (Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Businesses Association)
- Danish Outdoor Council
- Danish Camping Board
- Danish Tourism Board
- Confederation of Employees in Trade, Transport & Service
- Cooperation between Danish Tourist Associations and Tourist Agencies
- Destination 21 Regions
- Joint Council of the Danish Tourist Trade.

Unlike other joint government and industry voluntary initiatives, the funding ministries in this case, did not have an administrative role in its management. These responsibilities were left to the

Board of Destination 21, its steering committee and secretariat.

## **Benefits of becoming Destination 21 Certified**

A multitude of benefits have been identified for a destination to adopt the Destination 21 framework in their quest to develop their tourism industry upon a sustainable basis. The developers of Destination 21 have identified the following as arguments for use of their framework. The benefits have been grouped into the following categories;

- the destination as a whole
- the tourism businesses and organisations of the destination
- the host population
- the tourist to the destination.

## **Why should a destination choose to become a Destination 21?**

- In order to obtain an overview of the significance of tourism's impact upon the ecological, socio-cultural and economic environment of the destination, and thus develop a supply of activities and accommodation facilities in a sustainable manner
- to proactively develop tourism using the destination's resources and the current tourism's product mix.
- to work systematically with environmental issues.
- to maintain and increase market segments of tourists that place value upon nature and the environment.



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- to ensure the renewal and strengthening of the identity and image of the area as a tourist destination
- to promote and focus the development of new tourism products with sustainability as a trademark
- to take advantage of the synergy between investments in culture, nature and environment and investments in business development
- to bring about a collective strategy and plan
- to create inspiration for the development of new networks and co-operations.
- to secure the tourism product for the future by taking into account the expectations of consumers, developments in society affecting tourism, etc.
- to develop the capacity to document the ecological, socio-cultural and economical development of the destination.
- to enable and increase the cooperation between the tourism industry and associated organisations, local authorities and the local population in terms of sustainable tourism and general development.
- to assist local authorities in coming to terms with local Agenda 21.
- for local tourism businesses - the possibility to use the Destination 21 label for marketing purposes

## How can tourism businesses and organisations benefit from Destination 21?

- the destination's tourism businesses and tourism organisations have the opportunity to participate in the long-term sustainable development of their industry, while being able to document their own environmental performance and responsibilities and making this information publicly available.
- the publicly available annual Destination 21 statement entailing information regarding the business's environmental performance can serve to motivate both the employees and tourists to contribute toward the environmental initiative undertaken by the establishment.
- participation in the Destination 21 programme enables opportunities for cooperation with new business partners.
- employees increase their knowledge and competence in terms of sustainable development issues.
- the local businesses have the opportunity to profile themselves as a responsible Destination 21 enterprise.
- participation in the Destination 21 programme gives the business 'first mover' advantage over non-participating businesses.
- businesses will be able to gain financial benefits associated with the implementation of cleaner production practices in their daily operations.

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- businesses will be able to contribute to the qualitative improvement of the overall tourism product as well as their own specific products.

## How does the host population benefit from Destination 21?

There are many areas in which the local population benefits from the implementation of the Destination 21 program. The most obvious are the mitigation to some degree of the impacts of tourism as has been outlined in section 2.2, thus the overall quality of the ecological, socio-cultural and economic environment is improved. Apart from these effects, which are essentially the overall goals of the scheme, the local population has the opportunity to;

- exert an influence over the tourism development in the area
- promote and vitalise the adoption of Agenda 21 principles throughout the destinations other industries
- create and improve employment opportunities and revenue
- achieve integration and enhance the synergies between the local population's expectations of cultural and outdoor activities and those of tourists.
- increase and strengthen the contact to tourists, while improving relations between tourists and the local population.

## How does the tourist benefit from Destination 21?

Tourists that choose to hold their holidays at a Destination 21 destination have the possibility;

- to take holidays in a destination that both allows for a range of exciting and interesting experiences while exerting minimal negative influences upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
- to stay in eco-labelled hotels, youth hostels, camping grounds, holiday centres and summer houses.
- bathe at Blue Flag certified beaches.
- to frequent restaurants that offer menus consisting of ecological ingredients produced locally.
- to participate in tours and other activities that highlight the local areas culture and nature.
- make use of environmentally friendly means of transportation.
- to initiate contact and dialogue with the local population regarding the areas sustainable tourism development.
- to ensure that the money spent not only assists the local economy which depends to a great degree on tourist income, but that this is done so in a manner that does not jeopardise the areas distinctive character or identity.

## Elements of Destination 21

The initial and an integral element of the Destination 21 scheme is a vision and an action plan for the sustainable development of a destination area. The vision is a broadly formulated description of the ideal scenario that is to be attained, additionally it acts as a common ground of

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understanding for all concerned stakeholders. The formulation of this vision and action plan must be accomplished with the participation and cooperation of the destination's tourism businesses, tourism organisations (e.g. tourism associations, tourist information offices, etc.), municipality, regional authority, other concerned organisations (e.g. nature protection, forestry and wildlife services, marine and beach authorities, culture and heritage organisations, etc.), as well as the local host population.

Within the Destination 21 framework, particular emphasis is placed upon the development aspect. Apart from meeting a range of basic criteria, which are based upon sustainability indicators, the destination must also expound concrete development goals in order to become certified. Destination 21 specifies certain development goals whereas the goals determined by the destination itself are ascertained by conducting a comprehensive mapping and evaluation of the local conditions. By this means, the destination has a high degree of autonomy in the development of its sustainability goals. It is anticipated that being part of the sustainability goal development process will motivate and engage the local stakeholders to achieving, maintaining and further developing the said goals.

The Destination 21 framework also encompasses a skills and competence development aspect to allow the participating partners to continually develop their ability in the management of the necessary tools. This aspect has been addressed directly by the second sustainability goal, for which indicators as well as possible implementation of initiatives have been suggested by Destination 21.

The Destination 21 recognition label consists of the following elements;

- 8 Sustainability goals
- 37 Sustainability indicators
- Base requirements
- Development goals
- A recognition logo

Each of these elements is discussed in further detail in the following sections.

## *The Eight Sustainability Goals*

To enable the Destination 21 labelling scheme to achieve a long-term sustainable and competitive development, eight main goals have been identified. These are as outlined below;

1. Ensure Local organisation and co-operation and common strategy
2. Capacity building towards sustainable development
3. Promotion of Destination 21 philosophy and practice
4. Management and accessibility of natural and cultural heritage assets
5. Strengthen and increase local culture and authenticity visibility
6. Reduction of resource use and pollution
7. Create employment and enhance employment within the local economy
8. Promote the development of new sustainable tourism products

These eight so called sustainability goals have been designed to reflect the requirements of the three-tiered approach to

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sustainable development. Each, or at times, a combination of the sustainability goals, relates to aspects of ecological, economic or socio-cultural sustainable development. In order to facilitate the achievement of these goals, a system of measuring an initial baseline and then, further, the environmental performance of implemented initiatives, a variety of indicators have been developed.

### *Sustainability Indicators*

The sustainability indicators developed by the Destination 21 Association are linked to each of the eight sustainability goals to give the user a direct and constant indication of applicability and success of the implemented measures. Des-

ination 21 defines indicators as a method to:

- quantify or describe either the state, the development, an activity or the result in regards to a sustainability objective or a concrete sustainability goal developed by the destination.
- evaluate the degree or the extent of the sustainable development of the destination.

The table below, shows the indicators relevant to each of the eight sustainability goals and the base requirements for the qualification and operational phases.

Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
<b>1. Ensure local organisation, co-operation and mutual strategy</b>		
1.1 Common Vision & Values	Development of a common vision and basis of values. Analysis of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.	
1.2 Tourism Policy	Municipality develops a tourism policy	Coordination of tourism policy (Year 1 – 2)
1.3 Local Destination 21 participation	Minimum of 20% of the destinations tourism businesses and all tourist offices to join Local Destination 21 activities.  Formulation of a local goal and action plan for the operational phase years 1, 2 & 3.	Realisation of the Action Plan.
1.4 Local Agenda 21	Mapping, goals and action plan for cooperation	Realisation of the Action Plan.
1.5 Annual Destination 21 report		Annual analysis and documentation of activities and results

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Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
<b>2. Capacity building towards sustainable development</b>		
2.1 D21 competence	<p>Theme day for Local Destination 21.</p> <p>Objectives and management plan for maintaining competence in the destination.</p>	<p>Course for Destination 21 coordinator. (Year 1)</p> <p>Courses for company environmental coordinator. (Year 1)</p> <p>Courses for up-front personnel. (Year 1)</p> <p>Courses for municipal worker. (Year 1)</p> <p>Maintenance of competence. (Year 2 – 3)</p>
<b>3. Promotion of Destination 21 philosophy and practice</b>		
3.1 Dissemination of Destination 21 – philosophy and practices	<p>Destination 21 information aimed at local community.</p> <p>Evaluation of how tourists are informed of why and how they shall take consideration for the local natural and socio-cultural environment.</p> <p>Evaluation of tourist’s possibility to choose sustainable products from the generally available information material available at the destination.</p>	<p>Presentation of Destination 21’s philosophy within the destinations official marketing.</p> <p>Information for tourists regarding the sustainable development of the destination.</p> <p>Incorporation of sustainable choices within the brochure material.</p>
3.2 Destination 21 activities	<p>Planning of Destination 21 activities.</p>	<p>Implementation of Destination 21 activities at least one per week during the 4 months of the year that the destination seems most relevant. Destinations consisting of more than 5 municipalities should implement at least two activities per week.</p>

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Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
<b>4. Management and accessibility of natural and cultural heritage assets</b>		
4.1 Tourism development and planning	<p>Evaluation of the elements in existing regional and municipality plans that are of particular relevance for tourism.</p> <p>Registration of natural areas most intensively used for recreation purposes and evaluation of their sensitivity.</p> <p>Registration of possible conflicts between tourism and outdoor life and nature.</p> <p>Overall evaluation of different summer-house area's aesthetic, recreational and natural qualities. Prioritisation of activities.</p>	<p>The destination develops its own contribution to the physical planning at a municipal and regional level.</p> <p>Goals and action plans Development of the cooperation between Destination 21 and the municipal and county planners.</p> <p>Goals and action plans for improvement of chosen summer-house areas and concrete steps toward their implementation.</p>
4.2 Quality of natural areas	<p>Mapping of natural areas of particularly valuable nature. Evaluation of goals and action plans for their (further) development.</p> <p>Evaluation of the council's initiatives to maintain and restore natural areas</p>	<p>Communication of valuable natural elements and activities for nature renewal and conservation making them available to tourist and local people</p> <p>Description of the interests of tourism in connection to potential bigger nature restoring projects</p>
4.3 Quality of the aquatic environment	<p>Evaluation of the water quality in watercourses, lakes and coast areas in relation to set goals and the corresponding recreational possibilities.</p> <p>Improvement of the visibility within lakes in relation to that of the last 10 years.</p> <p>Improvement of the nourishment concentration in lakes in relation to that of the last 10 years.</p> <p>Mapping of public accessible beaches.</p>	<p>Potential initiatives to improve the water quality. Every third public accessible beach should have Blue Flag (year 1). Activities to improve the beach recreational options.</p> <p>Initiatives for the improvement of the water quality in lakes.</p> <p>At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> operational phase year every third publicly accessible beach must be Blue Flag certified. Develop goals for the number of Blue Beaches.</p>

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Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
	Assessment of beach recreation and potential activities.	Goals and action plans for individual beaches and the realisation of these.
4.4 Quality of cultural heritage assets	Survey of the cultural environment values of the highest interest for tourists.	Goals and action plans to promote the prioritised cultural values to tourists and the local population.
4.5 Accessibility of natural and cultural heritage assets	Survey and evaluation of the accessibility of the natural and cultural heritage sights in the urban and rural areas.	Goals and action plans to improve the accessibility to the destinations natural and cultural assets.
<b>5. Strengthen and increase local culture and authenticity visibility</b>		
5.1 Local identity and authenticity	Identification of the destination's identity and special features.	Examinations of the way tourists perceive the local culture and identity (year 1).
5.2 Tourism's influence upon the municipality	Evaluation of tourism's influence upon the region.	Development of the distinctive local features and environments.
5.3 People to people understanding	Evaluation of possibilities of contact between tourists and the local population. As well as the host population's view of and attitude towards tourists.	Initiatives to strengthen contact between tourists and local community.
5.4 Local and national visibility	Evaluation of which local features should be part of the future marketing.	Local features and environments to be rendered more visible.
5.5 Destination's International Cooperation	Mapping of international cooperative projects.	Goals and actions plans for international cooperation.
<b>6. Reduction of resource use and pollution</b>		
<i>In the qualification phase, the destinations can select 4 out of 8 indicators from points 6.5 to 6.12 to focus on. In the first year of operation, the remaining 4 indicators will be worked with by the destination.</i>		
6.1 Environmentally labelled tourism initiatives	Facilities for Eco-labelled overnight accommodations.  Access to Eco-labelled overnight accommodation.  Number of marinas with Blue Flag certification.	Eco-labelling of 10% of the overnight accommodation capacity (year 1).  Goals for year 2 and 3.  20% of marinas with Blue Flag certification (year 1).  Goals for year 2 and 3.

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Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
6.2 Business implementing environmental initiatives	<p>Mapping, goals and action plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of tourism establishments with environmental work.</li> <li>- Number of business offering ecological and locally produced food, menus and goods.</li> <li>- Provision of alternative means of transport.</li> <li>- Information material regarding ecological goods, eco-labelled accomodation, alternative transportation, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>20% of tourism establishments have started environmental work during the first year</p> <p>Goals for year 2 and 3.</p> <p>Companies develop an annual Destination 21 information package.</p> <p>Eco-labelled/certified brochures (year 2).</p> <p>Annual "Destination 21 Information".</p>
6.3 Municipalities' environmental initiatives	<p>Status and evaluation of the council's goals and initiatives. Evaluation of the municipalities goals and action plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goods and services e.g. environmentally responsible procurement.</li> <li>- Campaigns for water and energy savings</li> <li>- The cleaning of beaches, streets and other public areas</li> <li>- Garbage disposal in regards to tourism</li> <li>- Initiatives to create peaceful recreational places</li> <li>- Traffic development and the corresponding contribution of tourism.</li> </ul>	<p>Goals and actions plans for the municipalities environmental work.</p> <p>Annual "Destination 21 information".</p>
6.4 Raw & processed materials		<p>Identification of the most important materials. Goal and initiation of activities for reduction / substitution (year 2).</p>
6.5 Energy Consumption	<p>Mapping, goals and action plans for reducing energy consumption in the municipality.</p>	<p>Realisation of action plan.</p>



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Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
	Benchmark use of renewable energy in relation to governmental 2005 objectives.	Collect data on the tourism energy usage. Develop goals and action plans for reduction.
6.6 Water Consumption	Mapping, target and action plan for reducing water consumption in the council.	Realisation of action plan.  Data for tourism's water consumption and targets and action plan for its reduction.
6.7 Chemical Usage	Mapping the use of pesticides and development of targets and an action plan for phasing them out by 2003.	Mapping, goals and action plans for tourism's use of cleaning and washing agents and for a reduction in their use.
6.8 Waste	Mapping of total waste volume and volume of the fraction that is recycled, incinerated and landfilled in relation to the governmental regulations.  Goal and action plan for reducing waste.	Data for waste volume produced by tourism industry and targets and action plans for its reduction.  Realisation of action plan.
6.9 Sewage	Mapping, goals and action plans for reducing untreated sewage from summerhouses.	Realisation of action plan
6.10 Emissions	Mapping, goals and action plans for limiting traffic - alternative transport options.	Realisation of action plan.
6.11 Noise	Identification of noise problems and targets and action plan to reduce these.	Realisation of action plan
6.12 Odours	Identification of obnoxious odours and targets and action plan to reduce these.	Realisation of action plan.
<b>7. Create employment and enhance employment within the local economy</b>		
7.1 The area's tourism product range and take-up	Mapping, goals and action plans for: - Number of stays by accommodation type. - Capacity exploitation in relation to accommodation type and season. - Number of visitors to attractions.	Realisation of action plan.  Realisation of action plan.  Realisation of action plan.

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Sustainability Goals & indicators	Qualification phase (Basic requirements for goal)	Operational phase (Year 1 – 3) (Basic requirements for goal)
7.2 The area's tourism demand	Mapping, targets and action plan for developing demand for tourism products.	Realisation of action plan.
7.3 Tourism revenue	Mapping, targets and action plan for tourism generated revenue.	Realisation of action plan.
7.4 Tourism generated employment	Mapping, targets and action plan for number of employees in tourism per year.	Realisation of action plan.
7.5 Tourists perception		Examination and estimation of the tourists' experiences.
<b>8. Promote the development of new sustainable tourism products</b>		
8.1 Sustainable tourism products and business areas	Mapping and assessment of important products and business areas and action plan for their sustainable development.  Assessment of potential new sustainable tourism products and an action plan for this.	Realisation of action plan.  Realisation of action plan.
8.2 Sustainability account		Data collection. Development of a sustainability account.

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## Base Requirements

The Destination 21 recognition label comprises of a variety of base requirements that need to be fulfilled within both the qualification and operational phases. These base requirements are directly related to the scheme's sustainability indicators, which in turn relate to one of the sustainability goals. For example, the sustainability goal '*ensure local organisation and co-operation*' has an indicator that requires '*local Destination 21 participation*' for which the base requirement is '*a minimum of 20% of the tourism companies operating within the destination join the local Destination 21 activities*'.

## Development Goals

Apart from meeting the base requirements of the Destination 21 framework, a destination must also formulate and set up local development goals that address the specific issues related to the destination particular environmental and socio-cultural situation. These goals are then approved and assessed for attainment by the Destination 21 Association.

A destination must formulate development objectives for every indicator it wishes to initiate and implement. The Destination 21 framework stipulates some development goals; such as, for example, 20% of the destination's marinas have to be Blue Flag certified within the first year of the operational phase. However, the destination itself also has a great deal of autonomy in developing its own development objectives that contribute toward its sustainable tourism development. These objectives are developed according to the results of a survey and evaluation of the actual condi-

tions undertaken by the destination during the qualification phase. This ensures that the development goals are suited to the local conditions and that the participants can identify with the development objectives as well as being motivated to attain them.

## Recognition logo

Similar to other recognition schemes, Destination 21 participants will also be able to benefit from the use of a logo to signify their commitment and achievements to and within the Destination 21 process. This logo can only be used when the destination reaches the operational phase. It is intended that the destination and the individual business and other participants utilise this logo for their marketing and promotion purposes.



## The Destination 21 Process

The process of becoming a Destination 21 is characterised by a three-phase process; a pre-qualification phase, a qualification phase and an operational phase as shown in Figure 4 below. A destination must organise its local resources in the pre-qualification phase and lodge an application to the Destination 21 program with the Destination 21 secretariat. Upon acceptance the destination enters the qualification phase; within this phase the destination works to fulfil the scheme's base requirements and sustainable development objectives. Once the fulfilment of these base requirements has

# Destination 21 - a labelling scheme for tourist destinations with sustainable development

been approved, the destination then moves into the operational phase, where the work toward the attainment of the specified goals and the destination's self-developed sustainability goals and objectives continues. A destination in the operational phase is considered a Destination 21 and as such can make use of the Destination 21 label for its promotional activities.

The Destination 21 process is based upon a 3-year cycle with a prior 2 - 12 months qualification period. After the applicant destination has passed the qualification period and is approved and accepted to the scheme, it enters the first year of the operational phase at the end of which the board of Destination 21 assesses the destination's perfor-

mance. This cycle is then repeated for three years. At the end of the third year the destination needs to submit a sustainability account to Destination 21. The evaluation of this sustainability account then determines the destination's performance and its aptness to continuing with the scheme. If this is the case then the destination begins the process again by reapplying and entering the qualification process. The difference this time being that the level of sustainable tourism development at the destination is higher than that of four years prior. Therefore, the Destination 21 approach is cyclic, featuring increases in the levels of sustainability with the completion of each cycle. The qualification and operational phases are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

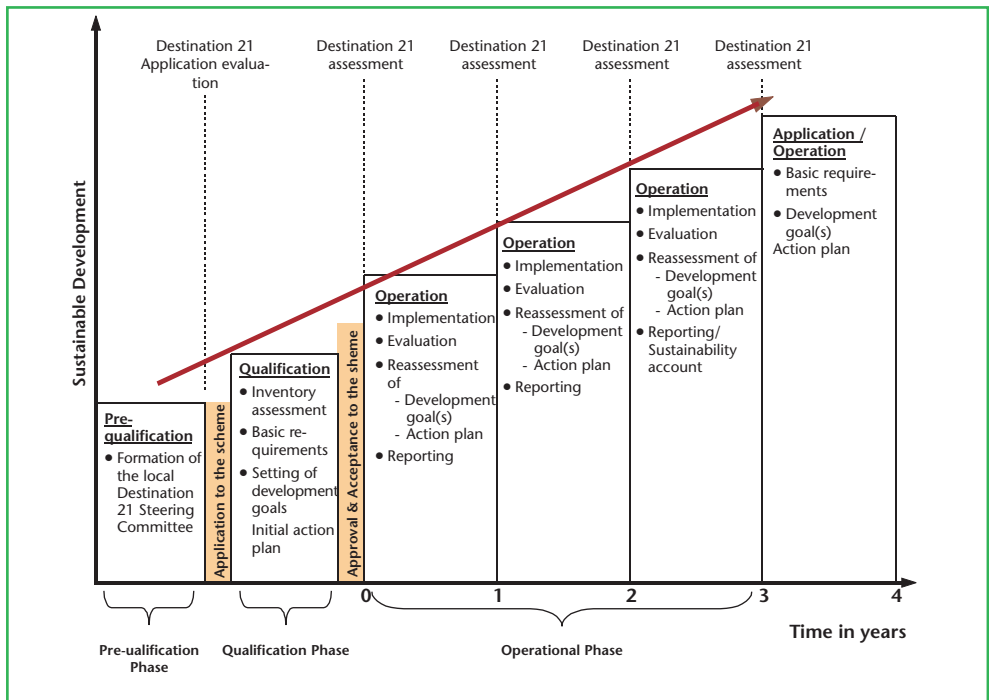


Figure 3. Outline of the Destination 21 process

# Destination 21 - a labelling scheme for tourist destinations with sustainable development

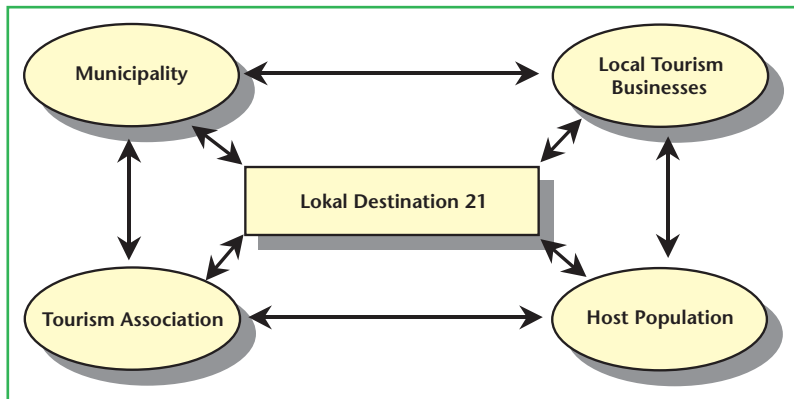
## The Pre-qualification Phase

The process for a destination area to become a certified Destination 21 begins with the local industry association creating awareness among its members of the advantages of developing their tour-

subsequent activities involved with the Destination 21 process.

The envisaged interaction and input between the stakeholder groups and the local Destination 21 framework is shown in figure 4 below.

Figure 4.  
Destination 21  
Local Actors



ism industry in a sustainable manner. Once this awareness begins to take hold and it is decided to use the Destination 21 framework with a view to eventual certification, a local steering committee is to be formed. This steering committee must, at a minimum, consist of four members, each representing one of the following stakeholder groups;

- The local tourism businesses
- The local municipality
- The local tourism association
- A local environmental organisation representing the interest of the local population

This group then elects or employs a coordinator who will have the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating the

## The Qualification Phase

Once the steering committee has been formed and the application to the Destination 21 programme has been accepted, the destination is ready to begin the work required for the qualification phase. The destination is able to remain in this phase for a period of 1 year; within this time the destination must meet the base requirements for each of the 8 sustainability goals. If this time frame is not adhered to, the destination is considered to be no longer in the qualifying stage, and will have to reapply in order to continue working with the Destination 21 program. This time limit has been set in order to prevent possible free-riding, in that a destination remains in the qualifying phase indefinitely without actually improving its environmental performance, yet benefiting from the Destination 21 status.

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The tasks and the methodology required during the qualification phase and later in the operational phase, are very much related to the methodology known from environmental management systems (the cycle of improvement – plan, do, check, act), providing a systematic and cyclical process of continual improvement as is shown by figure 5. The components of the process pertinent to the qualification phase have been highlighted in the figure below.

that the goals are attainable in the 3-year operational phase. If the goals or ideal situation is too highly pegged then a risk of loss of motivation on behalf of the participants could ensue. Once resignation and loss of motivation has occurred it may well be very difficult if not impossible to persuade participants to continue work with the Destination 21 programme.

The vision must be formulated through a process that makes use of dialogues

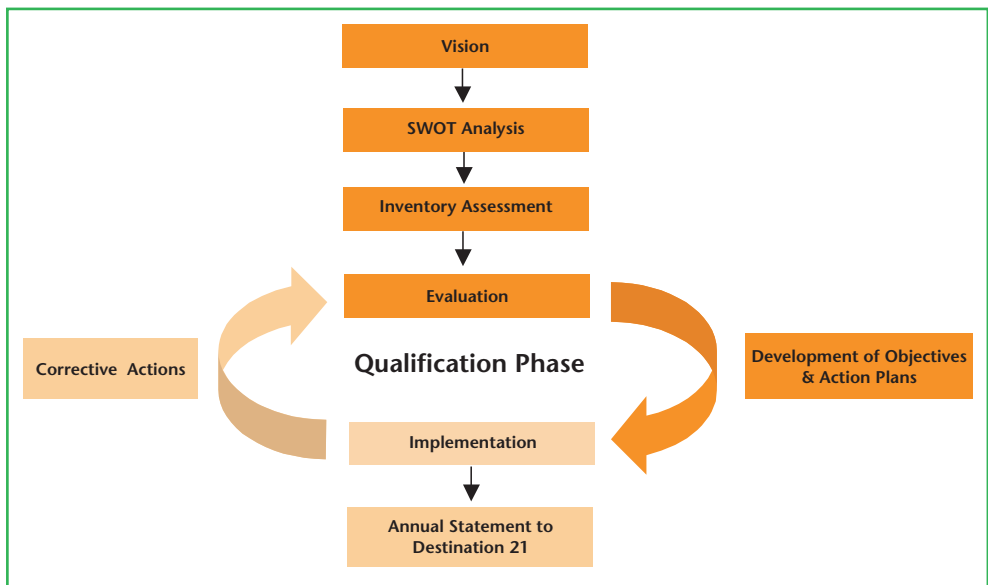


Figure 5. The Destination 21 qualification phase components

### The development of an overall vision

The qualification phase begins with the development of an overall vision for the destination as a whole. This vision should be a statement that expresses the ideal situation that the destination wishes to attain. Care must be taken that the expressed vision is realistic and

between at least the stakeholder groups represented by the local Destination 21 steering committee, however the more input the better. This dialogue should establish what and how the values (ecological, social, cultural, infrastructure and economic) of the destination are viewed by all stakeholders and how these can be incorporated into the overall vision.

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## The SWOT analysis

Once the overall vision of the destinations sustainable tourism development has been formulated a SWOT analysis is conducted. The purpose of this analysis is to give a momentary picture of the destinations overall position in terms of its strengths and weaknesses and possible threats and opportunities. The analysis should at least entail an examination of the following aspects;

sustainable tourism development. The aim of the inventory assessment, in conjunction with the SWOT analysis, is to give the participants a detailed overview of the state of the destinations general and tourism environmental (ecological, socio-cultural and economic) condition from which development objectives and action plans can be drawn up. Additionally, a basis is provided which allows for the evaluation of areas that may re-

### At an internal level

- Current tourism market base
- Current means of marketing
- Current competitors
- Current Tourism product mix
- All involved stakeholders

### At an external level

- Economic development on main markets
- Demographic development on main markets
- Environmental influences
- Technological development
- Accessibility in terms of transport
- Regional and national regulations
- Political climate and conditions
- Educational infrastructure
- Local, regional, national and international media
- Weather & Climatic conditions

The SWOT analysis is of a qualitative nature and will disclose information on which values and resources a destination possesses in regards to individual business areas such as, for example, active, culture or nature tourism. In terms of the qualifications phase, the SWOT analysis serves the purpose of a prelude to the initial inventory analysis, which focuses upon the aspect influencing the destination internally.

## The initial inventory assessment

The inventory assessment in contrast to the SWOT analysis entails a more systematic mapping of the destinations resources and their preposition to foster

quire further attention, as well as, from which the progress of future development activities can be evaluated. The inventory assessment will provide the participants with the base data that will be required for the yearly progress statements and the sustainability account due at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> operational phase year.

## Developing and setting of development objectives

Utilising the data obtained from the SWOT and inventory analysis the local Destination 21 steering committee must develop sustainable tourism development objectives which are in line with

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their formulated vision for the destination. These development goals are to be set in addition to those specified by the Destination 21 framework. This allows the Destination 21 framework to be adjusted to the individual requirements of the destination, thus giving the scheme a certain degree of flexibility.

In addition, this system ensures that the motivation of the participants is maintained throughout both the qualification and operational phases, as it will be more inspiring to attain goals that have been set by ones self. The development objectives, however, must cover the duration of the operational phase and be so designed that a logical and practical progression toward sustainable development throughout the operational phase is ensured.

### Development of an action plan

Once the development objectives have been set the local Destination 21 steering committee must develop an action plan. This plan must reflect the required activities and initiatives for the attainment of the formulated development objectives that have been set for the first operational phase year. Subsequently this procedure is then repeated in each of the operational phase years to allow for adjustment and re-setting of the development objectives. The action plan must include; who is responsible for the planned activities, what the exact functions of those responsible are, and the appropriate deadlines for each of the activities.

The Destination 21 board, then decides whether or not the destination is eligible to move on into the operational phase, this evaluation is based upon the desti-

nation's mapping, evaluation, goal setting and action plan development, number of participating business, etc. throughout the qualification phase.

### *The Operational Phase*

Once the destination's requirements for the transition to the operational phase have been approved and accepted by the Destination 21 Board, the destination can then call itself a Destination 21 and as such begin to make use of the benefits associated with this status. Additionally the destination and the individual participants (particularly the tourism businesses) are now entitled to use the Destination 21 logo in their marketing and promotional efforts. This logo will signify that the associated business or in the case of the destination, is actively involved in the Destination 21 process working towards increased sustainability in their own development and that of the overall destination.

Typically an operational phase year is characterised by the implementation of the activities and initiatives identified in the action plan, developed in the qualification phase. The progress of these activities is then measured using the sustainability indicators, the results of which are then evaluated and used in re-assessing the development objectives and the respective components of the action plan. The annual progress results are then reported to the Destination 21 Board for assessment. This cycle is then repeated for three years, thus ensuring that the activities are constantly monitored and adjusted so that the level of sustainability of the activities is increased.



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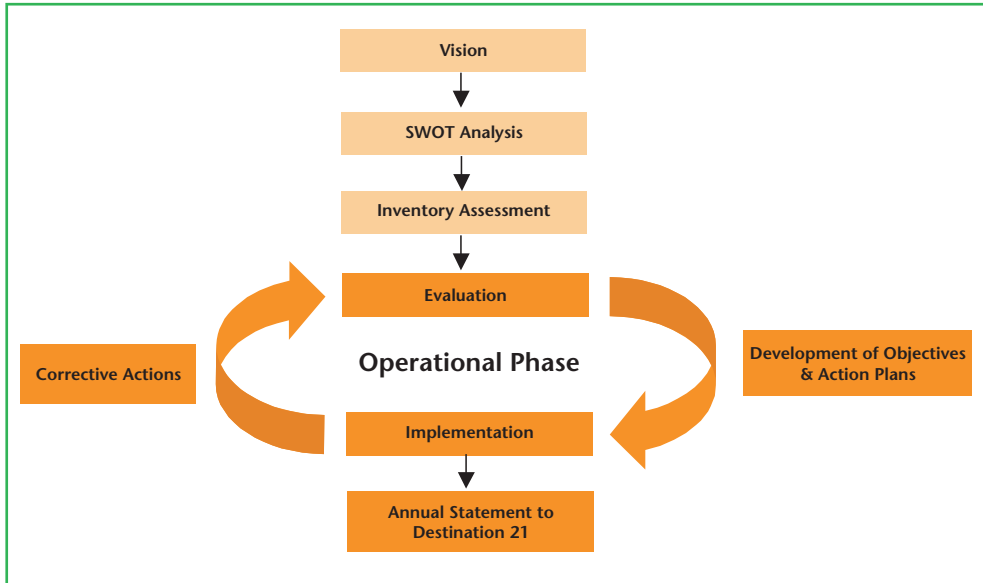


Figure 6. The Destination 21 operational phase components

The components of the operational phase year are shown as highlighted in figure 6 above, in essence some of the steps that were undertaken in the qualification phase are not repeated but are built upon. That is, the process involved in carrying these out is similar but the data used to do so should be continuously developing. The Destination 21 framework also specifies some base requirements and objectives that must be attained throughout the 3 year operational phase, these then complement the development objectives identified by the participants within the qualification phase. The Destination 21 framework specifies in which year of the operational phase the required objectives must be carried out.

## Annual assessment of the destination's progress

An important component of the Destination 21 labelling scheme is the reporting and evaluation of sustainable tourism development, the results and progress, to the Destination 21 secretariat. These reports should include which of the set development objectives have been attained and which activities were required to do so. Another requirement of the Destination 21 framework is that each of the participating tourism businesses prepares an annual statement in which it describes its environmental performance, highlighting issues such as the reduction in resource use, emissions and other pollution. These individual statements should then be made publicly available within the businesses. The

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local Destination 21 committee uses this data to develop key figures.

The three-year cyclical operational phase requires an annual assessment of the destination's progress in its work toward sustainable development, this assessment is carried out by the board of Destination 21. Any areas, which are deemed by the board of Destination 21 to be lacking or not meeting a sufficient standard of progress, are communicated to the local Destination 21 steering committee for revision and improvement in the following operational year.

At the end of the three-year operational phase the destination must submit, in addition to the annual statement, a sustainability account. It is envisaged that the account will analyse the destination's performance on a qualitative and quantitative basis using the data obtained from the sustainability indicators. The destination will need to outline its performance, for instance, in terms of resource use reduction, reduction in pollution levels, improvements made in the infrastructure of the destination which serve to facilitate improved sustainability within the three tiers of sustainable development.

**For further information, please contact:**

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