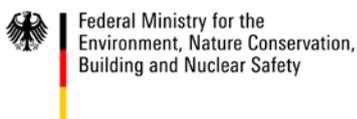


# Integration of biodiversity into CSR processes in tourism

## Baseline Study



Supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection (BfN) with financial resources from the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection, Construction and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

# **Integration of biodiversity into CSR processes in tourism**

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A screening of tourism standards and awards for biodiversity aspects.

**Publisher:** adelphi, Caspar-Theyß-Straße 14a, 14193 Berlin, Germany  
T +49 (30) 8900068-0, [www.adelphi.de](http://www.adelphi.de)

**Co-Publishers:** ECOTRANS e.V., [www.ecotrans.org](http://www.ecotrans.org)  
Global Nature Fund, [www.globalnature.org](http://www.globalnature.org)

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**Photos (title page):** Landscape (Altmühltal): Herbert Hamele - ECOTRANS e.V.  
Butterfly: dochl - fotolia.com (via Global Nature Fund)  
Walkers: Eike Dubois - [www.saarpfalz-touristik.de](http://www.saarpfalz-touristik.de)  
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**As at:** May 2014

This report is an outcome of the project *“Integration von biodiversitätsrelevanten Aspekten in aktuelle Prozesse von Entwicklung und Umsetzung von CSR im Themenbereich Tourismus”*, supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection (BfN) with financial resources from the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection, Construction and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Biodiversity

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Biodiversity describes the enormous variety of ecosystems, species and genes surrounding us. According to Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), biodiversity is

"...the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems" (Convention on Biological Diversity, n.d.).

In Germany alone, there are around 48,000 animal species, 9,500 plant species and 14,400 fungi including endemic species. Germany is also rich in ecosystems from Alpine to tidal mudflats, from forest to heath, high moors, water meadows, lakes and sea (BfN, 2007). Overall, biodiversity builds the network of living things that makes life on earth both possible and worth living.

However, the richness of life on earth is under threat. The loss of not only habitats and species but also entire ecosystems has risen alarmingly since industrial times (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, n.d.). Current extinction rates are 100 to 1000 times faster than the natural rate and 60% of the world's ecosystems are degraded or used unsustainably (European Commission, 2011). In the EU, only 17% of habitats and 11% of key ecosystems, protected through EU legislation are in favourable status (EEA, 2010). In Germany, the latest round of habitats directive reporting shows that only 25% of species protected by the directive are in favourable status while for habitats, 28% are in favourable status. The reporting also indicated that in the last 12 years, a third of all breeding birds have experienced significant declines in their populations (BfN, 2014). This loss of species and habitats is one of the highest levels in Europe (BfN, 2007).

Loss of biodiversity, together with climate change, is regarded as the gravest environmental problem facing us and, like climate change, it has anthropogenic causes. The most serious drivers, as recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, are considered to be habitat and land cover change; resource consumption; pollution; climate change, and invasive alien species. The global goal to halt loss of biodiversity by 2010 has quite clearly failed (CBD, 2010)<sup>1</sup> and if the new target (to halt biodiversity loss by 2020) is to be met, significant work is clearly needed.

The loss of biodiversity is a tragedy for the species that become extinct and an ethical problem for humankind but it also has immediate economic, social and health impacts for our species. As described in the EU Biodiversity Strategy, biodiversity is:

"our life insurance, giving us food, fresh water and clean air, shelter and medicine, mitigating natural disasters, pests and diseases and contributes to regulating the climate. Biodiversity is also our natural capital, delivering ecosystem services that underpin our economy." (European Commission, 2011)

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<sup>1</sup> This target for halting biodiversity loss was agreed under the auspices of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. In the EU, the aim is higher – to halt and restore as far as possible. See policy section for more details.

This recognition of the economic impacts of biodiversity loss encouraged the United Nations to initiate the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) in 2000 (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, n.d.). This appraised the condition and trends in the world's ecosystems and the services they provide humanity, and explored options to restore, conserve or enhance the sustainable use of ecosystems. It included the first formal and globally recognised definition of ecosystem services:

"...benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food and water; regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, and disease; supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; and cultural services such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits".

Since then, an attempt has been made to calculate the value of ecosystem services in monetary terms. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), has estimated the cost of the loss of ecosystem services from deforestation and degradation alone at an enormous US\$2-4.5 trillion annually (TEEB, 2010). An attempt is now being made across Europe to map ecosystem services (European Commission , 2013).

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## 1.2 Tourism

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Tourism is one of the most important economic areas in Germany. Around 2.9 million work in Tourism. It produces around 100 billion Euros annually directly (4.4% of the GDP) but consumption by tourists is in fact higher at around 278.3 billion (BMWi, 2013). According to the German Tourism Association (Deutscher Tourismusverband), this flourishing economic area – in 2013, the number of nights stayed rose to record levels at 411 Million – is not only concentrated in towns but also in rural areas with otherwise weak development opportunities (DTV, n.d.). Across the EU as a whole, tourism employs around 5.2% of the total workforce and generates over 5% of the EU GDP (when the other sectors linked to it are included, this number rises to over 10%) (European Commission, 2010).

Tourism is an interesting study area since the links to biodiversity and biodiversity loss are perhaps clearer than in some economic sectors. It is also a complex sector consisting of various services such as transportation, hospitality, entertainment, and tourism operators combining all of these. Tourism often relies directly on ecosystem services and biodiversity. Nature tourism (ecotourism, agri-tourism, wellness tourism, adventure tourism), is already an important sector but the importance of unspoilt nature to tourists goes beyond these groups.

For many years, tourism was considered a relatively “clean development area” (Rup, 1997) and it certainly has high potential to play a positive role in biodiversity conservation, replacing more intensive land uses and raising awareness about biodiversity and ecosystem services. However, in the last few years this view has changed and the potential negative environmental impacts (contribution to all the main drivers of biodiversity loss listed above) of insensitive tourism developments have become clear. There is clearly a delicate balance, even with nature-based tourism, too many tourists can strain or destroy, the very nature they are coming to enjoy.

The awareness of the potential negative impacts, had caused changes of behaviour within the tourism sector. Sustainable tourism is no longer a niche sector and its importance is being recognised by the larger mainstream tourism operators. Tourism operators rely entirely on the desires of their customers and voluntary measures such as CSR processes, certification,

standards and awards are increasingly important to demonstrate to potential customers that environmental and social problems are being taken seriously. The initial environmental focus of these was often climate change but Europeans are also increasingly showing concern for loss of biodiversity (Eurobarometer, 2013)<sup>2</sup> and this is reflected in CSR processes. German holiday-makers are increasingly concerned about the ecological and social impact of their decisions. 40% want their holiday to be as ecologically sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible (ReiseAnalyse, 2014).

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### 1.3 Voluntary measures

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) broadly refers to companies taking responsibility for their impact on society. A number of voluntary measures are commonly used to aid companies in this aim. This study concentrates particularly on standards and awards.

Standards are a set of explicit requirements with which companies must comply and against which they can be audited. They can be used to demonstrate to consumers that the company is following a particular management plan and is fulfilling its environmental and social obligations. Complying with a standard will often result in a company receiving a label to demonstrate their high performance in this area. Some standards include improvement mechanisms e.g. different levels such as bronze, silver, and gold. This allows businesses to start with measures that do not require significant changes in practice and build up to reaching higher standards. The use of eco-standards has increased in popularity (the number has increased from zero to around 350 in the last fifty years) and their importance is now clearly recognised as a mechanism for positive change by the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP-CBD, 2012).

Awards have a long history but have to some extent been rediscovered in recent years as a means to influence business and individual behaviour and raise awareness (McKinsey&Company, 2009). Awards set eligibility requirements and reward the applicant who meets them in the best possible way. They are of special interest for encouraging innovative behaviour and picking out best practice examples which can highlight innovative actions to others. They allow these best-practice examples to advertise their success in the area and potentially gain more customers in this way.

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<sup>2</sup> The latest Eurobarometer Flash Survey on biodiversity shows that 88% of respondents believe that the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems in Europe is a problem.

## 2 Aim and Methodology

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### 2.1 Aim

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This study aims to provide an overview of the contribution the tourism industry makes to the protection of biodiversity through examining how well biodiversity measures have been integrated into awards and standards. This should provide a baseline from which improvements can be made. An important objective was to raise awareness among standard organisations on the conservation of biological diversity. For this reason, every attempt was made to involve them at different stages, in the work of the project.

The project team compiled information on the integration of biodiversity aspects in CSR processes, certifications/standards and awards relevant for tourism. The key question was: to what extent do standards and awards include biodiversity aspects in their policy documents and/or in their sets of criteria and are measurable, relevant indicators available?

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### 2.2 Methodology

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The methodology consisted of a number of steps laid out in more detail below. Importantly, stakeholder feedback was sought at a number of stages in order to ensure that standard organisations were aware of the process and had an opportunity to present their point of view.

#### 2.2.1 Literature review and policy overview

A review was carried out to examine the current trends in biodiversity, CSR and tourism policy to give a good understanding of the current topic of interest and future trends in the area. Global, EU and German policies and initiatives were listed and their relevance for tourism analysed. The most important of these policies and initiatives were then included in the assessment of the awards and standards to check whether they were referenced in their policy documents. The review also helped to highlight upcoming areas in biodiversity, CSR and tourism policy of potential future interest to standards. More details are shown in Table 1.

#### 2.2.2 Review of current standards and awards

A selection of awards and standards was made based upon expert opinion (experts of the project teams in coordination with the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety). Standards and awards were chosen for their influence on the German industry and potential growth potential. Some were included for their potential as a positive example for others. A range of standards across the global, national and regional level were included as well as a number of industry-led standards.

The standards and awards were analysed against a list of characteristics which were adapted from the Best Policy Guidance for the integration of Biodiversity and Ecosystem

Services in Standards released in October 2012 by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-CBD, 2012).

### **2.2.2.1 Standards**

The awards and standards were chosen by experts of the project teams in coordination with the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. A set of 20 standards with relevance for the German tourism industry were selected. An individual assessment was carried out for every standard. In cases, where standards covered different parts of the tourism industry (destinations, accommodation facilities, camping sites or natural parks), these were assessed separately. The full list of standards can be found in the [Annexes](#).

#### **2.2.2.1.1 Review of policy documents**

To assess coverage of biodiversity issues in the standards, the policy documents were carefully reviewed, recording any references to biodiversity terms or concepts. These included the following

1. Components of biodiversity (use and explanation of terms related to biodiversity; mention of particular ecosystems; ecosystem services).
2. References to concepts to generally avoid, reduce or compensate for impacts on the environment / biodiversity (the mitigation hierarchy; No-Net-Loss or Net-Gain of biodiversity; business processes such as environmental management systems)
3. Reference to International Conventions with reference to the protection of biodiversity (e.g. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention); UNESCO World Heritage Convention; Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)).

The results were recorded in a template allowing comparison between different standards.

#### **2.2.2.1.2 Screening of criteria**

The second part of the work was to screen the whole set of criteria. The criteria were clustered according to the main drivers of loss of biodiversity, which are widely accepted by the international scientific community:

- Degradation/destruction of ecosystems
- Overexploitation of natural resources
- Spread of alien invasive species
- Climate change
- Pollution/Emissions

Taking into account that standards and awards relating to environmental management traditionally cover climate change (energy consumption, transport, energy sources) and pollution /emissions, the screening concentrated on the drivers which are less often considered in the tourism sector:

- Degradation /destruction of ecosystems,
- Overexploitation of natural resources
- Spread of alien invasive species

It was decided to also screen standards for mention of species separately (despite its close relation to the degradation or destruction of ecosystems and overexploitation of natural resources) as some standards include criteria targeting protection of individual wild species. Of course, all causes of biodiversity loss are interrelated and in many cases, criteria could be classified under several categories. In these cases, a decision was made by the project team under which threat they should be counted so as not to double-count.

Standards were also screened for criteria aimed at proactively protecting biodiversity. Access and Benefits-Sharing<sup>3</sup> is a term used in the CBD to describe sharing the benefits of genetic resources with local populations. It is considered here that to some extent the concept is transferable to the tourism sector which also depends to a great extent on the maintenance of landscapes and nature by local and/or indigenous populations. Sustainable tourism requires the inclusion of local initiatives and the creation of added value for the local population. In the rest of the report we refer to this as “community involvement and benefits sharing”. A second proactive screening category was “exceptional commitment towards biodiversity”. This could cover any unusual actions such as donations to an NGO. It was considered especially important to note any innovative or unusual approaches included in standards.

### **2.2.2.2 Awards**

A sample of 30 Awards was selected from a longer list. From this list, a further award was later removed because too little information was available on its requirements. The awards considered are listed in the [Annexes](#).

The review was carried out in two steps: first it was checked to see whether the award mentioned the concept of sustainability in their published documents. Secondly, reference to biodiversity was checked. Only those awards that contained a reference to biodiversity were analysed more deeply.

#### **2.2.2.2.1 Review of policy documents**

The second step of the screening involved reviewing the policy documents in a similar way to the criteria. Information on the following aspects was noted:

1. their mention of the main causes for the loss of biodiversity (degradation/destruction of ecosystems, overexploitation of resources, invasive alien species, pollution and climate change);
2. components of biodiversity (species, habitats, ecosystems hotspots of biodiversity, protected areas);
3. actions for avoiding negative impacts (loss of habitats and restoration, loss of ecosystem services, overuse, invasive species, wild species, No-Net-Loss, mitigation hierarchy)
4. long-term strategies and cooperations; international conventions related to biodiversity and the presence of a special category for biodiversity.

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<sup>3</sup> The *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (ABS) is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding, thereby contributing to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components. It was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

### **2.2.2.3 Feedback from awards and standards**

Awards and standards were sent the screening relating to themselves and asked to provide feedback. Some responded with additional not publically available information or explained current developments taking place. This feedback was used to reassess their screening (in the case that changes in their policy or criteria had occurred).

### **2.2.3 Feedback from the ground – survey of tourism businesses**

During the period from September 2013 to January 2014 a set of representatives from tourism businesses and associations in Germany were interviewed for the project. The objective was to gather stakeholder' views on the importance of the integration of biodiversity in corporate CSR processes and the need for further information on the topic. Feedback was collected on the perceived drivers and barriers to integration such as lack of information, fears, and potential financial barriers.

A total of 17 representatives from relevant tourism businesses and associations were interviewed regarding the integration of biodiversity in their CSR practices<sup>4</sup>. The vast majority of respondents (11 out of 17) worked directly in the field of CSR / Sustainability / Environmental management. The other respondents were either executive directors or product managers.

The survey followed an interview guideline which contained detailed questions about the following topics<sup>5</sup>:

- Understanding and relevance of biodiversity
- Relevance of CSR processes
- Assessing the deficits of and the need for information on biodiversity
- Demand for information and information brokering

Representatives were presented with a list environmental management standards with the request that they provide information about which standards were most used and which they would consider most relevant. They also received a list of awards that address the tourism branch as well as cross-sector awards. The list of participants is not provided as the survey was anonymous

### **2.2.4 Stakeholder workshop**

The initial results and draft conclusions were presented in a stakeholders' workshop on CSR and biodiversity at the ITB Berlin 6 March 2014. Participants were presented with an explanation of the aim of the project; an overview of the effects of tourism on biodiversity; expected outcomes of the work; and initial results from the questionnaire and screening of the standards and awards. Participants gave feedback which was minuted and used to inform the results and conclusions of the baseline study. A list of participants in the workshop can be found in the [Annexes](#).

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<sup>4</sup> The respondents represented eight tour operators, four destination marketing organisations, three tourism associations and two accommodation establishments.

<sup>5</sup> The interview topics were proposed by the project team with feedback from BfN. Some of the topics are similar to parts of the interviews carried out within the UFOPLAN project "Unternehmen und Biologische Vielfalt – Grundlagen für zielgruppengerechte Informationsvermittlung & Netzwerkbildung". This will allow comparison of the results between the sectors interviewed in this project and the results from the tourism sector.

## 3 Overview of relevant policy developments

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### 3.1 Biodiversity policy

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In recent years, numerous political initiatives have been developed to tackle the well-documented loss of biodiversity. These are laid out in more detail (though not exhaustively) in Table 1. Simultaneously, greater activity is being shown in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encouraging businesses to take voluntary action to reduce their environmental impacts.

On a global level, it was acknowledged that the target to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 was not met (CBD, 2010), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has therefore established new targets for halting biodiversity loss by 2020 (Convention on Biological Diversity, n.d.). This is built upon by the EU biodiversity strategy (European Commission, 2011), which aims to halt biodiversity loss and restore it as far as possible by 2020. The EU relies on its body of nature conservation legislation built up since the 1970s to implement the strategy, particularly the Birds Directive (European Commission, 2009) and Habitats Directive (European Commission, 1992) which established, amongst other things, the Natura 2000 network. With over 26,000 terrestrial and marine sites, Natura 2000 is the most extensive coordinated protected area network in the world. Other instruments such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are also relevant in terms of their requirements on EU businesses to limit their damage to biodiversity (European Commission, 2011).

In addition to these traditional regulatory instruments, there is an increasing attempt to “mainstream” biodiversity, to ensure it is integrated into other programmes and policies across the EU. This is particularly noticeable with the increased interest in maintaining ecosystem services i.e. focusing on the economic benefits that biodiversity provides for people. The Europe 2020 strategy (for economic growth) defines sustainable growth as that which protects the environment and prevents biodiversity loss (European Commission, n.d.). Natural Capital (biodiversity that provides goods and services we rely on) is also one of the priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme (European Commission, n.d.). The second target of the biodiversity strategy is to maintain and enhance ecosystem services and green infrastructure. Building on this, a green infrastructure strategy aims to maintain the natural infrastructure essential for providing ecosystem services (European Commission, 2013).

While recognising the high importance of ecosystem services, the EU has accepted that sometimes ecosystems will be destroyed where this has significant economic benefits. However, where this occurs, the ecosystem should be replaced as far as possible. This is known as the No-Net-Loss initiative (European Commission No Net Loss, n.d.). Under this initiative, businesses should compensate where they destroy an ecosystem by replacing it with one of equal value in environmental terms (a more positive version is described as Net-Gain where businesses should provide more biodiversity than they destroy). The “mitigation hierarchy” states that this should be done as a last resort after measures have been taken to avoid damage to the ecosystem in the first place.

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### 3.2 Tourism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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Tourism is an interesting example of an area of economic development which both relies strongly on a high quality environment (the natural environment is consistently rated high up on the list of why a particular destination is chosen (Eurostat, 2014)<sup>6</sup> but which, where developed insensitively, can potentially have an extremely negative impact on biodiversity (Rup, 1997). It is a difficult area to regulate in its entirety since “tourism” includes enterprises of all sizes and types operating over large areas inside and outside of the EU.

There has been some attempt to regulate tourism from the top-down. The Commission Communication *Europe, the world's no. 1 tourist destination from 2010*, while largely focuses on the economic development of tourism in the EU. However it also place a focus on the EU being regarded as the sustainable tourism choice and requires the establishment of a number of initiatives aimed at improving tourism's sustainability (European Commission, 2010). However as these initiatives have been developed, the focus has been less on biodiversity than on other environmental issues for example the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS), currently in a testing phase, includes only one indicator related to biodiversity protection (ETIS, n.d.).

There are also a number of initiatives on a global and European level which encourage businesses to make voluntary commitments showing that they take their social and environmental responsibilities seriously such as the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact (UN Global Compact and IUCN, 2012), the ISO 26000 Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility (ISO, 2010) and the EU EMAS Reference Document for the Tourism Sector (European Commission, 2012). The EU also has a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy aimed at encouraging the uptake of CSR measures (European Commission, 2011). While the focus of these has often been on social issues and latterly climate change, some like the EMAS reference document, include a larger number of indicators for biodiversity protection in tourism. These are hailed as a success in raising awareness regarding business responsibilities for the environment. Nonetheless, questions continue to be raised over the extent to which a voluntary approach can be relied upon and if it needs to be complemented by a compulsory regulatory framework (González & Martínez, 2004).

The proliferation of smaller initiatives driven by NGOs and businesses working together is a potentially promising development for the better integration of biodiversity concerns in tourism. For instance, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, first developed in 1995 (European Charter for Protected Areas, n.d.), is a voluntary agreement aimed at tourism operators in protected areas though its influence is limited to areas with official protection and not at wider biodiversity. The broader European Business and Biodiversity Campaign emphasises that business has a crucial role in biodiversity conservation and seeks strong commitment from the business sector (B&B Campaign, n.d.). In parallel, the B&B platform of the European Commission brings together EU businesses, associations and companies (EU B&B Platform, n.d.). In June 2011, the Platform held its first workshop on Tourism Sector and Biodiversity Conservation. Its outcomes have collected together the first set of best practices and play an important role in developing the EU Agenda on the subject (EU B&B Platform, 2011).

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<sup>6</sup> E.g. “natural features” are the main reason people return to a destination

The table below lays out the most important global and EU policy developments in the area. These have been used to inform the screening of the Standards and Awards.

**Table 1. List of International and European Conventions, laws or other recognised actions influencing tourism and biodiversity**

Name	Type	Requirements / comment
International Biodiversity		
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Legally binding international convention	The <a href="#">CBD</a> entered into force in 1993. Major achievements include the 6 <sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in Bonn where <a href="#">Guidelines on Access and Benefits Sharing</a> were agreed. In 2002, the parties committed to achieve a significant reduction in the loss of biodiversity by 2010. At the 10 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the parties in Nagoya Japan, it was acknowledged that this target had not been met and a strategic plan was laid out to halt biodiversity loss by 2020 including specific targets (the <a href="#">Aichi targets</a> ).
Ramsar convention	Intergovernmental treaty	The <a href="#">Ramsar Convention</a> (1971) aims to encourage the sustainable use of wetlands in the signatories' territories and provides an international framework for co-operation on wetland management.
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna	Legally binding international convention	<a href="#">CITES</a> aims to ensure that the international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Cites establishes lists of species, the trade of which is controlled and must be authorised through a licensing system. Species are included in three appendices of the convention. Appendix I (species threatened by extinction); appendix II (species whose trade must be controlled in order to avoid over-utilisation); appendix III (species protected in at least one country).
Convention on Migratory Species	Intergovernmental treaty – Framework Convention	The CMS or <a href="#">Bonn Convention</a> aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed in Appendix I other species that would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in Appendix II. Seven agreements have been concluded under the CMS relating to different species.

The World Heritage Convention	Legally binding international convention	The 1972 <a href="#">World Heritage Convention</a> , under the auspices of UNESCO, links the concept of nature conservation and preservation of cultural properties. It sets out duties for state parties to identify potential world heritage sites and carry out their role in protecting and preserving them.
IUCN Red List	Internationally recognised approach to defining endangered species	The <a href="#">IUCN Red List</a> provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on plants and animals that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.
Global Compact	Voluntary initiative	The <a href="#">UN Global Compact</a> establishes 10 principles for Corporate Social Responsibility that companies globally should take into account.
ISO 26000 Guidance	Guidance document	<a href="#">ISO 26000 Standard on Social Responsibility</a> provides guidance on how businesses and organizations can operate in a socially responsible way.
European		
Biodiversity Strategy	Strategy	<a href="#">Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020</a> lays out the EU's vision for halting biodiversity loss by 2020 with 6 specific targets for 2020 on the following topics: 1. Full implementation of the nature directives; 2. Maintain and enhance ecosystem services and green infrastructure, 3. Ensure agriculture and forestry is sustainable, 4. Ensure fisheries are sustainable; 5. Manage Invasive Alien Species; 6. EU contributing better to halting global biodiversity loss.
Birds Directive	Legislation	<a href="#">Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds</a> (as amended from Directive 79/409/EEC) protects particular species of birds and their habitats. Member States must set up and manage Special Protected Areas (SPAs) targeting the species listed in annex 1 of the directive.

Habitats Directive	Legislation	<a href="#">Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</a> extended protection to habitats and species other than birds. It requires the establishment of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which together with SPAs make up the Natura 2000 network. Annex 1 of the Directive lists the natural habitat types whose conservation requires the designation of SACs.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	Legislation	<a href="#">EIA Directive (85/337/EEC)</a> requires EU member states to carry out an assessment of the environmental impacts (impacts on natural resources) of all projects listed in annexes I of the directive. National authorities can decide whether an EIA is needed for projects in annex II of the directive. Annex II includes tourism and leisure infrastructure including ski runs, marinas, holiday developments, campsites and theme parks.
Green Infrastructure strategy	Strategy	Green infrastructure describes the natural infrastructure needed to deliver ecosystem services. The Commission developed a <a href="#">strategy</a> on how to protect and develop Europe's green infrastructure as required by the biodiversity strategy.
Invasive Alien Species proposal for a regulation	Proposal for legislation	Sets out <a href="#">proposal</a> on new rules for dealing with IAS across EU. Species would be prioritised depending on their environmental and economic impacts. It would be illegal to introduce particular species in the EU. There would also be a requirement to take action when particular species were discovered.
No-Net-Loss initiative	Proposal	The Commission aims by 2015 to establish an <a href="#">EU Initiative on No Net Loss (NNL)</a> of Ecosystems and their services by 2015 This would be done by the setting up of biodiversity offsets, habitat banking and/or the adherence to the "mitigation hierarchy", a best practice approach, which views the role of biodiversity offsets as a "last resort", after all reasonable measures have been taken first to avoid and minimize the impact of a development project.
EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility	Strategy	The Commission's <a href="#">strategy for CSR</a> develops EU policy on CSR, encouraging EU businesses to take measures to meet their responsibilities including in halting the loss of biodiversity.
Commission Communication	Communication	<a href="#">Communication COM(2010) 352</a> largely focusing on the economic development of tourism. Tourism should be

Europe, the world's no. 1 tourist destination		sustainable, responsible and high-quality and plans are included to develop an EU set of indicators; a quality tourism brand; a charter and prize for sustainable tourism and a strategy for sustainable coastal and marine tourism. The European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS), is currently in its testing phase, however only contains one indicator related to biodiversity.
EMAS Reference Document for the Tourism Sector	Voluntary environmental management measures	Under the EMAS regulation, sectoral reference documents need to be developed on best environmental practice. The <a href="#">EMAS reference Document for the Tourism Sector</a> provides "Best Environmental Management Practice" descriptions applied to some or all of the tourism sectors including biodiversity measures.
EU Business and Biodiversity Platform	Voluntary platform	The <a href="#">B@B platform</a> of the European Commission brings together EU businesses, associations and companies to develop tools and approaches that integrate biodiversity considerations into business practice. The B@B Platform also helps to coordinate and to raise awareness of innovative national and international initiatives, and showcase business best practices at EU level. The platform is open to businesses from all sectors and also brings together experts and stakeholders from business, as well as representatives from government, industry sectors and NGOs
European Business and Biodiversity Campaign	Voluntary platform	The <a href="#">B&amp;B campaign</a> was initiated by a consortium of European NGOs and companies led and coordinated by the Global Nature Fund. It provides support to companies in assessing and mitigating their impacts on biodiversity, for example by offering a Biodiversity Check for Companies. Knowledge pools with biodiversity fact sheets for various industry sectors including tourism are available at the Campaign webportal: <a href="http://www.business-biodiversity.eu">www.business-biodiversity.eu</a>
European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas	Voluntary agreement	The <a href="#">European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas</a> , first developed in 1995, is a management tool to encourage the sustainable development of tourism in protected areas in Europe. It is run by the Europarc federation and protected areas can chose to join it if they sign up to the charter's principles.

German		
Biodiversity Strategy	Strategy	The <a href="#">national biodiversity strategy</a> formulates a concrete vision for the future, and specifies quality targets and action objectives for all biodiversity-related topics with deadlines ranging from the immediate through to the year 2050. Tourism and nature-based recreation is recognised as one of the action areas in the strategy.
National Strategy for CSR	Strategy and action plan	The <a href="#">Action Plan for CSR</a> was approved by the federal government in 2010 following the recommendations of the National CSR Forum. Its aim is to bring about a change in attitude and instil an awareness that practising corporate social responsibility pays off for business and society.
Federal Government Tourism Policy report	Overview of Government plans	The <a href="#">policy report</a> lays out the planned areas of development to make Germany an attractive and sustainable tourism destination.

## 4 Results

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### 4.1 Screening of standards

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#### 4.1.1 Overview

A review was carried out of 20 standards focusing firstly on the policy documents and secondarily on the criteria. Criteria were also assessed using a set of quality elements (as described below) allowing the potential effects of the various standards to be assessed.

#### 4.1.2 Review of the policy documents

##### 4.1.2.1 Components of biodiversity

In most standard's policy documents, habitats were mentioned: the terms "natural areas" and "protected areas" were used, however they were not defined. There were relatively frequent references to specific ecosystems, mainly wetlands, glaciers and river floodplains although no references were found more broadly to ecosystem services. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species was also mentioned.

##### 4.1.2.2 References to avoiding negative impacts

In terms of general concepts to avoid, reduce or compensate for impacts on biodiversity, there were no references found to "No-Net-Loss" or the Mitigation Hierarchy for avoiding negative impacts. However, in over the 50% of the cases there were requirements related to legally protected areas found as well as to biodiversity hotspots – in some cases (18%) indirectly mentioned. Over 60% of the standards analysed required the integration of biodiversity in businesses process – in all cases as part of an environmental management system.

##### 4.1.2.3 International conventions and actions related to biodiversity

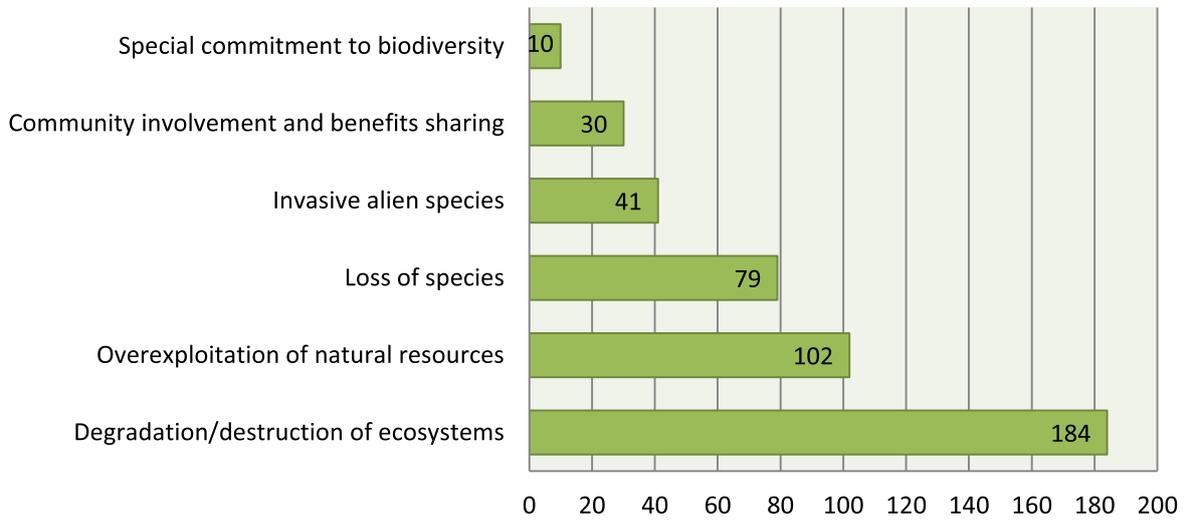
The Ramsar Convention was mentioned and CITES was referred to several times though not mentioned explicitly by name. In terms of voluntary schemes, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas was referred to. Two references were noted to a "special commitment of the company to biodiversity" – in both cases this was related to donations to NGOs.

#### 4.1.3 Screening of biodiversity criteria in the standards

##### 4.1.3.1 Criteria to reduce biodiversity loss

Examining the criteria on loss of biodiversity listed in standards themselves, most of them were related to degradation and destruction of ecosystems. The second most important aspect according to the number of criteria found, is the overexploitation of natural resources followed by the loss of species. Fewer criteria related to Invasive Alien Species were included.

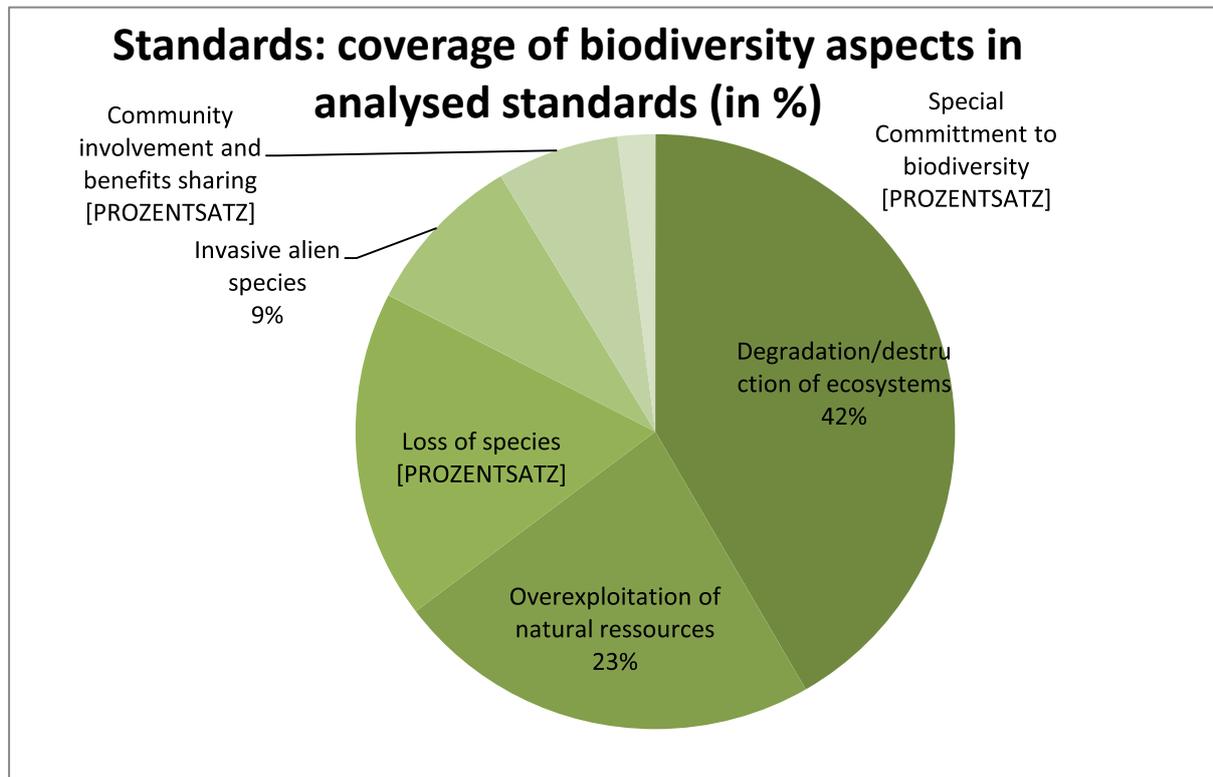
## No. of biodiversity aspects listed in the standards



### 4.1.3.2 Criteria to proactively protect biodiversity

Few proactive actions to combat biodiversity loss were included (few standards included criteria on community involvement or benefit sharing or had standards encouraging a special commitment of the company to biodiversity).

The graph below shows the percentage cover for each of the biodiversity aspects across all standards.



A set of quality elements was selected to analyse the potential impact of standards regarding biodiversity protection: weight (whether or not the criteria is mandatory); effectiveness (the extent to which the criteria is likely to be successful at protecting biodiversity); transparency (whether the criteria is clear enough or if it leaves room for interpretation); verifiability (the methodology/indicators established to certify the fulfilment of the criterion). A numerical value was assigned for each criterion listed and for each property. This allowed the calculation of an average subtotal shown in the graph below.



Most standards had a relatively high “weight” i.e. they were requirements (or musts) rather than optional (cans). Effectiveness received a lower overall score. It was ranked from 1 (lowest) to 3 (highest) and on average, the value is below 2. However, the transparency of the standards is quite high - most of the standards were concrete and not interpretable in different ways to different readers. Finally, the verifiability of the standards is also high, which means that in most cases, the fulfilment of the criteria can clearly be verified.

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## 4.2 Review of awards

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### 4.2.1 Overview

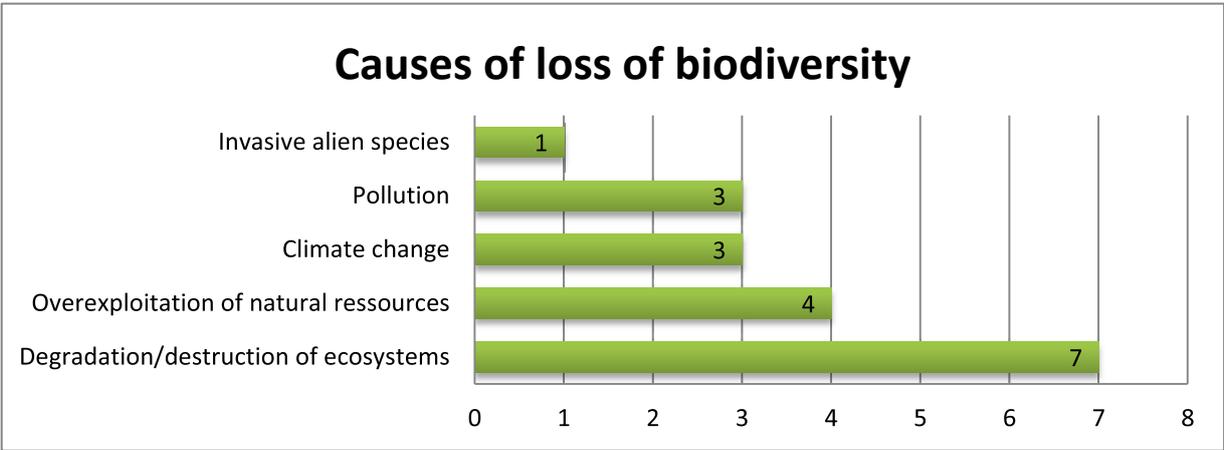
The sample of 29 Awards was chosen as laid out in the methodology. The review was carried out in two steps: first mention of sustainability in the award’s published documents was noted: It was found that over 80% (25 out of 29) did mention sustainability and that all of these also specifically mentioned the environmental pillar of sustainable development. Reference to biodiversity was checked and it was found that only 40% mentioned biodiversity

(10 out of 29). Only where biodiversity was mentioned, were the award policy documents analysed further.

It is particularly noticeable that few awards contained concrete requirements for potential applicants. From the entire sample of 29 awards, 12 cases had no published criteria for participation. Overall, for 62% of cases, the criteria were not available or unclear. This meant that the analysis carried out could not go into as much depth as that for the standards.

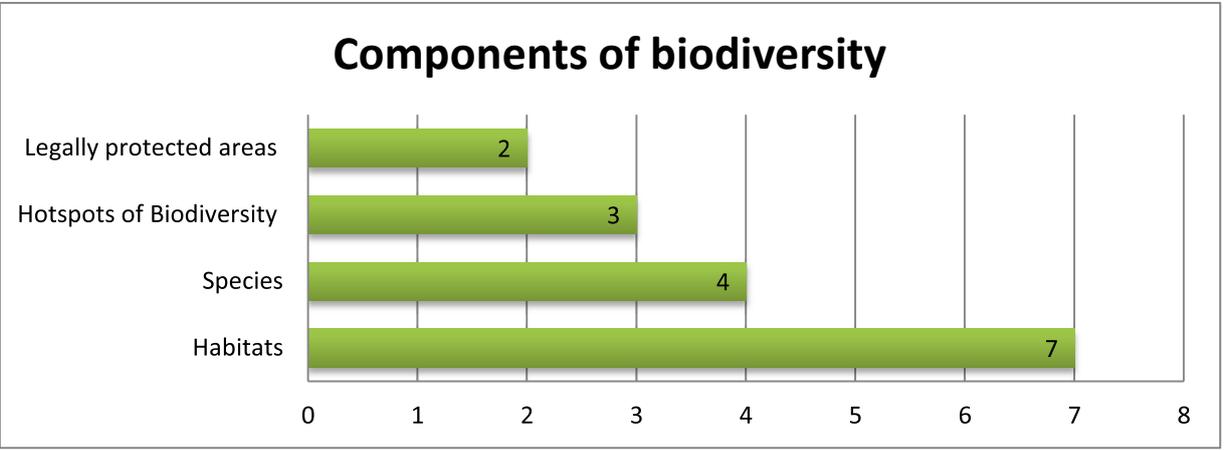
**4.2.1.1 Causes of loss of biodiversity**

Degradation/destruction of ecosystems was the most frequently mentioned cause of biodiversity loss, followed by overexploitation of resources and pollution and climate change. The spread of invasive alien species was only mentioned once as a main cause of the loss of biodiversity. The graph shows the number of awards which included at least one mention of each cause of the loss of biodiversity.



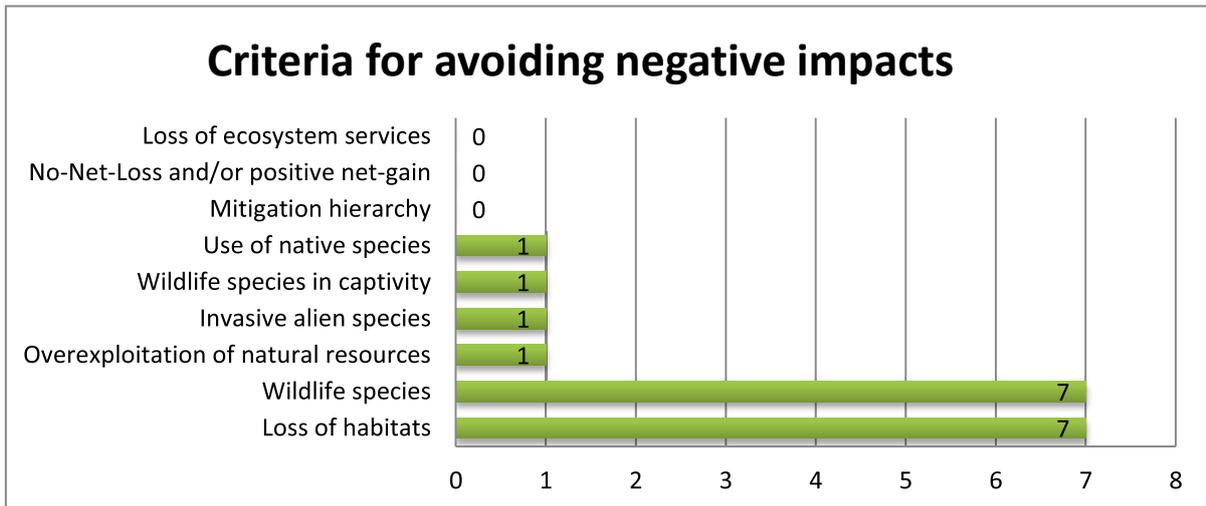
**4.2.1.2 Components of biodiversity**

In most cases there were references made to habitats (or "ecosystems and biomes"). The IUCN "Red List of Threatened Species" was also mentioned several times as well as hotspots of biodiversity if they were not protected by law. Protected areas such as Natura 2000 and national parks were less frequently referred to.



### 4.2.1.3 Criteria for avoiding negative impacts

The criteria aimed at avoiding negative impacts on biodiversity cited most frequently were those taking action against the loss of habitats and habitat restoration, together with criteria on the protection of wildlife. There were mentions (though infrequent) of criteria for the sustainable use of resources; addressing the spread of invasive species and promoting the use of native species; and also the handling of wild animals in captivity.



No references were found to the retention of ecosystem services.

There were no references found to the concepts of mitigation hierarchy and No-Net-Loss/Positive Net Gain. Only one mention was made of a long-term strategy.

### 4.2.1.4 International conventions and actions related to biodiversity

There was only one explicit mention of an international convention (Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB)). CITES and Ramsar Convention were occasionally referred to though not mentioned explicitly.

### 4.2.1.5 Specific category for biodiversity

40% of the 10 awards analysed included a specific category for biodiversity protection.

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## 4.3 Feedback from the ground – survey of tourism businesses

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### 4.3.1 Biodiversity: understanding and recent actions

When discussing the **understanding of biodiversity**, species diversity and protection of species were the concepts which came up most frequently, followed by landscape conservation. Biodiversity was rarely understood as a basic element of ecosystem services. Accommodation establishments also named organic products and the regional origin of raw materials as important aspects of biodiversity. The evaluation indicates that larger companies have a wider and more marked understanding of biodiversity and the role of ecosystem services that extended beyond simple knowledge of species and landscape conservation.

Nearly all representatives deem their **company's/sector's commitment** to biodiversity to be very high. With regard to the measures that have already been implemented, the survey showed that large and medium sized enterprises often work to raise customer awareness (through flyers, local prohibition of certain activities, knowledge transfer, tours through conservation areas). Moreover, cost savings and efficiency measures for waste and water, as well as measures for species conservation (insect hotels, hives etc.), were listed. The companies implement these measures either themselves or in cooperation with NGOs.

Companies justified their interest in biodiversity as being based on their dependency on unspoilt nature, since the value of an intact environment is an elementary component of the companies' economic success. Consequently, almost half of the respondents explained their environmental commitment by the need to preserve their destinations and to gain a competitive advantage due to more attractive natural surroundings. With reference to carrying capacities, the companies also consider the risks for destinations. Nevertheless, their commitment is largely driven by the opportunities they associate with the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

#### **4.3.2 Biodiversity in standards and awards**

The respondents examined the list of environmental management standards as described in the methodology. The awareness of standards and certifications appears to be relatively balanced. The classic environmental management systems like EMAS III and ISO 14001 are ranked top, followed by TourCert, Green Globe, and Viabono. In addition, the Travel Life Award, Blue Flag (limited to bathing destinations) and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria were mentioned. Occasionally the Bayrische Umweltsiegel was mentioned (since Bavaria is not included in Viabono), as were ISO 26000 and the European Ecolabel for tourist accommodation and camp site services. EETLS was not mentioned at all. Several representatives criticized the number of different standards and expressed their wish for a "meta-label" which would cover all aspects of biodiversity. The bottom line is that the respondents did not favour any one management system, although the most importance was attached to EMAS and ISO 14001 as classic environmental management systems and to TourCert as an up-and-coming CSR standard.

The respondents also considered a list of awards as well as being requested to suggest others they had heard of. The most noted awards were the Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitspreis, the Deutsche Tourismuspreis, the Bundeswettbewerb Nachhaltige Tourismusdestination followed by the German CSR-Award and the Fahrtziel-Natur-Award. Less well known were the Ecotrophea-Awards and the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. The EDEN-Award, the Goldene Palme, the Grüne Palme, the European CSR Award, the Ecotourism Award and the Travel One Nachhaltigkeitspreis were each only mentioned once.

The survey reveals that the big German awards hold the most importance since they lead the popularity rating. The accompanying increase in prestige of the award winners thereby plays a central and primary role, largely due to the high level of national awareness of these awards. Further responses concerning the awards were highly heterogeneous: many more awards were mentioned which underpins the statement that too many awards already exist.

The answers regarding a **sufficient consideration of biodiversity in standards and awards** were also highly heterogeneous. Additionally, many interviewees pointed out that they were not aware of the standard / award criteria and the categories of questions in detail. It generally appears that the majority believe this issue has not yet been given enough consideration. In particular, the awards should place a stronger emphasis on biodiversity. In

that context, one interviewee proposed establishing their own biodiversity award. This suggestion was opposed by the majority of the representatives because they already felt overwhelmed by the number of quality standards and awards. In addition, multiple representatives emphasized that no further criteria and categories of questions should be added even if biodiversity becomes more entrenched in standards and awards. Lengthy questionnaires can be overwhelming for companies. Despite the fact that the responders acknowledge that biodiversity plays an important role in the tourism sector, most representatives instead declared social aspects – especially human rights – to be a higher priority. Consequently, they felt that quality standards and awards should focus even more on this topic.

### **4.3.3 Demand for information and information brokering**

Fundamentally it can be said that a demand for information on biodiversity exists in the tourism sector. General information about the importance of biodiversity was requested, as was information about impacts on the sector resulting from the loss of biodiversity. The respondents further requested practical guidance and examples as well as information on key data and indicators of biodiversity. Regardless of the size of the company, the majority businesses as well as the associations expressed interest in additional tourism-specific information on biodiversity. As a key requirement, the representatives made clear that information must be kept as understandable and compact as possible (e.g. checklists of two or three pages). The tour operators in particular requested concrete and detailed information both on the state of biodiversity and on the possibilities for biodiversity protection at the specific destinations (e.g. in form of data bases).

When asked for the **company's activity areas/departments with the highest need for information on biodiversity**, the representatives mostly answered with "strategies and management". Marketing and purchase also seemed to be important functional areas. Several representatives pointed out that the need for information cannot be linked selectively with one department but rather applies to the entire company.

Both businesses and associations underlined that it is very rare for clients or members to ask for information about biodiversity. Biodiversity appears to play a bigger role within the company itself and in the context of sustainability reporting and stakeholder dialogues.

The representatives mainly inform themselves about biodiversity online through Google searches. They do not want to expend a lot of effort researching information on biodiversity. NGOS serve as another important source of information. Many interviewees use existing contacts and partnerships with NGOs.

In general, the responders ask for **more means of accessing information on biodiversity** but for the most part are not willing to pay for professional services. Expert meetings (of a maximum length of half a day) and webinars are the preferred means of increasing knowledge about biodiversity issues.

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## **4.4 Results from workshop**

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Feedback from the expert workshop in Berlin in March 2013 backed up many of the points brought up in questionnaire.

As described in the methodology, a workshop for standard organisations and experts was organised during the ITB in Berlin in March 2014. The draft results and conclusions of the baseline report were presented and discussed.

Workshop participants in general expressed their support for a higher consideration of biodiversity in standards and awards. They support the inclusion of criteria to protect biodiversity in standards. They would like criteria included in a clear and practical manner. Participants stated that future work should consider the leverage of individual criteria and concentrate mainly on those which can provide greatest benefits for biodiversity. These should be illustrated with examples and figures in order to make them clearer. Some considered that given the need for monitoring compliance with standards, it is not possible to include everything. Standards with criteria on indirect aspects are more challenging to fulfill and to verify than those who focus only on the obvious impacts.

There was discussion about the different possibilities available to different parts of the tourism sector. It was pointed out there are recommendations for the standard policy for all types of standards, but recommendations for criteria might be different depending on the target group the standard is focussing on (e.g. criteria for hotels might be different to those for destinations). Some participants believed that hotels had more leverage in terms of their effects on biodiversity through their catering than through their accommodation. The possible effects of souvenirs, leisure options and management of premises were also mentioned.

Some aspects were considered difficult for hotels to manage themselves e.g. the concept of no-net-loss. It was pointed out that where different parts of the sector work together on capacity building, they could achieve more. Other participants stressed that all sectors had a part to play and hotels could raise awareness with guests and for example grow their own food. It was however pointed out that this was potentially more difficult for inner-city hotels and those that are close to biodiversity hotspots were perhaps best placed for raising awareness.

One participant suggested the elaboration of a biodiversity action plan would be a good basis for action for all wishing to be included in a standard though others thought this might be too challenging. As with the survey, participants recommended working together with local experts and NGOs in order to improve knowledge of biodiversity and to assure the quality of actions such as a biodiversity action plan or compensation measures.

A point was raised, backed up by several participants, that big rating systems that do not have environmental measures as their primary focus, do have a strong negative influence regarding the environmental performance of hotels e.g. the DEHOGA star system (which requires fridges in rooms for a high rating) or ADAC. All participants agreed that the star rating system and others should be improved to avoid being counterproductive regarding sustainability. Furthermore they should include explicit components of environmental quality as part of the measure of overall quality. Large suppliers for hotels and camp sites are also an important target group. They are delivering key products to most of the hotels or camp sites and by improving the environmental quality and biodiversity performance of these products, the impact across the whole sector would be high.

## 5 Conclusions

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### 5.1 General points from the policy document screening and stakeholder feedback

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Review of the policy documents from the standards and awards showed that both tend to concentrate on destruction of ecosystems followed by overexploitation of natural resources as the main causes of biodiversity loss. Feedback from the interviews with tourism operators suggested that these areas were also the ones they were most aware of. There is much less focus on Invasive Alien Species perhaps because this issue has risen up the political agenda more recently.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the point above, the focus for avoiding negative impacts tends to be on traditional measures to avoid destruction of habitats and species such as protected areas, measures to protect specific habitats and species and biodiversity hotspots. New initiatives to tackle biodiversity loss received little mention e.g. No-Net-Loss or the mitigation hierarchy. Again this may be due to their newness and the fact that the EU is currently developing policy in this area. Standards did however generally require the integration of biodiversity in businesses process as part of an environmental management system.

More surprisingly, given their key importance to tourism and the wide acceptance of the concept, there was little specific mention made of ecosystem services with both standards and awards preferring to focus on the ecosystems themselves. Tourism operators also rarely understood biodiversity as being the basis for ecosystem services. None-the-less, the reasons companies gave for engaging with biodiversity issues generally included a realisation that they depend on the benefits provided by biodiversity. They also believed it could give them a competitive advantage.

Neither standards nor awards often referred to international conventions. CITES and the Ramsar Convention were occasionally referred to. Surprisingly, the CBD received only one mention.

Feedback from the survey and workshop suggests that biodiversity is seen as an issue in the tourism sector (in particular with relation to species and landscape conservation). The importance of an undamaged natural environment has been acknowledged and operators are willing to implement measures to preserve biodiversity. Respondents had clear views on where they could currently take action and where they felt there were barriers to participation.

Nonetheless, a holistic consideration of biodiversity going beyond single actions is still missing in most cases. In particular, respondents to the survey remark a lack of information on and awareness of biodiversity when it comes to strategy and management decisions. Often clear goals and action to manage biodiversity along the whole value chain are missing. The majority of the representatives responding to the survey support a stronger integration of biodiversity into CSR standards and awards. They ask for more sector-specific information on biodiversity, but specify that it has to be easy to understand, concrete, and practical without being cost- and time-intensive for the users.

## 5.2 Conclusions from the screening of the criteria

The table below shows the conclusions drawn from the screening of the standards criteria. This concentrates on the content of the standard requirements more than the analysis carried out of their quality. As shown in the results, standards on the whole were considered transparent and verifiable and most were requirements rather than optional actions. However, their effectiveness in terms of their actual impacts on biodiversity was not always clear.

Awards could not be screened in the same way as very few provided a catalogue of the criteria the jury used to evaluate the candidates. Workshop feedback suggested that criteria were not published in order to allow awards to make adjustments and include new ideas in different years. However, it would be more open and clearer if such an overview were available. Awards could consider the conclusions below relating to standards and whether some of these could be included as criteria when assessing applicants for awards.

### Key

	Shows where the results are relevant to either accommodation, tour operators / travel agencies or destinations
	Shows where the results are of even greater relevance to this sector.

Conclusions from the screening of standards	Valid for standards for		
	Accommodation	Tour operators/ Travel-Agency	Destination
⇒ <b>Conclusions</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒
Concrete criteria have been developed for the design of premises / outdoor facilities in a more wildlife-friendly way and for the protection of soils. However, criteria for the protection of ecosystems at the destination level are vaguer and left open for interpretation. None of the standards defines no-go areas (e.g. no tourism development in natural ecosystems).			
Even locally or regionally produced products			

<p>can still have a negative impact on biodiversity. Therefore standards should always require local or regional products to be of a certified environmental quality e.g. organic.</p>			
<p>There are no demands for companies or destinations to describe the initial condition of the site before they begin development. This is however essential, in order to evaluate any impact on the ecosystem.</p>			
<p>Most of the standards do not require working together with local experts in order to a) describe the initial condition of the site, b) develop monitoring of the effects of the development on biodiversity.</p>			
<p>Only one standard requires regular monitoring of the development of ecosystems, protected areas and species in the destination.</p>			
<p>Various international standards include the criteria "The business contributes to the support of biodiversity conservation ...". This is positive, but it would be even better, if standards included quantitative requirements so that claims could be compared and checked (e.g. compensation of land used, % of volume of sales/guests). A quantitative requirement would also allow comparison of the contribution with other options.</p> <p>In general, all companies and destinations should be motivated to compensate for any unavoidable impact on biodiversity by supporting initiatives to protect biodiversity.</p>			

Loss of species	Accommodation	Travel Agency	Destination
⇒ <b>Conclusions</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒
Most of the international standards assume that legislation or management plans exist and they ask for compliance with these (e.g. wildlife in captivity). In some countries and regions, management plans for protected areas do not exist or legislation is too weak to protect habitats and species. Even in the European Union there are many Natura 2000 sites without management plans still. Standards should take this into consideration in their criteria and require companies and/or destinations to use their influence to encourage and support the elaboration and implementation of management plans.			
Experts worldwide agree that species like dolphins and orcas cannot be maintained in conditions appropriate to their species in captivity. Even if it is legal, standards should demand that certified companies/destinations do not to support these kinds of wildlife spectacles for example by banning visits to dolphinariums.			
In order to prove that wildlife species are only harvested in a sustainable way, long-term objective monitoring is required. This is not, however, required by the standards.			
Only one standard explicitly prohibits the use of products which are potentially damaging in terms of their effects on species and habitats. All standards should include such a criterion. Since the lists of endangered animal and plant species changes, the standards should keep these lists up to date on the internet. They should be elaborated in collaboration with IUCN Focal Points.			
Besides recreational activities, food and furnishing, souvenirs should also be considered in standards (e.g. prohibition of the use of species whose trade has been banned by the CITES International			

Convention (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)).			
Many standards refer to locally or regionally produced products without considering their impact on agro-biodiversity. Standards could and should support the conservation of traditional varieties of cultivated crops and livestock.			

Overuse of natural resources	Accommodation	Travel agency	Destination
⇒ <b>Conclusions</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒
<p>Climate Change is one of the five main drivers of loss of biodiversity. Therefore, measures for the mitigation of climate change also help protect biodiversity. Standards include criteria on reduction of energy consumption and use of renewable energy. Only few standards refer to the impact of transportation and none of the analysed standards requires CO<sup>2</sup> compensation.</p>			
<p>While many of the analysed standards include measures to reduce water use, none includes criteria to guarantee the sustainability of water sources (surface or ground water). It is difficult for individual companies to assess if the water sources are used in a responsible way. However, companies/destinations should use their influence to encourage responsible administrations to implement sound management plans and sound monitoring to guarantee the sustainable use of water sources. This is especially important in regions with water shortages and because of the impacts of climate change.</p>			
<p>Included in the overexploitation of natural resources, the overuse of land surface and habitats due to tourism should be considered. One of the methodologies that can be used to avoid overexploitation is determining the carrying capacity of a destination, protected area or area of high conservation value.</p> <p>The responsible administration should incorporate the carrying capacity estimation into their planning policies and management plans. Companies and destinations should use their influence to require the sound definition of the carrying capacity of an ecosystem/area/destination.</p>			

<b>Control of Invasive Alien Species</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Travel agency</b>	<b>Destination</b>
⇒ <b>Conclusions</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒
All criteria refer to encouraging the use of native species (rather than non-natives) when designing premises/outdoor facilities. This is an important point for the protection of the biodiversity of an area. Standards should also motivate companies and destinations to promote use of native species as well as removal of non-native invasive species when restoring ecosystems in the whole region.			
<b>Community involvement and benefits sharing</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Travel agency</b>	<b>Destination</b>
⇒ <b>Conclusions</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒
The local population is often in control of the preservation of the landscape (particularly the cultural landscape) and so for the conservation of habitats and species. This is important natural capital for tourism.  Some standards include criteria on the support of traditional agriculture and crafts. This is one possibility for supporting the local population. Other possibilities include training of locals to become qualified nature guides, etc.			

<b>General Conclusions</b>	<b>Valid for Standards for</b>		
<b>Capacity Building</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Travel agency</b>	<b>Destination</b>
Most of the standards do not define terms related to biodiversity and do not include references to official definitions or own definitions (e.g. protected areas, sensitive areas, endangered species).			
International standards in particular often			

<p>require that legal standards be met. But standards should require more than just not breaking the law. That a company/destination complies with legislation should be self-evident and not sufficient to be certified.</p>			
<p>Much awareness raising is necessary to make companies and destinations aware of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and to increase the attention paid to biodiversity protection. It is especially challenging to make companies and destinations understand that their indirect impacts on biodiversity are also of importance and should be continuously reduced (e.g. purchase/supply chain). Standards should illustrate the direct and indirect impacts with concrete case studies.</p>			
<p>Biodiversity protection is complex. Standard organisations should provide assistance for their certified companies in fully achieving the criteria. This includes continued capacity building; a knowledge-sharing pool with information on "High Conservation Value Areas", protected species, invasive alien species, local/regional environmental organizations, IUCN Focal Points, easy-to-use checklists for companies, etc.</p>			
<p>In the field of biodiversity a number of developments have occurred and new findings should be considered in the standards. Since the revision of criteria normally occurs over a longer period of time, new findings should be integrated into capacity building and knowledge pools in order to inform companies about the state of the art.</p>			

Verifiability	Accommodation	Travel Agency	Destination
<p>The verifiability is both a prerequisite and a challenge for all standards. What can the auditors do? Can they judge whether an ecosystem is intact or worthy of protection? The auditor cannot be an expert on biodiversity for all regions, but they can be an expert in assessing the quality of processes. Consequently, standards – in particular international ones – should primarily require clear processes and methods for the management of biodiversity.</p> <p>Efficient management includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the initial condition (baseline)</li> <li>• Identification of direct and indirect influences</li> <li>• Setting priorities (e.g. protection of water or a particular species)</li> <li>• Setting measurable goals and actions (action plan)</li> <li>• Setting indicators and procedures for monitoring (e.g. size of natural areas plus a few key indicator species, continuous checking, input from experts)</li> <li>• Integration of stakeholders (e.g. conservation authorities, nature conservation organizations, local communities, scientific institutions)</li> </ul> <p>Negative impacts of companies on biodiversity does not stop at the borders of the operational areas, they also affect adjacent and connected habitats and areas.</p> <p>Biodiversity is also a new issue for auditors and certifiers and they need capacity building in this challenging field of activity. Furthermore they should collaborate with local /regional experts on biodiversity such as environmental NGOs, scientific institutions and nature protection administrations.</p>			

Monitoring	Accommodation	Travel Agency	Destination
<p>In most standards the description of the initial condition (baseline) is not required. However, recording of the status quo is a requirement for the implementation of criteria, for example when high conservation value areas need to be identified or an action plans should be developed. In addition, the positive effect of criteria can only be assessed if the status quo is described and monitoring takes place.</p> <p>The question is to what level of detail the original situation must be recorded in order to be meaningful while at the same time not overwhelming the company or destination. Standards should at least require the mapping of the habitats on the premises and adjacent areas. Companies in or adjacent to protected areas or "High Conservation Value Areas" should also record animal and plant species, which have been classified by the State as a protected species or have been listed on the IUCN Red List.</p> <p>The effects of measures on biodiversity can often only be determined in the medium or long-term. In addition, other factors play a role that cannot be controlled by the company. Long-term monitoring is therefore necessary. Instead of each company setting up monitoring separately, the standard organization should suggest that all certified companies in the region set up a single monitoring system.</p> <p>Monitoring their impact on biodiversity is a challenge for all standard organisations and therefore a task that organisations should implement together. A monitoring system at regional scale and backed by different standards would be more meaningful and cost effective.</p>			

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## 7 Glossary

**Access and Benefit Sharing:** Goal of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that seeks the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources.

**Biodiversity:** the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems (according to CBD)

**Biodiversity Hotspot:** Regions of high biodiversity and a high percentage of endemic flora and fauna that are especially endangered and are a protection priority. To be a biodiversity hotspot, a region must be home to 1500 endemic species of fauna (=0,5% of global plant species) and must have lost over 70% of its original size (according to Conservation International).

**Ecosystem:** means a dynamic complex of plant, animal and microorganism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (according to CBD)

**Ecosystem services:** The direct and indirect contributions of ecosystems to human wellbeing. The concept “ecosystem goods and services” is synonymous with ecosystem services (according to TEEB)

**High Conservation Areas:** natural habitats, which are of outstanding significance or critical importance due to their high environmental, socioeconomic, biodiversity or landscape values (according to Forest Stewardship Council; FSC, WWF)

**Invasive Species:** Non-native species that have detrimental effects on other species, biotopes and habitats (German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, BfN).

**Mitigation hierarchy:** A framework that enables businesses to manage environmental impacts across different phases of a particular project cycle. The mitigation hierarchy includes the following sequential actions: avoidance, minimization, rehabilitation/restoration, offset (IUCN).

**No Net Loss:** No Net Loss implies no biodiversity losses whereas Net Positive Impact corresponds to a gain in biodiversity. The mitigation hierarchy is a valid framework for companies to adopt to achieve No Net Loss or Net Positive Impact (IUCN).

**Offset:** Measures taken to compensate, in a like-for-like (or better) fashion, for any residual significant adverse impacts that cannot be avoided or minimized, in order to achieve no net loss or a net gain of biodiversity.

**Sustainable Use:** means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations (according to CBD)

**Protected Areas:** means a geographically defined area that is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives (according to CBD)

**UN Convention on Biological Diversity:** (CBD) in 1992 ratified treaty signed by over 190 states creating the central framework for biodiversity. The convention has three main objectives namely: protection of biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity, and access and benefit sharing.

## 8 Annexes

### 8.1 Standards analysed

Standards
EU Ecolabel für Hotels
Blue Flag
Österreichisches Umweltzeichen
Beherbung
Gastronomie
Reiseangebote
Schutzhütten
EcoRomania
Tourismusbetriebe
Touoperators
European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS)
Bayerisches Umweltgütesiegel für das Gastgewerbe
CSR-Tourism
BioHotels
Travelife Awards
Tourismusbetriebe
Touoperators
Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria
Tourismusbetriebe
Destinationen
VIABONO, Germany
Beherbung
Campingplätze
Alpine Pearls
ECEAT Quality Label, Europe
EIFEL - Qualität ist unsere Natur, Germany
Green Globe Certification
Nachhaltige Tourismusdestinationen Baden-Württemberg
Global Reporting Initiative
Tripadvisor

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## 8.2 Awards analysed

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Awards
Green Apple Award
EDEN European Destinations of Excellence Award
Green travel List
Tourism for Tomorrow Awards
Travel+Leisure Global Vision Awards
VESTAS Awards
World Saver Awards
Award for Green Heritage Sites
Green Globe Certification Highest Achievement Award
Deutscher Tourismuspreis (German Tourism Award)
Ecotrophea award
Fahrtziel Natur-Award
Goldene Palme
Green Planet Award, Kuoni
Skål International Ecotourism Awards
TO DO! International Contest Socially Responsible Tourism
TUI Umwelt Champion
The First Choice Sustainable Tourism Awards
World Travel Awards
Australian Hotels Association (AHA) National Awards For Excellence
Australian Tourism Awards
Brolga Northern Territory Tourism Awards
CIPRA's Future in the Alps Competition
CTO/Travelmole Award
Canberra and Capital Region Tourism Awards
Clean Beaches Awards program
Corporate Register Reporting Award
Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitspreis - German Sustainability Award
Green Events Austria- Sportlich zur Nachhaltigkeit

### 8.3 Stakeholder workshop, ITB Berlin 6 March 2014 – participant list

Name	Organisation
Balas, Martin	Bundeswettbewerb Nachhaltige Tourismusregionen
Balssen, Gesa	Ecotrophea Award
Becker, Antje	DER Touristik
Beißert, Helge	VIABONO
Bürglen, Kathrin Werbeck, Inga- M.	Fahrtziel Natur-Award
Carceller, Elia	adelphi
Dunkelberg, Dirk	Deutscher Tourismuspreis (German Tourism Award)
Engels, Barbara	BfN
Fichtl, Otto /	Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism
Gruber, Ludwig	Biohotels
Hamele, Herbert	Ecotrans
Hammerl, Marion	Ecotrans
Heike Friedrich-Hölscher	Partnerbetriebe Nationale Naturlandschaften
Hörmann, Stefan	Global Nature Fund
Kusters, Naut	Travelife & ECEAT Quality Label
Marsden, Katrina	adelphi
Regina Preslmair	Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism
Rein, Hartmut	Bundeswettbewerb Nachhaltige Tourismusregionen
Reiner, Karl	Alpine Pearls
Robert Lorenz	Green Key International, Blue Flag
Rushmore, Jenny	Tripadvisor - Green Leaders Programme
Salman, Albert	QualityCoast & GSTR for Destinations
Szczesinski, Anja	WWF Deutschland
Toegel, Florian	CSR Tourism, Sustainability Check for Destinations in Baden-Württemberg
Walter, Marco	Ecocamping
Weiss, Daniel	adelphi
Xaviel Lechien	EDEN Network
Zimmer, Peter	Green Globe Certification