

## Tourism and Biodiversity

# ECOTRANS presents recommendations for sustainability labels and awards for the German tourism sector

Saarbrücken, the 05th of December 2014

**More than 20 international and national labels and awards of sustainable tourism in Germany could considerably improve their standards concerning biodiversity and consequently boost their contribution to the promotion of species diversity. The provided recommendations highlight in detail how responsible tourism companies, destinations and tour operators can make a difference.**

The indicator report 2014 of the Federal Statistical Office on “Sustainable Development in Germany” reveals that the topic of species diversity lags far behind targets, with an increase in recreational activities e.g. along coastal regions, aggravating the threat to ecosystems. (1). Simultaneously the tourism sector in Germany has a range of opportunities to mitigate such threats and to contribute to the strengthening of biodiversity in coastal regions and mountainous areas, in the countryside as well as in urban environments. In this regard, the 20+ national and international certificates and awards for environmental responsible and sustainable tourism can leverage their influence across a host of stakeholders in Germany that seek such recognition, e.g. companies, destinations and tour operators. By strengthening their biodiversity criteria, these labels and awards could give much needed orientation for thousands of tourism providers and in doing so fulfil their responsibility in supporting sustainable development in general and species diversity in particular (2).

### **Which biodiversity criteria should be integrated into label and award schemes?**

To point organisers of labels and awards in the right direction, the European network of experts ECOTRANS in cooperation with Global Nature Fund and consulting firm Adelphi has published hands-on recommendations. The project was 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).

Accordingly, the standard organisations should:

- clearly define their terms in the field of action with regards to biodiversity
- strive to cover all fundamental aspects of biodiversity with their criteria
- follow the no-net-loss target
- determine their impacts on biodiversity
- and offer training for certifiers and certified organisations on biodiversity



The main part of the recommendations provides three lists for certification of companies, destinations and tour operators, respectively. Each list covers both priority as well as auxiliary recommendations, which should be integrated by the standard organisations into their catalogue of criteria for certificates or assessment. The recommendations relate to legal compliance in the context of nature and biodiversity protection, but also go beyond regulations.

In order to support participating standard organisations, a workshop for national and international certifiers and auditors will be offered in January 2015. With appropriate integration of the recommendations their certified and awarded hotels and campsites, destinations and tour operators will be included in a “green travel map”.

### **Publication:**

#### **Integration of biodiversity into CRS processes in the tourism industry**

**Biodiversity criteria in tourism: Recommendations for standards, labels and awards** ([Download: PDF, 700 KB](#))

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- 1) Federal Statistical Office, Sustainable Development in Germany, 2014, Pages 16-17 (German version) ([Download \(PDF\)](#))
  - 2) Integration of biodiversity into CRS processes in the tourism industry ([Download \(PDF\)](#))