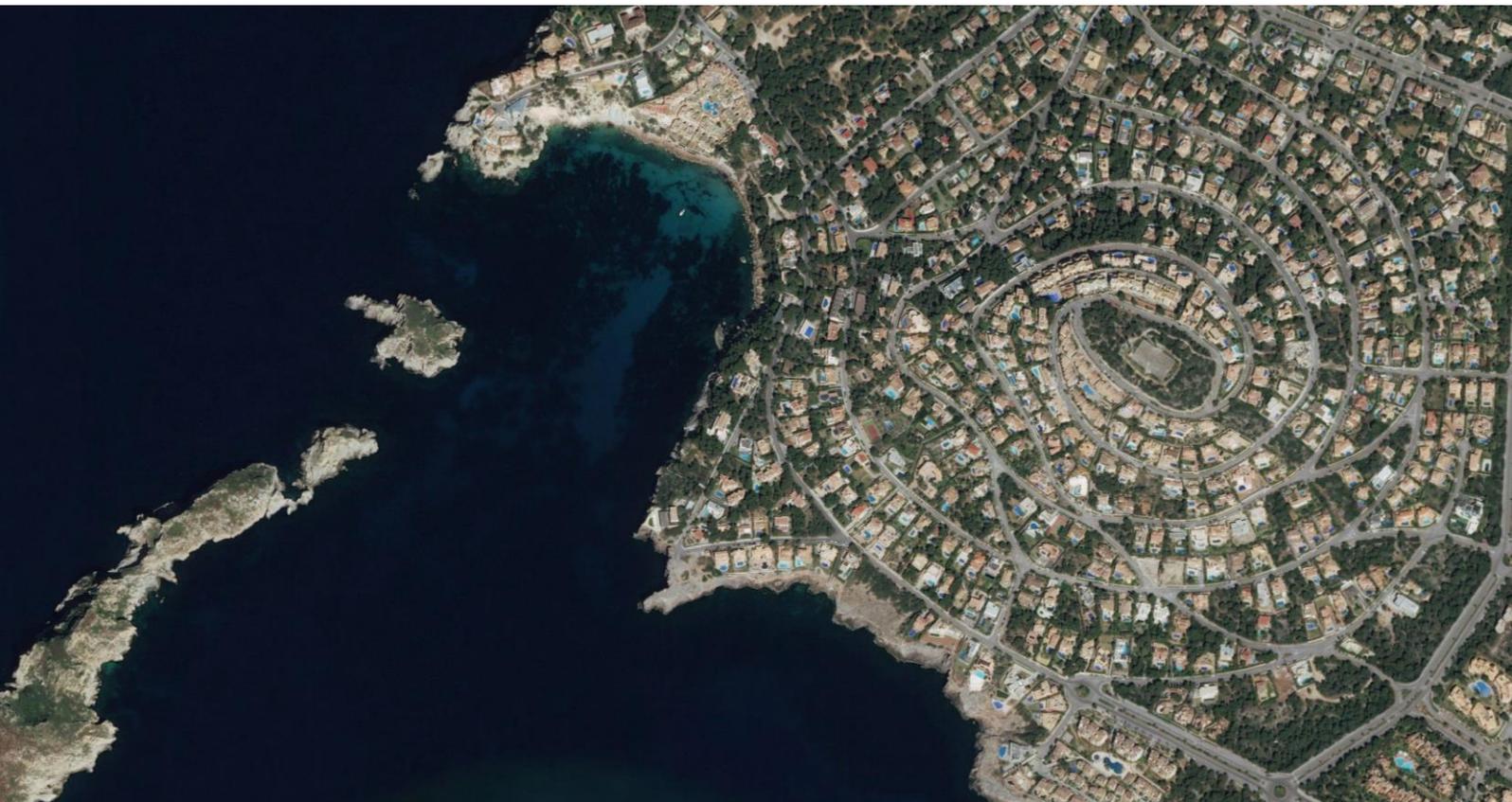


Tourism and the environment

Towards a reporting mechanism in Europe



ANNEX 15. Indicator assessment TOUR009

Tourism certification tools (1). Enterprises



Cover design: ETC/ULS

Cover photo: Coastal urbanisation in Mallorca (Spain), © Bing Maps

Layout: Francesc Romagosa (ETC/ULS)

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Indicator name: TOUR009 – Tourism certification tools (1). Enterprises

Assessment

Indicator name

TOUR009a - Percentage of tourism enterprises using environmental certification / labelling (Ecolabel)

TOUR009b - Percentage of tourism enterprises using environmental certification / labelling (EMAS)

Key policy question

Are tourism companies more environmentally responsible?

Key message

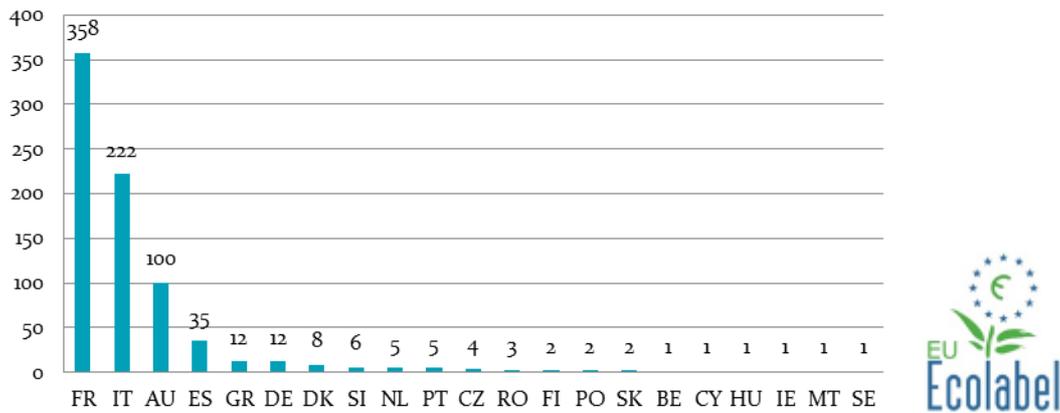
Environmental certification or labelling in the tourism sector is one of the ways to assess the extent to which enterprises (especially in the tourist accommodation subsector) are actively incorporating sustainability principles into their operations and whether they are involved in recognised (or qualified) eco-certification programmes and sustainability reporting procedures. An increase in the percentage of certified/labelled tourism enterprises will mean a more generalised commitment towards environmental management on behalf of the tourism sector in particular, and destinations and countries in general.

Key assessment

As far as the eco-labelling sector is concerned, Europe has far more “green” certification programmes than any other region of the world. Eco-labelling is used for all types of tourism suppliers in the region, which show a great diversity of characteristics and operating conditions. However, many are showing limited effectiveness in terms of significant cost savings and increased consumer demand. Accordingly, the challenge is now to provide more coherence and increase confidence in labelled services and products. To this effect, EU-funded projects such as VISIT and ECOLNET have been working to achieve agreement with leading initiatives on standards, criteria and indicators for effective eco-labels and ecotourism services in Europe, in order to contribute to a genuine conservation and sustainability effort.

Although there are many different types of Ecolabels for the tourism sector that can be found in Europe, the European Commission has promoted a common Ecolabel for the tourism accommodation sector in Europe, the so-called EU Ecolabel, which has also been implemented in other industries. The implementation of the EU Ecolabel for tourist accommodation services and campsites (the two categories created by the European Commission specifically for the tourism sector) has been growing since its creation in 2003. However, in April 2016 there were a total of 782 tourist accommodation establishments and campsites awarded with the EU Ecolabel, according to DG ENV registers. This is equivalent to 0.14% of the total number of tourist accommodation establishments in Europe (570,268 establishments). Moreover, there is an uneven distribution of certifications throughout Europe (most of these certifications are concentrated in only a few countries, i.e. France, Italy, Austria, and to a lesser extent, Spain).

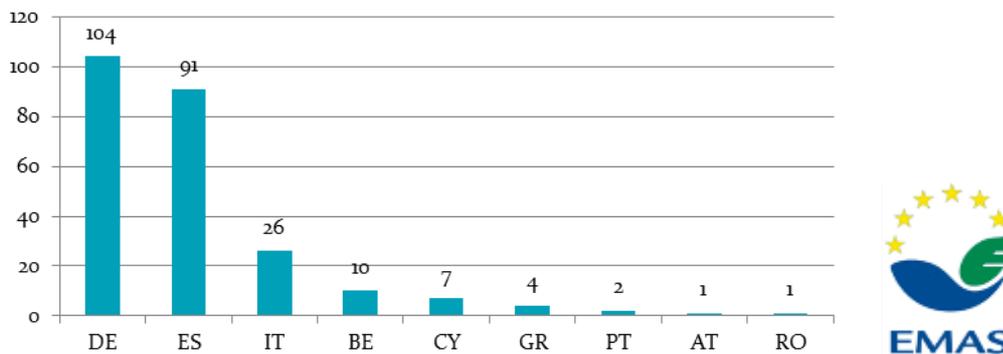
Number of tourism accommodation establishments awarded the EU Ecolabel, 2016



Source: Own elaboration from data provided by the European Commission.

In the case of the implementation of the EMAS certification (EU environmental management system) in the tourist accommodation sector, numbers are even lower than for the EU Ecolabel. The European Commission (DG ENV) reported 236 tourist accommodation establishments registered with the EMAS system throughout Europe in May 2016 (including hotels, campsites, and other types of short-stay accommodation), meaning a 0.04% of the total number of European tourist accommodation establishments. Again, this number is also concentrated in only three countries (Germany, Spain, and Italy), while six other countries have very few registered tourist accommodation establishments.

Number of tourism accommodation establishments with EMAS, 2016



Source: Own elaboration from data provided by the European Commission.

Specific policy question

Do tourists prefer spending nights in the least environmental impacts accommodations forms?
How can tourism help protect the environment?

Specific assessment

Available data so far do not allow answering the previous questions. In order to answer the first question, a specific survey should be carried out. Regarding the second one, it is generally considered that environmental and sustainability certification and labelling in the tourism sector can be very useful tools to enhance the environmental performance and contribute to improve the environmental quality of a tourism destination.

Specifications

Indicator definition

There are two subindicators: 1) Percentage of tourist accommodation enterprises certified with the EU Eco-label for tourist accommodations and campsites (TOUR009a); and 2) Percentage of tourist accommodation enterprises certified with the EMAS environmental management system (TOUR009b).

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Rationale

Environmental certification or labelling in the tourism sector is one of the ways to assess the extent to which enterprises (especially in the tourist accommodation subsector) are actively incorporating sustainability principles into their operations and if they are involved in recognised (or qualified) eco-certification programmes and sustainability reporting procedures.

Policy context

EC and national policies on tourism, environment and sustainable tourism.

Methodology for indicator calculation

Data is provided by DG ENV (European Commission).

Data specifications

Data is provided by DG ENV (European Commission).

Ownership and contacts

DG ENV, ETC/ULS.

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