

How sound certification programs can help to protect biodiversity

*Challenges and opportunities
in the sustainable tourism sector*

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Nature Tourism



Worldwide

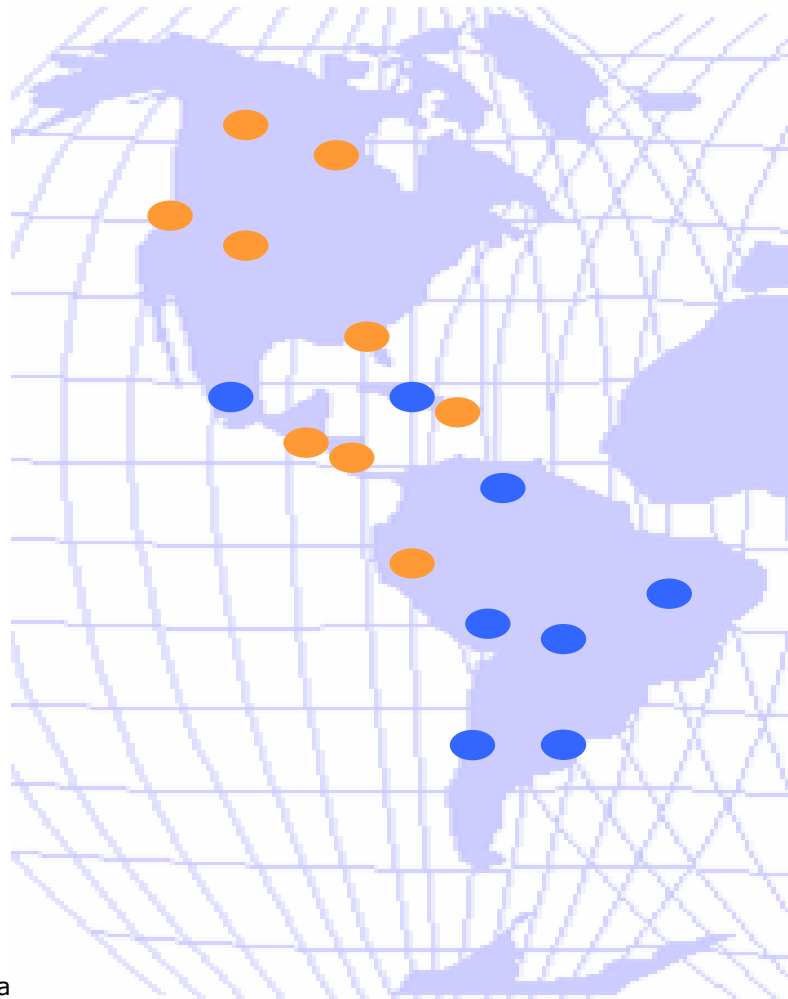
- In 1992, between 40% - 60% of tourists participated in nature tourism activities.
- In 2004, nature tourism grew **3 times faster** than the industry as a whole.
- Tourism to **biodiversity hotspot countries** has increased by more than **100%** between 1990 and 2000.

From Mexico to the Patagonia: Nature and Culture Based Tourism is being Promoted

- **Guatemala:** “... Soul of the Earth”
- **Belize:** "Mother Nature's Best Kept Secret“
- **Costa Rica:** “No artificial ingredients”
- **Panama:** “...the path less traveled”
- **Peru:** “Land of the Inkas”
- **Ecuador:** “Life at its purest“
- **Chile:** “Nature that moves your soul”
- **Uruguay:** “A natural country”



Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas



- **Consolidated**
- **In development**

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Network's Baseline Criteria

- Compliance with legislation
- Resource consumption (water, energy)
- Waste disposal / pollution
- Biodiversity conservation
- "Green" and local purchasing
- Community development
- Respect local cultures
- Working conditions
- Environmental education
- Responsible marketing



Sustainable Tourism Certification



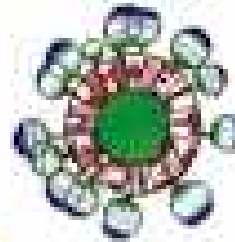
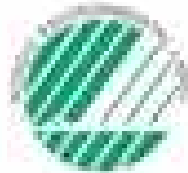
DENGRØNNENØGLE



Ecolabel



ECCO ACCREDITATION TOURISM



THE HALLMARK OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HOTELS



Challenges in Certification

Marketing

- False claims.
- Confusion between tourism certification and other tourism awards and endorsements.
- Consumer confusion about number and variety of certification seals in the marketplace.
- Local certification schemes with no international recognition.

Communication

- Isolated efforts
- Fragmentation
- Duplication of efforts



Challenges in Certification

International Credibility

- Not all labeled as “eco” is truly “eco”- greenwash.
- Green labels should have precise requirements and these must be respected.
- Need for an international mechanism to help coordinate efforts and enhance credibility through accreditation.

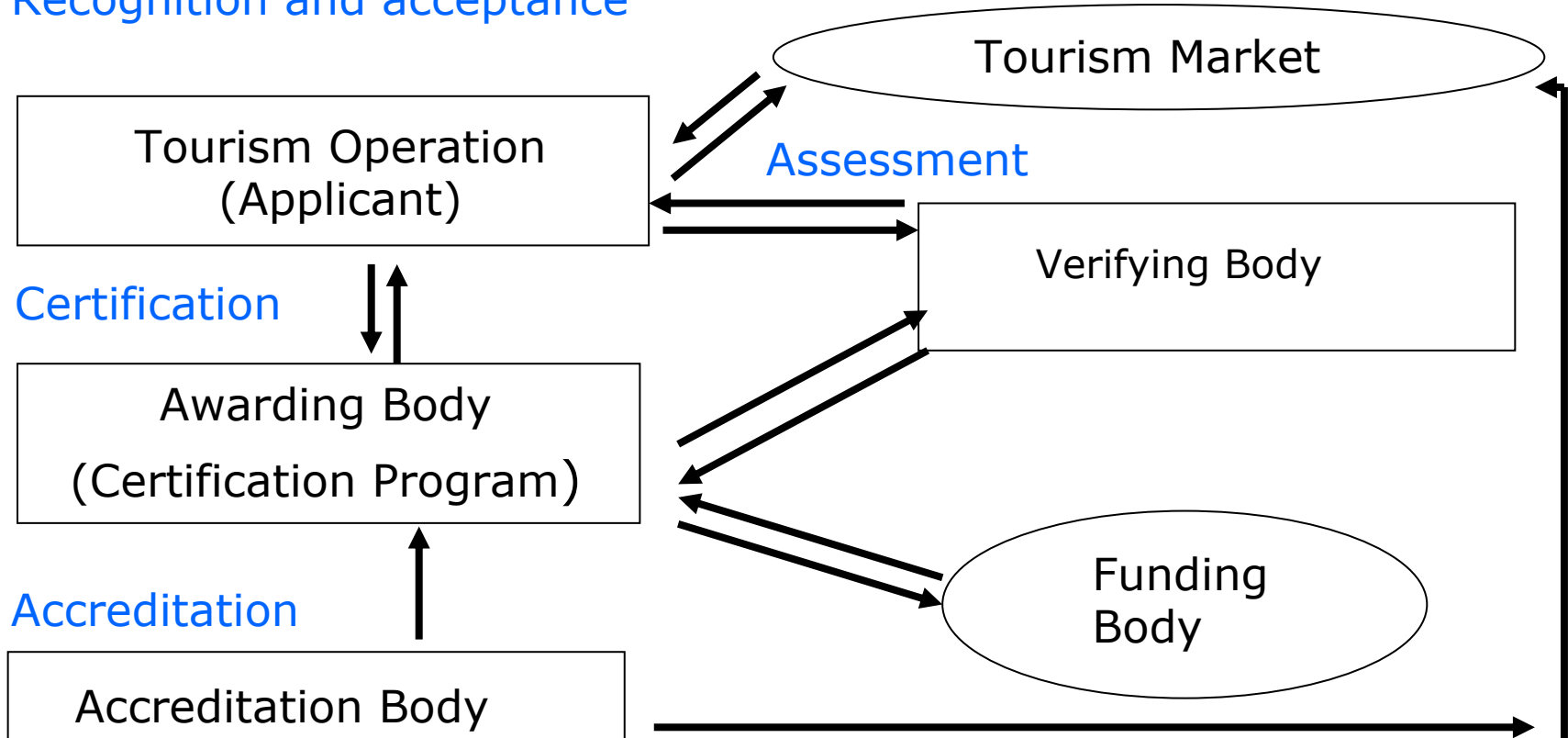


What Can Certification Programs Do to Attain Credibility and Recognition?

- Improve procedures for defining standards
 - Follow existing national procedures for norms
 - Consult the public
 - Improve auditing procedures
- Seek national and international endorsements and recognition
- Opt for international accreditation.

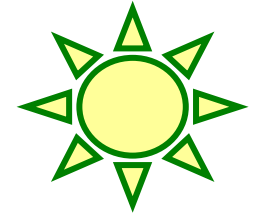
Certification and Accreditation

Recognition and acceptance



Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council

Mission



‘The core mission of the STSC is to enhance the sustainability of tourism operations by ensuring better environmental and social performance, and improved economic benefits to local communities and to certified businesses worldwide’.

Main Proposed Responsibilities

- Promote consumer and industry awareness.
- Increase environmental and social standards in the industry.
- Provide consumers with information for the selection of socially and environmentally friendly products and services.
- Guide the establishment and development of certification programs.
- Increase credibility of certification programs through accreditation.



Milestones

- **1999** The Rainforest Alliance's initial investigation about sustainable tourism certification
- **2000** First international conference on tourism certification. Development of Mohonk Agreement. Endorsement for undertaking the STSC feasibility study.
- **2000** Launch of Europe's VISIT network
- **2001/2002** Consultation at the International Year of Ecotourism regional meetings and others.
- **2001/2003** STSC feasibility study.



Milestones

- **2003/2004** WTO regional conferences on tourism certification.
- **2003** Launch of the Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas.
- **2005** UNEP high level consultation to move forward with STSC business plan.
- **2005** Initial organizing of work for network in Asia Pacific.
- **2006** Development of the business plan.
- **2007-2008** Fundraising for the launch of the STSC.



Benefits

- Protect the environment, residents and consumer rights by reducing “greenwash” and false claims.
- Give exposure to certification programs and their certified products as globally recognised sound operations.
- Lobby for political and financial support for accredited certification programs.
- Provide globally accepted standards and guidelines and support networks for product development.
- Promote a powerful global brand with marketing value to complement current marketing strategies.



Q & A

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