

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDUSTRY

An overview of labels and programmes in the Barents Region

Sustainable travel options are in increasing demand as the subject of sustainability in general is highly debated. There is a wide array of labels and certificates intended to guide the industry towards more sustainable offers and products. But the challenge is that there are both international and national labels used in each market, and there is no unison standard of what sustainability in tourism includes.

UNDERSTANDING THE LABELS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Looking at the Barents Region, there are great similarities between how Norway, Sweden and Finland view the concept of sustainability, and quality is often an implicit part of the whole. Sustainability as a part of a total quality system is more widely used in Finland, whereas sustainability certificates are more commonly used in Sweden and Norway. In the Russian tourism industry on the other hand, sustainable tourism is a fairly new concept. New markets and business opportunities would likely open up IF these issues are further developed. The programmes used here are mainly focusing on quality and security without the aspect of sustainability.

Sustainability drives business

In general, companies that do work with sustainability as part of their offer have a better success rate and positive reputation. It also plays a significant role as tourism often impacts culture and places and the approach will determine the development of the industry itself. This is also why the tables below include culture as its own aspect of sustainability, experiencing authenticity and local lifestyle is part of the attraction. In contrast to international sustainability certificates, national certificates used in the Barents region have in general been developed according to the needs of tourism companies.

Working across borders facilitates easier travelling

Being familiar with the different labels used in a specific market is helpful in cross-border collaborations. This overview is intended to shed some light on the current situation to make it easier for companies from different parts of the Barents to work together. Visitors to the Barents region already often include experiences from different countries in their travels. This behaviour creates new business opportunities for companies working together across borders.

Compare certifications criteria

Depending on the programme, different certifications can be awarded to a single service or an entire company. The scope also varies if they are developed for companies operating in different sectors, or specifically for instance restaurants or hotels. To fully understand and compare different programmes it is vital to get a deeper comprehension of the criteria since there are differences in how the dimensions of sustainability are being addressed.

Sustainability is also a factor taken into account in international total quality management systems, although the main focus is given to the economical dimension.

Coverage of Sustainability Dimensions by National Certifications

		Environmental	Social	Cultural	Economic
FIN	EcoCompass	●			●
	GreenDQN	●			◐
NO	Eco-Lighthouse	●	◐		●
SWE	Bra Miljöval	●			
	Krav	●	●		◐
	Nature's Best	●	●	◐	●
	Sapmi Experience Quality Mark	●	●	●	◐

Coverage of Sustainability Dimensions by International Certifications

	Environmental	Social	Cultural	Economic
ISO 14001	●	●	●	●
EMAS	●			●
EU-Ecolabel	●			●
Forum Anders Reisen	●	●	●	●
Nordic Swan Ecolabel	●			●
Blue Flag	●	●		◐
TripAdvisor Green Leaders	●			
Green Key	●	●	●	◐
ECEAT	●		◐	◐
Travellife	●	●	◐	◐
Responsible Travel	●	●	◐	●



This information is based on the report *Tourism Quality and Sustainability Programmes, Labels and Criteria in the Barents region* published by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland 08/2017 as a part of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation. Read the report: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-327-195-1> For further questions regarding the report, please contact Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen; Hanna-Mari.Kuhmonen@tem.fi