

# CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

An overview of labels and programmes in the Barents Region

Making sustainable travel choices isn’t always that easy. There is an array of labels and certifications intended to guide you as a consumer 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. Hopefully this guide will help you make a more informed decision in your travels.

## UNDERSTANDING THE LABELS FOR MORE INFORMED DECISIONS

If you are travelling to the Barents Region (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia) it is good to know that the development of sustainable tourism differs a bit between the nations. 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 mainly focuses on quality and security without the aspect of sustainability.

### Learn and compare different aspects of sustainability

As a consumer, the labels and certifications can help you make a more informed decision. The usual aspects to consider is the economical, the environmental and the social sustainability of a service or product. In tourism, the cultural aspect, which usually is a part of social, should be paid extra attention since protecting local culture and lifestyle is a crucial factor in the long-term attraction and sustainability of a tourism destination.

There are several other labels and initiatives on the tourism market that try to guide you to sustainable choices. As a customer, you need to consider who is issuing the label and if there are any financial or other interests that might affect the labelling.

It is up to you to factor in what you consider most important when you travel. Always keep up to date, since criteria and requirements might change over time.

### 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](mailto:Hanna-Mari.Kuhmonen@tem.fi)