PUTTING TRAFFIC LIGHTS ON THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED:
ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION & ITS POTENTIAL FOR HAWAII

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the opportunities and risks of establishing an ecotourism certification program in Hawai‘i. Tourism is Hawaii’s number one industry and ecotourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of that industry. As both depend heavily on the health of the unique, limited, and vulnerable natural and cultural resources that exist here, there is an imminent need to install some sort of mechanism that will help to ensure that Hawaii’s visitor industry improves their stewardship of these resources. In many parts of the world, ecotourism certification programs have been developed to serve this purpose through a voluntary, market-based process. Could a program like one of these succeed in achieving these goals in Hawai‘i despite the islands’ unique needs? If an existing program could be used as a general template, what changes would be required to consider those unique needs, or is certification the wrong approach altogether? These questions were posed to members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association to understand the issues from an industry perspective. The results demonstrate that many of those involved with the ecotourism industry in Hawai‘i generally support the idea of establishing an ecotourism certification program in the islands. Furthermore, they seem to believe that a program based on a combination of structural elements found in other existing programs, along with a few Hawaii-specific additions would produce the desired goals of perpetuating the vitality of Hawaiian ecosystems, communities and cultures, while improving the islands’ economic sustainability.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief overview of the study to follow, as well as some information explaining the significance of the issues at hand and describing the problem in detail, and the questions that the research intends to answer.

1.1 THESIS OVERVIEW

The term “ecotourism” first emerged in the late 1970s as nature tourism that operates in a sustainable and ethical fashion. The field has gradually evolved and today, combined with the larger category of nature tourism, ecotourism is the world’s fastest growing sector of the tourism industry. (Honey 2003) The field of ecotourism has also taken root here in Hawai’i. The image of Hawai’i as a destination is beginning to move away from the mass tourism idea of sun, sand, and surf to spotlight the islands’ exceptional natural and cultural heritage instead. In 1994, the government of Hawai’i held a statewide ecotourism conference to address this growing industry.

As the popularity of ecotourism expands around the world, this industry is also having increased impacts, both positive and negative, on its destinations. Thus, society is increasingly interested in establishing systems to assess the credibility of tour operations that use the label. As a result, a number of ecotourism certification programs have been developed for different regions. These programs are designed to verify that the operators are employing environmentally sustainable business practices and making tangible contributions to the social and economic welfare of the destination communities. Although Hawai’i has been slow to jump on the ecotourism bandwagon, the industry here is beginning to feel the push to standardize ecotourism practices. In fact, in 2004 a request was made to the governor to establish a task force to determine an appropriate definition and standards for ecotourism in Hawai’i.

Recently, members of the Hawaii Ecotourism Association have expressed an interest in exploring the potential for an ecotourism certification scheme in Hawai’i. By consulting Hawaii’s current ecotourism operators, this thesis attempts to identify some of the obstacles and opportunities to come, if an effort like this is made here in the 50th State.
1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY AREA: HAWAI'I

The State of Hawai'i forms the longest and most isolated island chain in the world. It is 1,523 miles long and lies approximately 2,397 miles west-southwest of San Francisco ("Hawaii." Infoplease 2000-2004), spanning a section of Pacific Ocean from 154° 40' W to 162° W and 16° 55' N to 23° N. (NetState: The Geography of Hawaii) Hawai'i is the southernmost state in the USA and covers 10,932 square miles, of which 6,423 are land and 4,508 are covered by water. The land areas are made up of 132 islands, including 124 islets that together comprise only about 3 square miles and are not fit for human habitation, in addition to the eight main islands. All of the main Hawaiian Islands, except for Kaho'olawe, are inhabited. (NetState: The Geography of Hawaii)
Hawai'i houses some of the most diverse, unique, and vulnerable ecosystems in the world. The largest island in the chain is the island of Hawai'i, which covers 4,038 square miles, and itself exhibits a range of climatic diversity comparable with that found on large continents. (Juvik, Singleton, and Clarke no date). Although considered to be a tropical paradise with average monthly temperatures ranging from a high of 87.1°F to a low of 65.3°F (NetState: The Geography of Hawaii), the State is home to several environmental extremes, including the tallest mountain on earth if measured from the mountain root (in this case on the sea floor), as well as the wettest spot on earth, located on the islands of Hawai'i and Kaua'i respectively. In the words of a local state forester,

"The Hawaiian islands -- an isolated archipelago with high forested mountains, a multitude of climates, and abundant rainfall, provided a remarkable opportunity for the first plant and animal visitors that arrived on its shores. Together these plants and animals grew over the thousands of years to form complex ecosystems of incredible beauty. The native Hawaiian forests represent one of our planet's magnificent treasures, including lowland and mountain rain forests and some of the world's most unique examples of tropical biodiversity, much of it endangered with no where else to go. Hawai'i has 48 different native forest and woodland types and more than 175 different species of native trees, the vast majority of which are found nowhere else on Earth." (Buck 2003)

The islands of Hawai'i were first settled by Polynesians sailing from other Pacific islands between A.D. 300 and A.D. 600. The individual island kingdoms were finally united by King Kamehameha the Great in 1810 shortly after their 'discovery' by British Captain James Cook in 1778. Hawai'i was a native kingdom throughout most of the 19th century, until 1893, when Queen Liliuokalani was deposed. One year later, the Republic of Hawai'i was established with Sanford B. Dole as president. It became a U.S. territory in 1900, and finally a state in 1959. ("Hawaii." Infoplease 2000-2004)

In 2003 the resident population was estimated to be 1,257,608 people. The 2000 resident census states that the population at that time was 50.2% male and 49.8% female. The racial diversity consisted of 41.6% Asian, 24.3% White, 9.4% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 7.2% Hispanic/Latino, 1.8% Black, 0.3% American Indian, and 1.3% of some other race. Those with two or more races equaled 21.4% of the population. ("Hawaii." Infoplease 2000-2004)

Some of the most prominent values exhibited by the Hawaiian culture are the importance of environmental stewardship, family and community, as well as learning and sharing their cultural heritage
with others. The importance that traditional Hawaiians placed on health of the environment is embodied in
the saying *malama 'aina* and can be found in their ‘*ahupua’a* land management system, on which much of
the social and cultural traditions were based. Hawaiian culture also places great importance in ‘*ohana*’,
which is roughly translated as family in English, but often goes far beyond immediate family to include
extended families, friends, and neighbors. (Kanahele) ‘*Na‘auao*’ means to be enlightened and
knowledgeable (Mills no date) and expresses the high value that the Hawaiian culture places on learning
new things and learning carefully in order to fully and accurately understand their surroundings. Kanahele
explains that the Hawaiian people place great pride in their cultural heritage, called ‘*hinheo*’, which
recently experienced somewhat of a renaissance and is very evident in the islands today with the growing
popularity of Hawaiian immersion schools, the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement, and the explosion of
“Hawaiian Pride” type bumper stickers and t-shirts. (Kanahele)

1.3 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

1.3.1 Impact of the Tourism Industry & the Ecotourism Sector

Martha Honey (2003) states that “travel and tourism is widely estimated to be the world’s largest
industry, employing directly and indirectly almost 200 million people. This amounts to 11% or one in
twelve jobs globally, 10.2% of the world’s Gross Domestic Product, and 11.2% of global exports. If
tourism were a country, it would have the world’s second largest economy, surpassed only the United
States.”

There is no question that tourism is a powerful player in the world economy. Ecotourism happens
to be one of the fastest growing sectors of this mammoth industry, and thus an increasingly formidable
force shaping our world in the years to come. In the year 2000, it was estimated that ecotourism was
growing by 20% annually, compared with 7% for tourism overall. (Honey 2003) By 1997, international
ecotourism arrivals were roughly estimated to be seven percent of the world tourism market, which equated
to approximately 45 million arrivals in 1998. (Epler-Wood 2002) That number is expected to increase to
70 million by 2010, due to its exceptionally high rate of growth. In the Asia-Pacific region today,
ecotourism accounts for 20% of all travel. (Motavalli 2002)
The tourism industry is absolutely vital to Hawaii’s current economy. (DBEDT 2000) And, in order to remain competitive in the global tourism industry, Hawai’i needs to capitalize on the growing ecotourism sector. In 1994, a professor of political science at the University of Hawai’i argued that “most tourists are attracted to Hawai’i because of its natural beauty and the Polynesian culture, yet increasingly many visitors are not coming, or not returning, because they feel the Islands have become too over-developed, commercialized, and lost their special aloha spirit.” And he concluded that, “Hawaii’s tourism industry will only remedy its present decline by shifting its orientation away from mass tourism and more towards emphasizing its unique environment and multiple cultures.” (Rohter 1994) Soon enough Hawai’i began to make that shift and, by 1999, it was estimated that ecotourism was bringing in approximately $669 million of Hawaii’s $10 billion dollar tourism industry and accounted for approximately 7.7% of all visitor expenditures. (Carroll 1999) These figures illustrate the significant influence that the continued success of Hawaii’s ecotourism industry will have on the health of Hawaii’s broader economy in the years to come.

In addition to the economy, Hawaii’s unique native nature and local cultures are also affected by ecotourism. In other parts of the world where ecotourism has had a longer history, it has already brought mixed results when it comes to its impact on the welfare of its host communities. Such benefits and costs are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. According to Peter Apo, President of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, the current visitor industry model used by both the conventional tourism and ecotourism sectors here is destructive to Hawai’i as a place. As long as the visitor industry continues to put the visitor first, it will continue to sacrifice the well being of Hawaii’s people and environment for the comfort of the tourist. Apo concedes that the idea of ecotourism is a step in the right direction, since its principles are based on maintaining the sense of place. But at the moment, he believes, most of Hawaii’s ecotourism operators do not fully embrace these principles but rather continue to place priority on profit rather than benefits to the local community. (Apo 2003)

Hawaii’s State Motto is Ua mau ke ea o ka ʻaina i ka pono, or “The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.” (“Hawaii. ” Infoplease 2000-2004) Nothing is more important to the identity of the Hawaiian people than their connection with the land, or ʻaina. Thus the preservation of Hawaii’s native species and habitat is not only critical from an ecological point of view, but also from a cultural
perspective. The year 2003 was proclaimed the Year of the Hawaiian Forest by the Hawai‘i State Legislature and it provided some opportunities to reflect on the state of Hawaii’s natural environment. In “Last Stand: The Vanishing Hawaiian Forest,” a publication associated with this event, the Nature Conservancy links the destruction of the Hawaiian forest with the frequency of human arrivals. The publication discusses the increasing impact from the days of the first few Polynesian settlers, coming from islands with relatively similar biota, to the era of much greater species loss when Westerners discovered the islands in much greater numbers over a much smaller span of time, and coming from vastly different habitats to those of Hawai‘i. Presently, Hawai‘i receives over 6 million visitors a year. (DBEDT 2000)

With so many human arrivals every year, originating from places with great varieties of plants and animals foreign to Hawaiian ecosystems, it is no wonder that Hawai‘i is in first place for the state with the most birds and plants listed on the U.S. Endangered Species List (Carter & Burgess 2002) with nearly 60% of Hawaii’s total native flora and fauna considered endangered. (Buck 2003)

Although there are regulations for the activities that impact Hawaii’s threatened habitats, funding is insufficient to enforce all the regulations effectively. According to the Nature Conservancy, although the Hawai‘i State Government is responsible for the stewardship of nearly half of all its forested lands, less than 1% of its budget is allocated for the protection of all of its natural and cultural resources. “Only by committing to a new era of public-private cooperation and investment can we ensure the survival of the Hawaiian forest for generations yet to come”. (Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i 2003) Recently, the Hawai‘i State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism sponsored the Hawai‘i Sustainable Tourism Study, which evaluated the potential impact and requirements of tourism on Hawaii’s resources, including its natural resources. One report produced by this study confirms the impact of insufficient funds. In regard to addressing the threat of non-native species it states, “Laws and appropriate management policies have been established to protect native endangered and threatened species. However, inadequate funding does not allow for adequate enforcement. Public awareness programs directed toward both visitors and residents about the plight of Hawaii’s environment can help.” (Carter & Burgess 2002)

Tourism and ecotourism have the potential to make or break this ‘last stand.’ Tourism is the impetus the transport of millions of non-native people, with whom non-native plant and animal hitchhikers
could easily catch a ride, to Hawaii’s fragile ecosystems. It is also the catalyst for much of the development on our islands, which is responsible for much of the displacement of Native Hawaiian people and destruction of native habitats, which is the primary cause of species decline, according to State Forester Michael Buck. (Buck 2003) Thus, tourism and ecotourism simultaneously have a large impact on Hawaii’s natural and cultural resources, and yet rely on these resources for economic gain.

1.3.2 Potential for Ecotourism Certification

Left unchecked, even ecotourism could end up ‘killing the goose that lays the golden egg’, but if programs are put in place that establish standards for the industry that are based on maintaining the integrity of the Hawaiian sense of place and that provide market incentives for the industry to do so, the State of Hawai'i may get the private cooperation and investment it needs to help fund the stewardship of our islands. In many places around the world, such as Costa Rica, Australia, and the Galapagos Islands, ecotourism certification programs have been set up to do exactly that.

However, its success in meeting the above objectives has not yet been analyzed and the potential remains that certification may also have negative consequences, as well as positive, on the ecotourism industry. One argument, exemplified by the history of the movement in organic agriculture (Guthman 1998), is that by setting up a system to measure how ‘eco’ a tourism venture is, may result in the redefinition of what is ecotourism based on those aspects of ecotourism that are most readily and objectively measurable. For instance, it is much easier to measure energy use, waste produced and other things associated with environmental management systems (which has historically been the focus of Green Globe’s certification program) than it is to measure the extent of ‘meaningful employment opportunities’ provided by the operation or the extent of cultural respect and empowerment that is incorporated into operational activities and decisions. In the organic agriculture situation, partly because it was easier to measure use of fertilizers and pesticides, the label has become centered on that particular aspect of organic agriculture and the meaning of ‘organic’ has strayed away from its original, more holistic intent, which now would be better defined as ‘sustainable agriculture’. This original meaning of ‘organic’ is, in Julie Guthman’s words, “a mode of farming that attempts to provide long-term sustained yields through the use of ecologically sound management technologies. This requires that agriculture be regarded as an
ecosystem (hence, the term agroecosystem) and, as such, farming and research are not concerned with high yields of a particular commodity but rather with the optimization of the system as a whole. It also requires looking beyond production economics and considering the vital issue of ecological stability and sustainability.” (Guthman 1998) Other risks of certification include barriers to access by potential consumers who cannot afford the higher price of the good or service resulting from the expense and status of certification as well as barriers to the providers, due to the expense of application for certification, and resulting in inappropriate exclusion from the certified label and thus undeserved negative stigma.

1.3.3 Ecotourism Certification Challenges

Ecotourism Certification programs face many challenges today. It is much more complicated than certification in other industries due to the inherent complexity of the ecotourism industry itself. Additional challenges stem from the fact that ecotourism best lends itself to very small operations, whose operators have little time or money to spend on costly and complicated certification applications. The ongoing debate and general confusion over the definitions and terms associated with ecotourism, as well as the lack of consistency among the recent proliferation of certification programs in different parts of the world, must be overcome in order to produce an ecotourism certification program that successfully achieves its goal.

1.3.3.1 Complexity of Certification

Implementation of standards through certification in other industries has been in existence for decades. Regardless, certification in these industries still raises concerns and questionable results. For example, programs to certify organic agriculture have been around so long that the process to earn the use of the term has come under government regulation. Julie Guthman (Guthman 1998) notes that this process of codification has many unintended side effects, such as the creation of bureaucratic institutions as well as loopholes in the policies. According to a report produced by Synergy for WWF-UK in August 2000, some certification schemes for environmentally and socially responsible tourism can be misleading to consumers and often fail to guarantee high standards of environmental practice. (Maclaren no date) Thus, careful consideration must be given to the process of certification and its applicability to the associated region in order assure its integrity.
Tourism is much more complicated than most other industries involved in programs, such as wood, bananas, coffee, and aquarium fish. According to Martha Honey (2002), these industries consist of tangible goods whose chain of custody can be easily traced from production to consumption, whereas tourism is multifaceted and nonlinear and involves a wide variety of products and services. In addition, due to the myriad of goods and services required to create each final tourism product, a distinct set of rules and standards for each must be created such that they are somehow applicable to the whole spectrum of inputs for every product. (Honey 2002)

1.3.3.2 Inconsistent Definitions & Terms

A lack of agreement exists as to what exactly "ecotourism" and "ecotourism certification" means. Ecotourism has a different definition in almost every publication on the subject. (The International Ecotourism Society Homepage; Weaver 1998; Beoh 1999; Ruel 1999; Honey 1999; Hawaii Ecotourism Association Brochure 2002; Epler-Wood 2002; Honey 2003; Mader 2003; Maclaren no date) One major disagreement pertains to whether ecotourism should be defined by the product offered or by the conduct of running the tourism business itself. Some definitions limit ecotourism to nature-based operations, a subset of nature tourism, whereas others argue that ecotourism is defined by sustainable and conscientious business practices and that the location and activities conducted are irrelevant. Some focus on environmental sustainability, while others place priority on education or cultural integrity, and others still claim that in order to use the term, an operation must excel in all of the above.

One of the earlier definitions illustrates the confusion between ecotourism and its industry brother, nature tourism. In 1987, Hector Ceballos-Lascurain defined ecotourism as "traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas." (Ceballos-Lascurain 1987)

As the concept of sustainable development gained popularity, the focus of many ecotourism definitions shifted away from the motivations and activities of the visitor, defining it instead according to the environmental stewardship of the provider. In their Code of Ethics For Environmentally Responsible Tourism, the Pacific Asia Travel Association explains that it "recognizes the necessity to ensure a
sustainable future, meets the needs of the tourism industry today, and does not compromise the ability of this and future generations to conserve the environment." (Liu 1994)

Today most definitions of ecotourism portray it as a healthy component of a diversified economy with the emphasis on the benefits it produces for the hosts of the destination, both natural and human. Others define it by the benefits it creates to both the hosts and the visitors. For example, the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association states that, “ecotourism is nature and culture based tourism that is ecologically sustainable and supports the well being of local communities” (Hawaii Ecotourism Association Brochure 2002) whereas the Ecotourism Association of Australia defines ecotourism as “sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.” (Nature & Ecotourism Accreditation Program) However, not everyone agrees with these new perspectives of ecotourism. For example, Shores argues that “the proper definition of ecotourism is ecologically sound tourism” and nothing more. (Shores 2003) Yet there are also those who, like the director of the Hawai‘i Chapter of the Sierra Club, believe that it has lost all meaning and states disdainfully that "Eco" in Hawai‘i today seems to apply to everything from golf carts to all-terrain vehicles. (Mikulina 2001)

Ecotourism is controversial term. According to Martha Honey, author of several books on ecotourism and the current president of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), the word ‘ecotourism’ is derived from the concept of ecosystems, a holistic and balanced approach to tourism and closely linked to the concept of sustainable development. (Honey and Rome 2001) At least ten terms, and even more variants, are often used interchangeably with ‘ecotourism.’

One category of terms is merely descriptive. The expressions ‘nature-travel’, ‘adventure-travel’, and ‘cultural-travel’, segment tourists based on what activities they participate in during their visit. Another category of terms is value-based. The phrases, ‘responsible tourism’, ‘alternative tourism’, and ‘ethical travel’, highlight the need for considering the approach and impact of travel regardless of the activities pursued. (Ziffer 1989)

Although the definitions of these other terms are often difficult to distinguish, a growing consensus exists for some of the major differences. One of the largest discrepancies in the travel industry is
the confusion between 'ecotourism' and 'adventure travel.' While the terms are often used synonymously, their goals and impacts can be very different. "Ecotourism is altruistic," says [Bill] Mueller, who is president of R.E.I. Tours, based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "In contrast, adventure travel insulates you from the local environment and then utilizes its resources." (Bech 1999) ‘Nature tourism,’ like ‘adventure travel’, is not necessarily ecologically sound, whereas ‘ecotourism’ is. (Ziffer 1989) ‘Responsible travel’ takes the principles of ecotourism and applies them to any form of tourism. Whereas ‘ecotourism’ has been very much about conservation, ‘responsible travel’ is about benefiting local people, as well as the environment. (Amodeo 2002) And then there is also ‘sustainable tourism’ which is described as any form of tourism that facilitates sustainable development. (Weaver 1998)

1.3.3.3 Proliferation of Inconsistent Programs

The objectives of most ecotourism certification programs are to induce greater compliance with conscientious business practices among the tourism industry members and particularly those who claim to be involved in 'ecotourism.' However, with the lack of consistency among certification programs, they lack credibility, understanding and awareness among the traveling public, and thus, also lack in the delivery of tangible benefits to operators. A recent study sponsored by the World Tourism Organization states, "The increasing number, variety and popularity of voluntary initiatives related to sustainability in tourism stress the need for consolidation, based on an evaluation of the effectiveness of existing schemes...One of the over-riding conclusions from the hundred plus cases examined in this report is that eco-labels, awards, and self-commitments have entered the tourism supply chain, and although their current impact has been minimal across the sector as a whole, they are revealing tremendous potential to move the industry towards sustainability, but not without careful nurturing and support from the key industry stakeholders." (World Tourism Organization 2002)
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Partly to remedy the problems caused by the proliferation of inconsistent certification programs, an international set of principles was published in March 2003, which includes plans to determine country-specific standards and a single ecotourism certification program for operations based in every country. (Crabtree et al. 2002) If these plans are carried out, Hawai‘i will have to abide by the same ecotourism standards as the rest of the United States of America. Country-specific standards may be inappropriate even for other states within the continental United States, which span a great distance and are geographically very diverse. Hawai‘i is isolated from the rest of the country by almost 2,400 miles, features a society more similar to those found in other pacific island nations or Asia, and has one of the most unique and vulnerable natural environments in the world. (Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i 2003)

Over 100 businesses were listed as members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association (HEA) in 2004, whose membership implies that they are ‘dedicated to a visitor industry that protects Hawaii’s unique culture and environment’ as stated on the membership application (Hawaii Ecotourism Association Brochure 2002). However, neither the state government nor the HEA have any agreed set of measurable standards for the ecotourism industry or an official ecotourism certification program with which to verify these claims. In order to secure greater economic sustainability within its number one industry, Hawai‘i must be able to compete with other destinations in the growing ecotourism market. Thus, Hawai‘i also needs keep up with these other destinations in the growing trend towards ecotourism certification, not only to help ecotravelers to find ecotourism opportunities in Hawai‘i and make a decision on which to choose, but also to encourage tourism operators to take more responsibility for the well-being of their surroundings, and therefore increase the environmental and cultural sustainability of Hawaii’s tourism industry.

If Hawai‘i doesn’t take this initiative soon, the tourism industry here will continue to lack guidance toward responsible business practices, or risk surrendering to programs developed elsewhere that might encourage inappropriate behavior for the unique life forms and lifestyles that exist in Hawai‘i and involve application and evaluation procedures that are not conducive to participation by many local people.

Recently, a resolution was brought before the 2004 Hawai‘i State legislature “requests the governor to form a task force to research and collect input from local tour operators and the local
community, relative to creating a comprehensive definition of ecotourism and developing standards and operating guidelines for implementation of an ecotourism program.” (Ecotourism Defined; Governor's Task Force 2004) Although the resolution did not pass, the Hawai’i Tourism Authority (HTA) agreed to hold a series of meetings with their Cultural Advisory Council and their Natural Resources Advisory Council to draft an ecotourism definition that will be suitable for Hawai’i. However, the coordinators of this task force did not include industry members, who are intimately familiar with the realities of ecotourism in Hawai’i and will play a decisive role in ecotourism’s ultimate success in Hawai’i.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & QUESTIONS

The overall goal of this research is to determine the opportunities and risks of an ecotourism certification program for the State of Hawai’i. Thus, the main objectives of this study are to determine the level of support, as well as an acceptable framework, for a Hawai’i-specific ecotourism certification program from the perspective of operators in Hawai’i’s current ecotourism industry. But before anything can be certified as genuine and responsible ecotourism, a general agreement must be reached on what the term ‘ecotourism’ means for Hawai’i. Thus, this study identifies the similarities and differences of the term as defined by individual members of the ecotourism industry. These objectives can be met by answering the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant level of agreement among Hawaii’s ecotourism industry members on the concept of ecotourism?
   a. How do various members of the Hawai’i Ecotourism Association (HEA) define ecotourism?
   b. What is the most suitable term for the ‘ecotourism’ industry in which HEA members operate?
   c. Which principles do HEA members believe are most important for Hawai’i ecotourism operators to practice?

2. How receptive are Hawaii’s ecotourism industry members to the formation of an ecotourism certification program in Hawai’i?
   a. Do Hawaii’s ecotourism industry members believe that the creation of an ecotourism certification program in Hawai’i would yield any tangible benefits?
b. In what ecotourism certification framework would HEA members be most likely to participate?

c. What are some of the unique issues that Hawaii-based ecotourism operations face, which may influence their support for a certification program?
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is intended to familiarize the reader with the concepts and history of ecotourism and ecotourism certification. The following sections explain why and how each idea was developed, the positive and negative impacts of ecotourism, its evolution in Hawai'i, and finally describes the current state of ecotourism and certification around the world today.

2.1 CONTEXT OF ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION

Despite the plethora of definitions associated with ‘ecotourism’, the most widely accepted definition of is the one supported by The International Ecotourism Association (TIES). (Ziffer 1989) It defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people”. (The International Ecotourism Society Homepage) Certification (in the tourism industry) is “a procedure [which is normally voluntary] that audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process, service or management system meets specific standards. It awards a logo or seal to those that meet or exceed baseline criteria or standards that are prescribed by the program.” (Honey 2002) The ideas of ecotourism and ecotourism certification are rooted in the concepts of sustainable development, globalization, consumerism and responsible consumption.

Sustainable Development. The concept of sustainable development emerged in the 1970s when many governments began passing laws that required companies to comply with regulations for environmental impact and emissions. The term itself emerged in 1987 when the famous Brundtland Report was published, and defined it as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. (Krut and Gleckman 1998) The popularity of ‘sustainable development’ helped to launch the ecotourism campaign and revitalize international aid to the tourism industry. Due to its focus on local ownership of operations and locals’ increased stake in preserving their surrounding natural environments, ecotourism was seen as a promising way to achieve sustainable development, in places where other development programs had failed to achieve their economic and environmental objectives. (Redclift 1995; Honey 1999)
The idea of carrying capacity is often associated with sustainable development, considered by some to be a necessary tool by which to achieve and measure sustainable development, as well as successful ecotourism projects. (Ziffer 1989) The Carrying Capacity Network defines ‘carrying capacity’ as “the number of individuals who can be supported in a given area within natural resource limits, and without degrading the natural, social, cultural and economic environment for present and future generations.” (What is Carrying Capacity?) According to Janet Cochrane, it is almost impossible to maintain the carrying capacity of an ecotourism destination.

“One of the arguments of developing ecotourism is to divert people’s energies away from dependence on the more destructive uses of the protected area’s resources. To be successful in this, tourism has to be large enough to employ substantial numbers of people. But any medium- or large-scale tourism activity is bound to have environmental impacts – so it is extremely difficult to achieve both the aims of ecotourism at once, i.e. to conserve nature and to improve the welfare of local people.” (Cochrane 1996)

Cochrane’s argument may not apply as well to ecotourism destinations in which the inhabitants were not previously dependent on a naturally extractive industry. Nonetheless, it is very difficult to determine and maintain tourism carrying capacity, particularly when using a more fluid definition, such as the this popular one by Dogsé:

“Carrying capacity is a function of a broad range of environmental, cultural and economic factors. As these change over time, so does the carrying capacity. Rather than an ‘optimum’ level of tourism where net tourism benefits are maximized, carrying capacity is a (dynamic) threshold level beyond which additional tourism brings more costs than benefits.” (Wanger 2001)

According to this definition the carrying capacity of a certain activity in a certain destination may be different depending on the operator. For example, if raising tourists’ awareness of conservation issues and proper environmental behavior can raise environmental carrying capacity, an ecotour operator with a commitment to educating the visitor might be assigned a higher carrying capacity than a non-‘eco’ tour operator conducting the same activity in the same location without the emphasis on education. However, if this were the case, one would also need a standard method of measuring the content and quality of a tour’s interpretive program. The same could be applied to cultural carrying capacity, although that is even more difficult to assess, as it is based primarily on the perceived point in which the number of visitors begins to negatively impact the local residents’ way of life, whereas environmental carrying capacity can be
objectively measured to some extent, based on the number of humans that exists in an area when indicators of environmental degradation begin to be observed.

**Globalization.** One of the overriding paradigms of the current era is globalization. In fact, a recent report published by the National Intelligence Council states, “We see globalization—growing interconnectedness reflected in the expanded flows of information, technology, capital, goods, services, and people throughout the world—as an overarching “mega-trend,” a force so ubiquitous that it will substantially shape all the other major trends in the world of 2020.” *(Mapping the Global Future: A report of the National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project 2004)* Part of the reason that sustainable development, and ecotourism in particular, continue to enjoy such popularity is because they promise to solve the world’s problems yet still fit snugly in to the existing paradigms of politics and power. According to anthropologist and ecotourism activist, Luis Vivanco, faith in free markets to solve the world’s problems is the ideological cornerstone of both globalization and ecotourism. (Maclaren 2003) One of the earlier explanations of ecotourism describes it as “a brash, pragmatic new concept that mixes modern conservation theories with good old-fashioned money-making...it is the point at which capitalism and conservation join together to fight for the same cause: wildlife preservation, at a profit.” *(Ziffer 1989)*

**Consumerism.** In northern industrialized countries, where capitalism has a long history, capitalism’s dependence on excess has resulted in a society we refer to as “consumer culture.” These societies tend to behave as if the acquisition of material possessions will bring them happiness. This craving for acquisitions also often applies to the acquisition of travel experiences. In the case of eco- or nature tourism, tourists from the paved ‘North’ consume the pristine and exotic nature and cultures of the ‘South’, thereby advancing their social status just as the acquisition of material possessions is perceived to do. (Duffy 2002) In addition to elevating a person’s perceived social status, people from the industrialized North are increasingly turning to travel, especially travel to regions with stronger ties to the land and more cultural identity, as a way to fill the void we feel as a part of such a mobile society. (Borofsky and Karlin 2002) In this regard, many consumers of travel are not only seeking to acquire social benefits, but spiritual ones as well.
Guarantees are a common tool used to gain a competitive edge in consumer-driven markets. Consumers demand guarantees from all sorts of goods that the product will deliver the desired and expected results. From auto parts to whale-watching tours to breakfast cereal the motto goes, “We promise you will be completely satisfied or your money back, guaranteed.” However late in coming, ecotourism is no exception, as consumer culture expands and the consumers of travel are demanding pre-departure guarantees that the travel activity will deliver the ‘embodied experience’ they are seeking. (Cater 2001)

**Responsible Consumption.** The terms “responsible consumption” and “sustainable consumption” are often used interchangeably. The Sierra Club defines sustainable consumption as “the use of goods and services that satisfy basic needs and improve quality of life while minimizing the usage of irreplaceable natural resources and the byproducts of toxic materials, waste, and pollution.” (Sustainable Consumption Main 2004) A good example of one of these goods is the chocolate bar “Rainforest Crunch” upon which the label reads that a certain percent of the proceeds on the purchase of the chocolate bar goes to raise the income of rainforest residents to reduce their need to practice slash and burn farming and ‘makes the trees too valuable to cut down’, which the chocolate bar label implies is the cause of rainforest deforestation. (Dove 1993) Because this particular good is espoused to go towards a good cause, the consumers feel less guilt about spending money on themselves for something they don’t really need. The concept of sustainable/responsible consumption emerged in 1992 when the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or “Earth Summit”, encouraged businesses to adopt the principles and practices of sustainable development in its publication, *Agenda 21.* (Honey and Rome 2001) “Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 (Changing Consumption Patterns) became the starting point for international work directed to improving understanding of global consumption patterns and their environmental and social impacts.” (Sustainable Consumption: A Global Status Report: Executive Summary 2002) A variety of initiatives emerged that were aimed at helping consumers identify businesses that had sustainable practices and provided meaningful employment opportunities for local people. The Forest Stewardship Council and Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International are two responsible consumption certification programs that emerged to provide incentives for industries to support local enterprises and preserve natural resources. (Honey 2002) These initiatives provided the timber, coffee, and organic agriculture industries with an
enhanced marketing image and therefore a larger market share or larger profits due to price premiums consumers are willing to pay for sustainably produced products. (Support trade justice! Support fair trade! 2004) Recently, a fair trade certification program for tourism was created in South Africa, entitled Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa. (Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa 2004) Likewise ecotourism certification initiatives are also intended to provide certified businesses with greater market share and price premiums by consumers with guilt-minimized products and services.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF ECOTOURISM WORLDWIDE

The term, “ecotourism” first emerged in the late 1970s. It initially grew in scattered experiments and without a name, in response to deepening concerns about the negative effects of conventional tourism. (Honey 2003) Gradually more and more nature tour operators began adopting sustainable practices and by the 1980s, many Third World countries were looking to ecotourism for an alternative to industries such as logging, plantation agriculture, ranching, and mass tourism. By 1990 nearly every non-industrialized country was promoting ecotourism as a part of its development strategy. (Honey 1999)

According to Martha Honey, the concept of ecotourism emerged due to a handful of different stakeholders and their responses to various phenomena occurring simultaneously across the globe. These phenomena included accelerated environmental degradation, growing disillusionment with mass tourism by several groups, and the increased benefits of environmental stewardship for tourism providers. (Honey 2002)

**Environmental Degradation.** First of all, the environmentalists of the world were becoming increasingly alarmed at the rate of natural habitat and species loss occurring in the wake of resource-intensive industry growth. For them, ecotourism offered a more sustainable alternative to the destructive industries proliferating in these areas. (Honey 2002) They hoped that ecotourism could create as much monetary profit as those other industries and consequently compel industry leaders to embrace ecotourism instead and encourage businesses to take more responsibility for the well being of the natural environment. International environmental NGOs saw ecotourism as a way to harness the immense power of the international market to maintain and restore integrity of the world’s natural resources. Ecotourism puts nature on the market, which creates an economic benefit in preserving it, therefore encouraging and
providing the means for both governments and residents of these natural areas to do so. However, many also argue that ecotourism devalues the lives and lifestyles of the people living in these areas, often causing them to be displaced from their homes and access to subsistence resources, and creating a sense of identity loss among those cultures. (McLaren 2003)

**Conventional Tourism Failures.** Second, conventional tourism was failing to fulfill its initial promises of health, wealth and happiness to various players in the industry. According to the author of *Rethinking Tourism and Ecotravel*, “Tourism increases local reliance upon a global economy, leaking many economic profits outside of the community back to the companies and countries that control most of the travel infrastructure. At the same time, tourism decreases dependence on local resources, as technologies, food, and health services are imported. Local people may also be pushed out or sell out, and local prices for commodities and services rise, as do taxes.” (McLaren 2003)

Citizens and governments of less developed countries were becoming disillusioned with tourism projects, largely due to the significant amount of economic leakage in tourist dollars. Most of these tourism projects were in the form of large resorts run by transnational companies and did not enhance local businesses or offer valuable employment opportunities for locals, since they could do so more efficiently using products and labor imported from abroad. In addition, several citizens' movements sprung up in protest of some of the negative social impacts tourism was having on the developing world. (Honey 2002)

This group often saw ecotourism as the ultimate remedy for their economic woes. “During the mid- to late 1980s, many Third World countries turned to ecotourism as a foreign exchange earner that was potentially less destructive than alternatives such as logging, oil extraction, cattle, bananas, commercial fishing, or conventional mass tourism. They viewed ecotourism as minimizing negative effects through its emphasis on low-impact construction, controlled visitor numbers, and care in interacting with the local flora, fauna, and human population. Further, it could, in some instances, be more profitable.” (Honey 1999) Ecotourism was encouraged, of course, by the lending institutions and the environmental NGOs, who seemed anxious to funnel grants and loans into these regions in the name of ecotourism. In many cases, unfortunately, this funding only increases the economic power of corrupt government elites who are able to siphon some of this money as administrative fees for the projects or strike deals with incoming
transnational companies. In these instances the community members see only negative side of ecotourism, as they are displaced from their resources, they become addicted to the consumptive habits introduced by the ecotravelers, they lose their cultural identity, and their economic welfare becomes slave to the whim of the unstable industry of international tourism. (McLaren 2003)

Even the multilateral aid institutions that funded most of these mass tourism projects were not pleased with the results because the projects were not enhancing the ability of those countries to pay-off their national debts. In fact, in the 1970s both the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank closed their tourism departments and stopped loans for tourism projects. (Honey and Rome 2001) However, as both the environmental movement and Third World debt continued to rise, by the mid-1980s most of these institutions were considering this new form of tourism as useful a development tool and conservation strategy. In the words of a Clark University professor in 1990, “The international politics of debt and the international pursuit of pleasure have become tightly knotted together.” (Honey 1999) “By the mid-1990s USAID had 105 projects, totaling more than $2 billion in funding, with ecotourism components.” (Honey 1999).

It is argued by some academics that these same multilateral international aid institutions are using ecotourism as a vehicle to enhance the process of globalization. Ian Munt, an author and opponent of ecotourism writes that “ecotourism intervenes on local lifestyles to promote a global agenda.” (Munt 1994) Rosaleen Duffy, another author on the subject, claims “ecotourism forms part of the central legitimizing argument for the switch to free-market policies favored by global interest groups.” (Duffy 2002) These interest groups are primarily multilateral aid institutions that often put stipulations on ecotourism project loans to developing countries that require the governments agree to reduce trade barriers that prevent corporations from developed countries from doing business there. According to Deborah McLaren, “Tourism is a mighty force in free trade agreements such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which promotes privatization and free trade and undermines the power of governments to protect and control their labor markets and resources.” (McLaren 2003)

The traveling public gradually grew tired of the crowds associated with the resort model of tourism. As conventional tourism became accessible to the masses of industrialized societies, travelers
began to accumulate traveling experience and had increasing confidence to venture out from the protective arms of the package deal. They were beginning to seek travel experiences like those associated with ecotourism, that allowed some individual freedom and provided opportunities for less mediated interactions with the culture and surrounding environment of the destination. Like the environmentalists, there was also a growing concern among the traveling public over the loss of pristine natural areas.

According to interviews of ecotravelers on holiday in Belize in Duffy’s book, *A Trip Too Far* (2002), ecotravelers (who are primarily from the Global North, or western societies) are filled with a sense of guilt about the mess their society has made of the environment and the societies of the less developed world. Ecotourism helps them to relieve some of this guilt without having to make significant changes in their own daily lives, because, hypothetically, they are contributing to the development of an environmentally sustainable industry in those places and through their ecotourism activities they are actually giving something back to these societies. However, in August 2000 contrary information was reported by Synergy for WWF-UK, in a report entitled *A Strategic Overview of Ecotourism Accreditation and Certification: The Road Forward*. It stated that, “certification schemes for environmentally and socially responsible tourism can be misleading to consumers and often fail to guarantee high standards of environmental practice.” (Maclaren no date).

**Ecotourism’s Economic Benefits.** Finally, tourism providers themselves began to take steps to protect the natural environments surrounding their operations because one, they realized that without it they would have nothing to offer the visitor, and two, by advertising their environmental stewardship, they could tap into the growing market of environmentally concerned travelers from the global North. The new catch phrase for ecotourism operational objectives is ‘the triple bottom line’, and otherwise known as ‘the three-legged stool.’ (Honey 2002), that describes these businesses as giving equal priority to economic profit, social profit, and environmental profit when measuring the success of their business. However, business will be business and economic profit will always be the very bottom of the bottom lines. Although there are operators that are genuinely concerned about the welfare of the people and the nature surrounding their operations, many make efforts towards these ends primarily for the competitive advantage it can create for them. (Duffy 2002)
2.3 EVOLUTION OF ECOTOURISM IN HAWAI'I

Tourism has been a major player in Hawaii’s economy ever since the decline of plantation agriculture in the mid-1900s. Soldiers on R&R were some of the first tourists, followed by independent travelers who arrived via passenger liner, and finally the tourism industry exploded with the introduction of the jet airplane. Today tourism is Hawaii’s number one industry, with over 6 million visitors per year (DBEDT 2000), and providing about 20% of all jobs to Hawai’i residents.

Support for alternative forms of tourism in Hawai’i began to arise in conjunction with the worldwide trend in concern over the world’s rapidly diminishing natural resources in the 1970s and 80s. In an effort to address these issues different voices began to call for a visitor industry that protects the people of Hawai’i and its fragile environment. Researchers at the University of Hawai’i (UH) began studying the alternatives to conventional tourism in 1987 (Minerbi et al. 1988), in which they explored the possibilities of resort enclaves, small accommodations, community-based tourism, and Native Hawaiian land issues arising from tourism development.

The Hawaiian culture had also experienced a renaissance and by this time Hawaiians had gained the cultural pride needed to speak out in the defense of their people and their culture. In 1989 the Hawai’i Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism announced that “all is not well in ‘paradise’” during a conference it held at St. Stephen’s Diocesan Center, entitled “Tourism in Hawaii: Its Impact on Native Hawaiians and its Challenge to the Churches.” The conference resulted in a declaration that tourism has not benefited the ‘poor and oppressed Native Hawaiian people’ and they recommended that steps be taken to create a new model of tourism that integrates Hawaiians in a meaningful way, that accurately represents and respects the Hawaiian culture, and invests in the ‘ecostructure’ of Hawai’i. (Tourism in Hawai’i: The Impact on Native Hawaiians and its Challenge to the Churches 1989)

By the early nineteen nineties there was a burgeoning nature tourism industry here in Hawai’i, but it wasn’t until 1994 that Hawai’i caught the ‘ecotourism’ fever that was spreading around the world. The University of Hawaii’s Pacific Business Center Program, which is designed to “help indigenous island economies help themselves by adapting the scientific and technical resources of the University of Hawai’i to support Pacific island economic, business and community development in a manner that is holistic,
responsible and builds local island capacity," (Pacific Business Center Program 2004) published two guidebooks on ecotourism in Hawaii and the Pacific in 1994. One is a step-by-step handbook that prospective entrepreneurs can use to develop successful and sustainable ecotourism businesses in Hawaii and the Pacific. (Bushnell 1994) The other describes how Pacific Island governments can support and control ecotourism development via appropriate policy. (Liu 1994)

Also that year, a survey administered by Hawaii’s Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) and the School of Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii showed that 23.9% of tourism businesses in Hawaii used the word ‘ecotourism’ in their marketing, although 45% of tourism businesses made no distinction between nature tourism and ecotourism. Ironically, with the growth of this nature-oriented tourism industry, Hawaii was beginning to feel the increased impact of visitors searching for pristine nature experiences. For example, “Kauai’s fabled Kalalau Trail along the Na Pali Coast was decimated by hiking traffic before the state took action in 1995 to reduce the number of trekkers”. (Salkever 1997)

In conjunction with the above study, DBEDT held the first Hawaii State Conference on Ecotourism in October of 1994, which marked the beginning of heightened environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity for Hawaii’s tourism industry. Over 600 people participated in the conference and as a result, in 1995, the Hawaii Ecotourism Association was formed as a member organization to help make ecotourism viable in Hawaii. (Hawaii Ecotourism Association Membership Directory 2001) Since the establishment of the Hawaii Ecotourism Association in 1994, membership has grown steadily, with over 100 members in 2003.

Today, even the mass tourism establishment here in Hawaii seems to understand the benefits of eco- and sustainable tourism practices. Historically, the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) focused primarily on increasing visitor numbers and visitor spending, largely ignoring the local concerns over tourism’s impacts on its host culture and natural environment, but the 2002 Hawaii Tourism Authority strategic plan illustrates a whole new focus toward a diversified tourism industry that redirects some of its energy towards niche markets like ecotourism and others that are often included under the ecotourism umbrella, such as adventure tourism, health and wellness tourism, and edu-tourism. (Ke Kumu: Strategic
Directions for Hawai‘i’s Visitor Industry 2002) Then, in 2003 the HTA launched an environmental program that includes grants for county events and projects related to sustainable tourism, a state-wide natural resources assessment, a survey of state parks, and allocation of one million dollars to the Department of Land & Natural Resources for trail and park improvements. (HTA Initiates Natural Environment Program 2003) More recently, DBEDT sponsored a Statewide Sustainable Tourism Study to analyze “the extent to which the benefits from tourism can be maintained, while sustaining the quality of our social, economic and environmental assets.” (Hawai‘i Sustainable Tourism Study 2002) In cooperation with the Office of Planning and the HTA, DBEDT spent over two years researching the sustainability of Hawaii’s tourism industry collecting public input from all stakeholder groups and employing computer-modeling techniques.

2.4 ECOTOURISM’S OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

According to Deborah McLaren, “at its best, ecotravel promotes environmental conservation, international understanding and cooperation, political and economic empowerment of local populations, and cultural preservation. At worst, ecotravel is environmentally destructive, economically exploitative, culturally insensitive, ‘greenwashed’ travel.” (Maclaren 2003) Ecotourism has the potential to significantly impact host cultures and ecosystems both positively and negatively depending on how it is practiced.

2.4.1 Opportunities

“Authentic ecotourism,” according to Martha Honey, “is a multifaceted concept that requires tourism to ensure sustainable environmental, socio-cultural, and economic development. This type of ecotourism focuses on natural destinations, creates minimal adverse impact on the host region, promotes environmental awareness, provides direct financial benefits to conservation, provides financial benefits to and empowerment of local communities, fosters respect for local cultures, is sensitive to the host country’s political and social environment, and supports human rights and international labor agreements.” (Honey 1999) Ecotourism projects that commit to all of the above requirements provide sustainable alternatives to existing destructive industries, empower local people, educate the public on environmental issues, foster mutual respect for different cultures, and thus contribute to world peace and alleviate poverty in rural areas.
There are several published examples of ecotourism projects that are producing many of the positive impacts associated with authentic ecotourism as listed above. According to Robert Basiuk, a Canadian biologist living on the island on Sarawak, the Iban people of Borneo have partnered with a local tour operator to develop a village ecotour project that has created a variety of benefits for the indigenous society as well as the natural landscape they live in. The income generated from the project has reduced their dependence on subsistence agriculture, has rekindled their interest in traditional story-telling, and has empowered the community as they gradually take on more managerial roles in the project and petition the government of Sarawak to designate their village as village conservation land to be managed for tourism by the village. The villagers’ increased stake in the health of the surrounding ecosystem has in turn benefited the local wildlife. The area is known for its amazing orangutan population, which is under government protection yet still threatened by hunters from outlying areas. Previously, although the local villagers would not hunt or harm the orangutans themselves, the did not make much effort to prevent the outside hunters from killing the beasts due to the damage orangutans tend to cause to the crops of the local farmers. Now, however, villagers are much more involved in the protection of the orangutans, keeping track of their movements and informing authorities when hunters are spotted, as village guides receive generous tips when orangutans are seen during a tour. (Basiuk 2000)

Other indigenous communities are profiting from ecotourism projects by putting the needs of the host culture and environment first, followed by the needs of the tourists and profits. The Huaorani people indigenous to the Ecuadorian Amazon host groups of eight tourists, once a month for six days during which time the visitors learn about rainforest ecology, medicinal plants, the Huaorani people and their spiritual relationship with the environment, and local crafts while staying in a small cabin with a roof thatched with palm leaves. The Huaorani set the rule of no more than one group each month in order to prevent unwanted disruptions of their hunter-gatherer lifestyle by habits introduced by the visitors. Revenue from the visitors’ accommodation is divided evenly between all the families in the village and salaries for various jobs associated with the tour are calculated by doubling what that person would earn as a oil company laborer, which is the main source of income in the area. Community representatives greet every group on the first night and discuss the Huaorani’s social and environmental concerns, then at the end of
the trip their guests are invited to raise awareness at about the Huaorani's efforts to protect their lifestyle and landscape, which has led to many visitor donations and funded training workshops, high frequency radios and solar panels for the village. (Blangy 1999)

2.4.2 Risks

Despite the acclaim it receives from many, not every ecotourism project has a happy ending. One study of 100 internationally funded projects in Ecuador showed that 95 had failed. (Mader 2003) Weaknesses in the concept of ecotourism are primarily due to the lack of commitment from the industry and host governments to its fundamental principles. In these instances, ecotourism has the potential to displace local people from their land and access to their traditional livelihoods. This happens as western ideology about conservation and capitalism is imposed upon these people and land traditionally used for subsistence is confiscated for nature preserves and property for eco-resorts. For example, Ecotourism operations in Botswana's Central Kalahari Desert have pushed the remaining few hundred San people off the land they've inhabited for centuries. And in Thailand, angry villagers near Khao Sok National Park report that they are arrested if they collect mushrooms in the forest or corals in marine parks, yet various World Bank-funded ecotourism projects are allowed to fell trees and make landscape changes without prosecution, even though it contravenes Thai law. (Motavalli 2002) In the case of many nature park-related ecotourism projects, "the benefits tend to accrue to local elites rather than to the community at large." (Cochrane 1996)

Another obstacle hindering ecotourism projects from meeting the second half of its goal to conserve nature while improving the welfare of local people is clearly explained by Cochrane (1996):

"The general service principle that 'the customer is always right' ensures that the standard of facilities and services will be dictated by the tourists' needs. Many developing countries lack the skilled manpower to provide services to the international standards required by tourists, particularly in areas where ecotourism is an option, which are often distant from cities and centers of higher education. This usually means that English-speaking guides and other staff have to be brought in from abroad or from outside the region. The ability of poor farmers and fishers to become involved in tourism is limited: they generally lack both the skill needed to work directly with the tourists and the capital to invest in good quality facilities." (Cochrane 1996)

Tourism and ecotourism alike often create dependencies on western commodities and an addiction to consumption through a phenomenon known as the 'demonstration effect', in which people from less
developed areas interact with others who have material luxuries that at first become a novelty for the indigenous people and then eventually a dependency. All types of tourism have the potential to also introduce drugs, prostitution and other illegal and dangerous activities into a community. (Epler-Wood 2002)

Ecotourism can even promote the subjugation, subservience and servility of indigenous peoples, by creating a service industry in which local people cater to foreigners’ needs and by promoting the ‘preservation’ of primitive cultures rather than allowing them to evolve. (Munt 1994) According to Ian Munt, co-author of *Tourism and Sustainability: New Tourism in the Third World*, ecotourism “underscores a nostalgic desire for the imagined, 'real' and 'authentic' primitiveness, and itself calls for cultural preservation, in a new twist to the institutionalization of racism. Images in brochures represent wildlife and natives as synonymous. "Passive, they are to be discovered, sighted, viewed, and ultimately, 'shot' [by the camera]." (Munt 1994)

It can even create worse environmental problems than mass tourism or other existing industries if it is not practiced in regionally appropriate ways. The ecotourists’ drive to travel off the beaten path ironically ends up trampling vulnerable ecosystems as they each forge their own path through previously untouched environments. For example, “The Annapurna region of Nepal has suffered deforestation, erosion, pollution and cultural and economic disruption as a result of the influx of trekkers.” (Cochrane 1996) Finally, ecotourism reinforces and works within the existing paradigm of globalization, which can homogenize the diverse cultures and natural environments of the world, inevitably making all species on earth more vulnerable to disease and disaster. (Stark 2002; Duffy 2002; Torres no date)

### 2.5 ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION TODAY

According to a study conducted by the World Tourism Organization in 2001, there were 104 Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism (VIST) in existence around the globe at that time. (World Tourism Organization 2002) The study defined a VIST as “an ongoing project or tool to stimulate suppliers in tourism to improve their environmental and/or social performance above legal compliance.” Of these, 59 were specified as “Eco-labels”, a term used interchangeably with ‘ecotourism certification’, as used in this study, and is distinguished from other types of VISTs by their purpose, which is to create and
guarantee a choice to the consumer ("better than"). The other two VIST categories are "Awards", designed to stimulate and discover innovations ("best of"), and "Self-commitments", which are designed to get voluntary support for a common goal ("supporter of"). (World Tourism Organization 2002)

According to the above study, the first eco-label, Blue Flag for beaches in Europe, began in 1987, but over half of all eco-labels were started in 1996 or later. The programs are widely varied in geographical scope, sectors covered, application processes, rigor, specific benefits and fees, but there are five main components that most programs include. These are: 1) voluntary enrollment, 2) a list of standards or criteria that the applicant must meet, 3) an assessment or auditing process, 4) some sort of recognition or logo, and 5) membership and fees.

The following is a brief overview of some of the more prominent ecotourism certification, or eco-labeling, programs. For a detailed comparison of the following programs, see Appendix A: Certification Scheme Matrix.

![A Sample of Existing Ecotourism Certification Programs](image-url)

*Figure 3. A Sample of Existing Ecotourism Certification Programs*
2.5.1 Green Globe 21 (GG21)

Green Globe 21 is one of the few worldwide programs and is run by a private for-profit company. For the purpose of this certification, ecotourism is defined as "ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation" (Green Globe 21 Homepage) and the overall goal of the program is "to facilitate environmentally sustainable tourism". (Crabtree et al. 2002) According to Martha Honey, this program is best suited for large operations because it focuses on the use of costly environmental management systems, with particular emphasis on reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. It is quite rigorous, as it requires complicated measurements of all company-produced emissions and extremely in-depth third party auditing of claims. It is also one of the most expensive certification schemes, due to both the fees themselves as well as the equipment, technology and staffing investments the applicant must make in order to meet the requirements. (Honey and Rome 2001)

The criteria that applicants must comply with vary by sector (accommodation, tour operators, etc) and by country, while all applicants must operate in accordance with their eight general principles of ecotourism. These are 1) Ecotourism focuses on a direct and personal experience of nature; 2) Ecotourism provides opportunities to experience nature in ways that lead to a greater understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment; 3) Ecotourism activities, during both development and operation, should not degrade the natural environment; 4) Ecotourism should provide a tangible contribution to conservation; 5) Ecotourism provides ongoing contributions to the local community; 6) Ecotourism must respect and be sensitive to cultural matters; 7) Ecotourism products must meet or exceed customer’s expectations; and 8) Ecotourism provides accurate and responsible information about the product that leads to realistic expectations. (Crabtree et al. 2002) These principles are based on the work of varied stakeholder groups from 20 countries who met in November, 2000 at the Mohonk Mountain House in New York. Their Mohonk Agreement (Honey and Rome 2001) was expanded and finally published as the International Ecotourism Standard in 2003 and is now used as part of Green Globe’s certification program. In addition to the criteria and principles listed there, applicants must also submit detailed information reporting on the quantities of energy used and pollution generated, complete with the documents to prove it. (Green Globe 21 Homepage)
There are three sequential levels of award available from Green Globe. To achieve the first level, called “Benchmarked”, the applicant must submit all emissions records, which are then held up to country-specific standards. Once a company is successfully benchmarked, they can apply for the next level, called “Certification.” To receive this label, the applicant must meet or exceed 100% of all baseline criteria listed in the International Ecotourism Standard under each of the eight principles listed above. Finally, to achieve the highest level, called “Advanced Certification”, one must meet all of the abovementioned criteria as well as 75% of “Ecotourism Best Practice Criteria”, also listed in the International Ecotourism Standard (see Appendix B: International Ecotourism Standard). Successful applicants are promised to receive a variety of benefits including marketing, educational, and networking benefits.

2.5.2 National Ecotourism & Accreditation Program (NEAP)

NEAP is the national certification program for Australia and seems to be the program most suitable for small to medium ecotourism operators. (Honey and Rome 2001) Since it is run by the government of Australia, it is largely subsidized and therefore one of the cheapest programs. However, it may be less rigorous than some other programs because awards are based primarily on the application questionnaire filled out by the applicant, and there are no on-site third-party audits conducted prior to certification. It also promises some of the most rewarding benefits, such as free advertising as part of an ecotourism in-flight video aired on all in-bound Qantas Airlines flights, inclusion in tourism promotion guides, website listing and logo use. Due to lack of funding this program has not been able to deliver these promises to their fullest extent. However, the NEAP program was highly acclaimed by the World Tourism Organization study, noting that 32% of tourists to Australia are aware of the program and 70% of those use NEAP to choose their travel products (World Tourism Organization 2002), making it one of the more successful and credible ecotourism certification programs in existence.

NEAP certifies both ecotourism and nature tourism products. They define nature tourism as “ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas”, whereas ecotourism is nature tourism that also “fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.” (Nature & Ecotourism Accreditation Program) Although the emphasis, funding, and procedures are very different between NEAP and Green Globe 21, much of the wording and basic concepts
used are similar because the authors of Green Globe’s International Ecotourism Standard included many representatives from NEAP. (Crabtree et al. 2002) NEAP’s overall program goals, described on their website, are to “provide industry, protected area managers, local communities and travelers with an assurance that a certified product is backed by a commitment to best practice ecological sustainability, natural area management, and the provision of quality ecotourism experiences.” (Nature & Ecotourism Accreditation Program)

Their application process is less intimidating than that of Green Globe, with very clear instructions and simple wording in the questionnaire. It is also less objective, as it depends more on the subjective opinions of the applicant and references, and encourages creativity in the ways the applicant can prove its commitment to ecotourism, whereas the emphasis of the Green Globe program is on specific measurements of emissions or energy, includes no open-ended questions, or any other subjective information such as the opinions of references.

Successful applicants can achieve one of three levels of award: Nature Tourism, Ecotourism, or Advanced Ecotourism. In order to achieve the lowest level, of “Nature Tourism,” one must comply with 100% of the Core Criteria under the first four categories listed in the application questionnaire, which include: Natural Area Focus, Interpretation, Environmental Sustainability and Contributions to Conservation. To achieve the distinction of “Ecotourism” the applicant must comply with 100% of all Core Criteria under all of the above categories plus an additional four: Working with Local Communities, Cultural Components, Customer Satisfaction, and Responsible Marketing. To achieve the highest level, the applicant must comply with all of the above as well as an unspecified amount of Bonus Criteria listed in the questionnaire and/or examples of Innovative Best Practice. The NEAP Application Document can be viewed on-line only at: http://www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp.

2.5.3 Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST)

Costa Rica’s Certification for Sustainable Tourism is tailored to medium and large operations in the ecotourism, sustainable tourism, and mass tourism sectors in the country. (Honey and Rome 2001) At the moment the program only covers accommodations, but a tour operator version is underway. It focuses primarily on environmentally sustainable business practices with some attention to social-economic
benefits to local communities. Until now, the program fees have been completely subsidized by the
government, but there are plans to implement fees soon. The application process is quite thorough, as it
includes a lengthy questionnaire, an initial on-site visit to evaluate the operator and provide guidance on
how to improve its performance, and then a second visit to verify claims once their official application for
certification has been submitted. (Certification for Sustainable Tourism)

The stated goals of CST differ from the previous two programs, clearly emphasizing the economic
profit it should produce for the country as a whole, whereas the environmental and social benefits included
are primarily a means to an end rather than an end unto themselves. The CST website states that the goals
of the program are to “improve the way in which the natural and social resources are utilized, to motivate
the active participation of the local communities, and to support the competitiveness of the business sector
in the context of the country’s tourist industry.” (Certification for Sustainable Tourism) However, as one
of the most prominent leaders in the international ecotourism industry (Honey 1999), it may be assumed
that Costa Rica’s potential applicants are already familiar with the environmental and social benefits of
ecotourism and thus do not need as much explanation.

There are five levels of award possible through CST, denoted by one to five green leaves, much
like the AAA five-star rating. The applicant’s answer to 20% of the questions must be “Yes” in order to
achieve one green leaf, 40% for two, 60% for three, 80% for four, and 95% to win the status of five green
leaves. (See Appendix C: CST Questionnaire for the list of questions and weight assigned to each) To
date, although there are a few companies that have been awarded four green leaves, CST has not awarded
any companies with five green leaves. For each level, the required percentage of “Yes” answers can be
from any of the four main categories, unlike the previous two programs, which require minimums for each
category. Thus, under the CST program, applicants that are, for example, very thorough in their business
practices under the categories of “Physical and Biological Environment” but have completely neglected the
other three categories of “Hotel Facilities”, “Customer Interpretation”, and “Socio-Economic Environment”
may still be able to get certified under one of the lower levels. If ecotourism is to be seen as a ‘three-legged
stool (Honey 2003), which requires a balanced and holistic approach to development by addressing each–
the environmental, social, and economic–leg equally, then the CST program may not be the best approach

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to promote genuine ecotourism. However, this approach welcomes a broader array of participants, since applicants who do excel in one area but not in others have a chance to achieve some level of certification without undergoing costly changes to operations at the outset. Then once a green leaf has been awarded, these companies still have an incentive to improve the areas in which they lack, to achieve more leaves in the future. In addition, anyone viewing the CST website has access to the results of each company’s questionnaire and a breakdown of their scores to provide consumers with the full information on the company’s strengths and weaknesses.

2.5.4 Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program (STEP)

The Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program™ (STEP) is a program developed and administered by a U.S. non-profit organization called Sustainable Travel International (STI), and intended to certify accommodations, tour operators, attractions, and transportation businesses based in the U.S., but operating anywhere around the globe. According to their website, “STEP is focused on enhancing tourism providers' triple bottom line of economic profitability, respect for the environment and social responsibility.” (Sustainable Travel International Website 2004) The creators of this program chose to use the term ‘sustainable travel’ in contrast to the above programs, which use ‘ecotourism’. STI defines sustainable travel as

"travel and tourism services that maintain and preserve the ecological integrity of the environment while meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of current or future generations. Sustainable travel therefore includes ‘true’ ecotourism and ‘responsible’ adventure travel."

The application fees average a bit higher than those of Australia’s program, but still significantly lower than those of Green Globe. In addition, applicants who gross less than $125,000 annually can apply for financial assistance to participate in the program. Benefits of membership and certification with STEP include website listings, ecolabels, as well as an on-line newsletter and on-line training courses. The STEP coordinators are still developing the program, and plan to include partnership benefits as well, including discounts with program partners, access to the MyClimate carbon-offset program and direct marketing support. (Krahenbuhl 2005)
Applicants who are members of STI receive a discount on STEP application fees. To become a member, they first submit a subjective description of their operation with regards to each component of this triple bottom line. At this point the operation is listed on the STI website with a caveat notation that the operator has not yet been formally certified. There are four levels of award an applicant may achieve. For each level, the criteria listed in the on-line questionnaire differ depending on the sector and size of company, identified by the applicant. Level one is being revamped. Currently, however, it’s being referred to as “Benchmarking” and, like the Green Globe program, requires the applicant to submit quantitative data for consumption levels, emissions, energy usage etc. (Krahenbuhl 2005) In addition, the applicant must also submit a list of references that can be contacted to verify information submitted. Once the applicant successfully completes this step, they are awarded a “Bronze” logo, though not considered fully certified. “Silver” is the first level of actual certification and is achieved when the applicant has been successfully benchmarked and scores between 40-59 points on a Self-Audit Questionnaire. Answers to each question are assigned between 0-3 points depending on significance of contribution toward ecotourism goals. Applicants must score from 60-79 points for “Gold” and 80-100+ points for “Platinum”, including bonus points achieved for best practice examples. (Sustainable Travel International Website 2004) See Appendix D: STEP Checklist for a sample of STEP criteria and its point system.

2.5.5 SmartVoyager

The SmartVoyager certification program was designed specifically for tour boats operating in Ecuador’s Galapagos Islands. Probably due to the fact that its target industry is so specific, SmartVoyager does not describe itself certifying either the ‘sustainable tourism’ or ‘ecotourism’ industries. However, the meaning of the award is described and reads as follows: “The program awards its green seal of approval to tour boat operators in the Galapagos Islands who meet a set of strict conservation standards for protecting the environment, wildlife and the well-being of workers and local communities.” (SmartVoyager Program) Elsewhere on the website, the program’s coordinators explain their idea of sustainable and eco-tourism:

“Both ecologically and culturally sensitive, sustainable tourism helps to generate income, employment and the conservation of local ecosystems. According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism should lead to the “management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.” As a sub-category of sustainable and nature tourism, ecotourism includes an
interpretive or learning component, typically made available to small groups of tourists by small-scale businesses. Ecotourism stresses local ownership, particularly for rural people.”

SmartVoyager is managed jointly by the international environmental non-profit organization, Rainforest Alliance, and the Ecuadorian non-profit, Conservación y Desarrollo (translated as ‘Conservation and Development’). Included in the application document, the stated purpose for the program sounds somewhat similar to that of Costa Rica’s CST with respect to positioning the national tourism, which is “to transform the concept of sustainability into something real, practical and necessary, in the context of competitiveness, with the aim to improve the way tourism relates to its environment.” (Environmental Certification Program for Tourist Boat Operations in the Galapagos Islands 2001) However, the Rainforest Alliance website describes the program as serving the philanthropic purpose of “protect[ing] the wondrous living laboratories of the Galapagos Islands, and the people that live and work on and around them.” (SmartVoyager Program)

Relative to the other programs discussed, the application SmartVoyager fees are quite expensive, starting at $1,500 annually and increasing depending on the boat size. Another notable difference is that there is only one possible level of certification, which requires compliance with 80% of the certification criteria, absence of any “fatal flaws” and a written commitment for continual improvement in subsequent years. (World Tourism Organization 2002) For a complete list of SmartVoyager’s standards, see Appendix E: SmartVoyager Criteria. This program has received significant international attention and has certified five of the 20 tour boats operating in the Galapagos, two of which are operated by one company and three from another. (SmartVoyager: Environmental and Social Certification Program for Tour Boat Operators in the Galapagos 2002) Unfortunately, the website is not well organized and lacks a directory or list of certified operators.

2.5.6 Horizons: Saskatchewan Ecotourism Accreditation System

The non-profit Ecotourism Society of Saskatchewan runs the Horizons program, which is limited to certifying accommodations, tours, and attractions operating in the mid-western Canadian province of Saskatchewan. Ecotourism in this case is defined as “enlightening nature travel experience that contributes to conservation of the ecosystem and economic resources of the host communities.” (Horizons:
Saskatchewan Ecotourism Accreditation System (2004) The overall goal of this program is “to provide an assurance that products and services will be delivered with a commitment to the environment and ecological processes, and a commitment to providing quality experiences, thus expanding business opportunities available to members and helping to conserve the natural resources upon which they depend.”

(Horizons Ecotourism Accreditation System Application Document)

This certification process is similar to Costa Rica's CST program as far as its larger amount of site visits and personal assistance the applicant receives from the program coordinators. Not only do the applicants receive pre-application advice on improvements, but also a program representative actually goes to the site to help the applicant fill out the questionnaire. Then once the application form is submitted, two program representatives return to the site to do a complete audit. Despite the frequency of site visits, which are usually the most expensive aspect of running certification programs, Horizons is surprisingly inexpensive at only $100 (Canadian dollars) for the first year and half that for each subsequent year of the three-year award. (World Tourism Organization 2002) Like SmartVoyager, Horizons only has one level of certification. However, SmartVoyager has very explicit requirements for achieving the award whereas Horizons does not specify what percentage of the criteria must be met and bases a portion of the decision on a confidential evaluation report. (Horizons Ecotourism Accreditation System Application Document)

Despite this flaw, according to the VIST study conducted in 2001, Horizons has good visibility and credibility in the public eye. (World Tourism Organization 2002)

2.5.7 Cook Islands Tourism Accreditation Scheme

Even Hawaii’s southern hemisphere counterpart, the Cook Islands, has a program in place to encourage tourism providers to be socially and environmentally responsible. This tiny group of islands has had their “Tourism Cook Islands Accreditation Scheme” in place since 1997. (Cook Islands Tourism Accreditation Scheme: Accreditation Handbook 1997) This program is run by the Cook Islands Tourism Charter (CITC) and is applicable to accommodations, tours, attractions, transportation, retailers, food & beverage operations, and cultural activities. The program provides guidelines and personal assistance for product improvement, but does not have a formal policy regarding the extent to which the applicant must meet those guidelines in order to be accredited. Each applicant is provided with several checklists of
recommended social, environmental, and service quality practices. However, the applicant is required only to submit a signed form agreeing to work towards those standards and to cooperate with CITC officials during annual site assessments. These site assessments are not audits, like those of most of the above-described programs, which are used to determine the applicants’ level of certification. Rather, they are used merely to provide officials with the company information needed to assist the applicant in making continual improvements. The Cook Islands program does not include some elements normally associated with ecotourism certification, but serves as a valuable resource for existing and potential tourism operators, and also provides an example of one way the tourism industry can be encouraged to improve its impact on the local environment and community in an island state with some similar characteristics to Hawai‘i.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

The methods used in this study took place in three phases, including a mail-out self-administered survey, follow-up interviews, and data analysis. A survey was designed to test the research questions and mailed to members of the ecotourism industry in Hawai‘i. The survey was designed to obtain an overview of the general opinions on ecotourism certification from Hawaii’s ecotourism operators. After mailing the surveys, a follow-up interview was conducted. These semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the respondents’ views as well as the day to day realities of operating an ecotourism business in Hawai‘i. Finally, the data was analyzed using simple descriptive and non-parametric statistical techniques.

3.2 SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

As a part of the development stage, several existing ecotourism certification programs were analyzed and discussions with Martha Honey, an ecotourism expert and President of The International Ecotourism Society, helped to identify the value of each program and issues experienced by each. Groups representing environmental conservation and Native Hawaiian interests in Hawai‘i were also questioned about issues believed to be of particular importance with regards to ecotourism in Hawai‘i. This information was used to identify elements to consider in the design of a Hawai‘i ecotourism certification program. The survey and interview questions were then developed to obtain the respondents’ opinions on each of these elements. The Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association (HEA) board also provided valuable input on how to ensure that the questions were understandable, appropriate and useful for the ecotourism industry in Hawai‘i. In the latest stages of development, a pilot test was conducted with 9 members of the HEA board.

3.3 SURVEY DESIGN

A full copy of my questionnaire is attached in Appendix F: Ecotourism Operator Questionnaire, and the analysis of my research results details what I expected each set of questions to explain. Provided here is a brief overview of the survey and the logic behind it. The goal of the survey was to determine to what extent it is feasible to establish an ecotourism certification program in Hawai‘i, with a specific focus
on the likelihood of the industry itself to participate if such an opportunity existed. The questionnaire content was therefore structured to explore four different sub-questions.

The first section of the questionnaire was designed both to sensitize the respondents to the concepts normally associated with ecotourism, as well as to determine the extent to which the industry members agree on the concept of ecotourism and its application in Hawai‘i. These questions are critical, since an ecotourism certification program can only be successful if it is based on an ecotourism definition agreed on by all stakeholders. The second section, again, was partly aimed at sensitizing the respondents to the realities of ecotourism certification, but also aims to discover a certification structure in which the industry members would be likely to participate. The third section aimed to determine the members’ opinions regarding the feasibility of ecotourism certification in Hawai‘i. If there were a high rate of disagreement or overwhelming negative response to any one of these three sections, an ecotourism certification program would be likely to fail if proposed without further discussion and education. The fourth section questions the respondents about the nature and scale of their operations primarily to help explain certain response tendencies and identify potential biases.

3.4 SAMPLING

The survey population was confined to members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association. This group was chosen for several reasons. First, all business members with the HEA, not only define themselves ecotourism service providers and also proclaim a commitment to the principles of ecotourism. For these reasons, one could hypothesize that, 1) they would be the most logical people to be involved in an ecotourism certification program for Hawai‘i and therefore their concerns would be most relevant, and 2) since they have already invested in ecotourism through their membership dues, they are more likely to be interested in participating in the survey and result in a good response rate. With this definition of the survey population, surveys were distributed. Five surveys returned as ‘undeliverable’ so there was a net sample population of 120 questionnaire recipients.

3.5 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Once the survey was finalized and approved by the University’s Human Subjects Committee, the President of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association sent an email to the HEA members, endorsing the project
and encouraging them to respond as soon as possible. Each survey and return envelope was coded in order to identify those people with whom continued follow-up was needed. The questionnaires were initially mailed out on March 16, 2004 and follow-up was conducted through July 21, 2004, when a second copy of the questionnaire with a new cover letter was sent to the 59 participants who had still not responded. A final email was sent to the remaining 51 members on August 12, 2004 informing them that the project was ending and all questionnaires must be received by August 27th in order to be included in the study. The final data set included 67 completed surveys, amounting to a 55.8% response rate.

3.6 FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selection of respondents during the second phase of research. Interviewees were chosen based primarily on their willingness to participate. One week after mailing out the questionnaires, all the participants were emailed to explain the interview stage of the study and begin the process of securing interview participants. From these responses, each neighbor island research trip and specific interview appointments were scheduled.

The interviews were initially structured to follow one of two alternative lines of questioning, according to the interviewee’s questionnaire responses. If the interviewee appeared to be generally in favor of ecotourism certification, then the questions would press the interviewee for their opinions regarding the logistics of a certification program. If the interviewee appeared to be skeptical about certification, then alternatives to certification would be discussed.

However, as the interviews got underway, the strategy was revised. Most of the members who expressed an interest in an interview were the HEA members who best represented ideal ecotourism practices in Hawai‘i, and consequently be most likely to prosper from an ecotourism certification program. Thus, most of the interviewees were indeed in favor of certification and the contrasting line of questioning became obsolete.

In addition, the first few interviews yielded a bounty of great ideas not previously considered, so the interview questions were also revised to address those new ideas. Upon my initial attempts to analyze my survey data, it was also apparent that many of the questions did not provide conclusive or accurate data. So the survey questions were re-addressed during later interviews.
The follow-up interviews were designed to be ‘semi-structured’ with the specific intent of allowing the discussions to flow to the matters that were of genuine concern to each interviewee as well as to allow me to pursue my general concerns. A copy of the topics originally planned for discussion, as well as a copy of the revised list later used, can be found in Appendix G: Interview Questions 1 and Appendix H: Interview Questions 2.

3.7 FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW ADMINISTRATION

One trip to each neighbor island was planned, ideally to conduct at least three interviews on each island. The reality of the project dictated that travel was possible to two neighbor islands only: Maui and the Big Island. All interview trips were intended to be completed by mid May, in order to avoid the summer tourist season, when potential interviewees would likely be too busy with their businesses to set aside time for an interview. Unfortunately, the planning and preparation for these trips well exceeded expectations and by the time the trips to Maui and the island of Hawai‘i were completed, there was no time to fit in a trip to Kaua‘i before summer. As expected, most Kaua‘i HEA members were too busy to meet between June and September, so those interviews were conducted by phone instead. At the time of the questionnaire distribution there were only two HEA members on Moloka‘i and neither of them returned a survey, which precluded them from participating in a follow-up interview.

The interviews generally lasted about 45 minutes, and were recorded with a digital voice recorder when available. Whenever possible, the ecotour product was also experienced, which helped to better understand the reality of operating their particular business. Out of the 22 interviews conducted, the products of 12 operators were experienced. Descriptions of the experiences can be found throughout subsequent chapters when relevant.

Figure 4. Personal Interview with an ecotourism operator on the Big Island of Hawai‘i, 2004
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistical methods available in Microsoft Excel functions were used for calculating frequency to analyze the aggregate responses for each question to assess the industry’s overall acceptance of ecotourism certification. In order to determine whether different types of operators were correlated with certain responses, correlation calculations and a non-parametric chi-squared test using a 95% confidence interval were applied.

The interviews were analyzed by identifying common themes with the aid of a computer software package called QSR Nvivo. Once identified, the frequency that each idea came up was tallied. The results were then inserted into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to be summarized.

3.9 SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

The combination of a self-administered survey and selected follow-up interviews was used to examine support for ecotourism certification by the current ecotourism industry in Hawai‘i. The expectation was that most members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association would support the principles of ecotourism. However, some apprehension was expected regarding the details of such a program due to economic constraints, particularly with smaller companies. It is also expected that firms would be relatively undecided over the actual outcomes of such a program on their businesses and on Hawai‘i, due to Hawaii’s unique environment, culture, social structure, economy, location and destination image.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data collected from a self-administered questionnaire and from personal interviews. The significance of the data is also discussed, in reference to the initial research questions and impact on the potential success of an ecotourism certification program. The first section describes the participants in the study. Discussed next are several key issues affecting the potential support for an ecotourism certification program in Hawaii’s near future. These include agreement on the concepts underlying ecotourism certification, industry confidence in certification, and potential risks. Finally, preferences for specific program features are presented and explained. Please refer to Appendix F for a copy of the questionnaire and Appendix G and Appendix H for lists of the proposed interview questions.

4.1 STUDY PARTICIPANT PROFILES

A total of 67 questionnaires were completed and returned. Twenty-two of those respondents were later interviewed. All of the participants were members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association and most operated ecotourism-related businesses. The remaining six included students and professors in ecotourism-related fields. The associated ecotourism-related businesses in this study include a wide variety of activities, sizes, market segments, and geographical locations, which are presented in the following sections.

4.1.1 Activities & Services Provided

Many of the ecotourism operators identified more than one service provided by their business and most included guided tours and activities, illustrated in Table 1. as the total amount of responses well exceeds the number of respondents (67). The row entitled, “Percent” in Table 1. represents the percentage of respondents offering each particular type of service. It shows that 62.69% of all respondents offer tours as one of their services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Ecotourism Services Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44
The array of visitor activities conducted by those respondents who provide guided tours or activities is quite broad. Thirty-four, or 55.74% of all respondents operating a business provided at least one land-based activity such as hiking or birding whereas 13, or 21.31% included at least one ocean-based activity such as kayaking or snorkeling. The amount of respondents providing a particular ecotourism activity is summarized in Table 2. below.

### Table 2.

*Array of Activities Provided by Respondents Associated with Ecotourism Businesses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hiking</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motor vehicle site-seeing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attraction tours</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classes (not cultural)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snorkeling</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural classes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horseback riding</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kayaking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birding</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marine mammal viewing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sailing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canoe paddling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zipline rides</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backpacking</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>air tours</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.1.2 Company Positioning

Respondents associated with an ecotourism-related business were asked to rank, from a list of seven, the company features that was highlighted most its promotional materials. The list included four features associated specifically with ecotourism principles, including environmental responsibility, social responsibility, nature education, and cultural education. The other three features listed were product uniqueness, quality of service, and price, which are commonly used for marketing in all tourism segments. Despite the fact that every business in question was involved in ecotourism, only a few companies gave highest marketing priority to features specifically associated with the principles of ecotourism (see Table 3. & Table 4. below). In contrast, most companies associated with the study highlighted more general features, such as the uniqueness of their product and the quality of service provided. These results would imply that the ecotourism niche has not been completely carved away from the broader tourism market in
Hawai'i, requiring that ecotourism operators continue to compete for market share not only within their niche, but across the entire tourism market.

Table 3., below, presents the number of respondents that ranked each of the listed features as their number one feature highlighted in promotional materials. Each respondent was asked to rank the top three most important features, but Table 3. is concerned only with the top rank from each survey.

**Table 3.**

*Most Important Feature Highlighted for Each Company's Marketing Strategy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Product Feature</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Uniqueness</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Education</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Responsibility</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. below calculates the weighted score of each promotional feature, which includes the ranks of 1st, 2nd and 3rd most important, in order to determine the overall most important feature used by respondents in their marketing strategies. The score was calculated by multiplying the number of times a feature was chosen for 1st place by three points, for 2nd place by two, and for 3rd place by one, then adding the sub-totals of each rank resulting in a total score for each feature listed. The different features have been grouped according to association with ecotourism or applicable to all tourism segments. The ecotourism-related features have been further grouped into “Responsible Business Practices” and “Educational Experience” categories. Under each individual weighted score, the weighted score for each group is also presented.

**Table 4.**

*Weighted Score of Product Features Highlighted in Marketing Materials*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Categories</th>
<th>Ecotourism Specific</th>
<th>Applicable to All Tourism Segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible Business Practices</td>
<td>Educational Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Feature</td>
<td>Environmental Responsibility</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted Score</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.3 Company Size

The ecotourism-related businesses associated with the respondents included a wide range of sizes, according to annual revenue, number of employees, and facility size. Table 5. shows that of the six revenue categories listed, the most frequently selected was the highest category, indicating an annual revenue of over one million dollars per year, followed by the second lowest for-profit category of $30,001-$80,000 per year.

Table 5.
Breakdown of Annual Revenue Among Ecotourism Operator Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Revenue</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-$30,000</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001-$80,000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,001-$150,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,001-$500,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,001-$1,000,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over $1,000,000</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of employees was also widely varied amongst the companies associated with the survey respondents. Of the 60 respondents to this question, 27 were owner-operated with no other employees. The average staff size of all companies associated with the study participants was 29.2 paid employees, including full-time, part-time and seasonal. The company with the largest staff had 310 paid employees.

Most of the visitor accommodations associated with survey respondents were small facilities. Twelve of the 25 responses to this question indicated less than 10 rooms, whereas six of the facilities had between 10 and 70 rooms, and the seven others had over 70 rooms.
4.1.4 Geographical Distribution

As shown below in Figure 5., the geographical distribution of participants includes every inhabited island from the Big Island of Hawai‘i to Kaua‘i, except Moloka‘i and Lana‘i. Two participants were based in Canada and California.

![Image: Geographical Distribution of Study Participants]

**Legend:**
- • = Participant in Survey Only
- ▲ = Participant in Survey & Interview

*Not Shown: 1 Survey Participant from California
1 Survey Participant from British Columbia, Canada*

*Figure 5. Geographical Distribution of Study Participants*

Table 6. illustrates the geographical contrast between the survey and interview participants. Of the 67 survey participants, most were from the islands of Hawai‘i and O‘ahu. Of the 22 interview participants most were from the island of Hawai‘i, followed by Maui, Kaua‘i, and O‘ahu respectively.

*Table 6.
Island/Regional Distribution of Study Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawai‘i</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maui</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O‘ahu</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaua‘i</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION CONCEPTS

4.2.1 Defining Ecotourism in Hawai’i

There was a high level of agreement among the study participants over how ecotourism should be defined in Hawai’i. Participants were questioned on the defining elements of ecotourism in Hawai’i, asked for their suggestions for an official statewide definition of the term, and questioned on the appropriateness of the term itself.

4.2.1.1 Official Definition for Ecotourism in Hawai’i

The first question on the survey (see Appendix F: Ecotourism Operator Questionnaire) asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the Hawai’i Ecotourism Association (HEA) definition of ecotourism. The average score was 4.35, where a score of one translates as ‘strongly disagree’ and a score of five translates as ‘strongly agree’. A closer look of the data reveals that over half of all respondents ‘strongly agree’, and almost 87% either agree or strongly agree with the following definition:

“Ecotourism is nature and culture based tourism that is ecologically sustainable and supports the well being of local communities.”

While encouraging, the high level of agreement is not surprising, as one would expect some bias toward the HEA definition from a survey population in which every respondent is a member of the organization proposing definition in question.

Of the total respondents (67) to this question, 27.5% suggested some type of change be made to the Hawai’i Ecotourism Association definition of ‘ecotourism’. Almost all the changes suggested fell into one of the following categories: 1) a general desire to make the definition more specific, or 2) to include the educational component of ecotourism in the definition. This emphasis on education was reinforced during the interviews, as several interviewees stressed that a high quality educational experience is in fact one of the defining elements of ‘ecotourism.’ For example, one said “you can basically get an ecotour from a bus window as long as somebody is educating you about the land and ecology” and another elaborated, “You must educate the visitor... so people come away with a different understanding about what is here than they did when they arrived.”
4.2.1.2 Defining Elements of Ecotourism in Hawai‘i

Respondents were also asked what general practices, or principles, are most important for a business to incorporate if they wish to operate under the label of ecotourism in Hawai‘i. The six principles listed were common to all or most of the certification programs described in detail in Appendix A: Certification Scheme Matrix, and included the following: 1) Participating in environmental conservation, 2) Fostering cultural sensitivity, 3) Contributing positively to the local community, 4) Providing nature experiences for the visitor, 5) Providing quality educational experiences for the visitor, and 6) Being economically sustainable. Respondents were asked to rank the top three most important principles from this list. In addition to average score, Table 7. presents the weighted score for each principle, calculated by multiplying the number of times a principle was chosen for 1st place by three points, for 2nd place by two, and for 3rd place by one, then adding the sub-totals of each rank resulting in a total score for each principle listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Nature Exp</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Rank</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted Score</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average rank of each principle, presented in Table 7., shows that most respondents believe all the practices listed to be important to the label of ecotourism in Hawai‘i. However, by calculating the weighted score of each, it is clear that environmental conservation is considered the most critical to ecotourism in Hawai‘i, which is not surprising considering ecotourism’s environmentally-focused roots (Honey 1999) as well as the vulnerable state that exists for Hawaii’s native ecosystems. One respondent aptly explained, “It is not tourism-eco, it’s eco-tourism. ‘Eco’ comes first and it is our responsibility to take care of the ecosystem.”

More recently, cultural sensitivity and appreciation has been incorporated into most conceptions of ecotourism around the world, and is reflected above tying for second place with education. One interviewee noted about ecotourism, “It should be ‘eco’ and people are part of the ecology.” When asked, most interviewees agreed that preserving the sense of place of an ecotourism destination is essential to the concept of ecotourism, and the sense of place is created not only by the ecological landscape, but by the
cultural and social landscape as well. Furthermore, seven interviewees specifically noted that due to the intimate relationship that persists even today between Hawaii’s natural environment and the cultural identity of the Hawaiian people, Hawaii’s sense of place could only be preserved by ensuring the perpetuation of both. One respondent said, “in Hawai’i it’s hard to understand the culture without understanding more about nature.” Another respondent added that ecotourism in Hawai’i needs to “embrace the Hawaiian sense of place, express a commitment to Hawai’i. The Hawaiian sense of place is all the immigrants too.”

This ‘Hawai’i sense of place’ is founded primarily on Hawaiian cultural values, as most immigrant cultures now found here have evolved to incorporate the values of Hawaii’s host culture. However, since traditional Hawaiian culture encouraged hospitality to newcomers and welcomed new ideas (Kanahele 1992), traditional Hawaiians and the evolving Hawaiian society also adopted many of the values and customs rooted in the cultures of those who immigrated here during the era of the sugar plantations. It is all the different parts of these various cultures that combine to create the colorful culture of modern Hawai’i and the human component of Hawaii’s unique sense of place.

Some discrepancies existed between the survey results and interview responses in regards to creating community benefits through ecotourism businesses. It was ranked lower than the others on many surveys, accompanied by comments such as “this is the responsibility of the State” scribbled into the margins. Yet, during my interviews I found that often even those who gave it a low rank actually made significant efforts to create community benefits through their ecotourism operation. For example, I was interviewing a general manager of a large operation who ranked ‘community improvement’ lower than the other principles listed, but then proudly described several of his business practices that are perfect examples of efforts that go above and beyond the call of duty to create tangible benefits for the local community residents. This operation hosts Hawaiian students from Kamehameha Schools to come to and learn traditional Hawaiian fishing skills, and it even created their own entire fire station, which responds to community fires that occur closer to their facility than to the city fire station. Many other interviewees expressed a strong commitment to their community as well, with comments such as this one, “Community
is critical because this is where we live. We want to take care of it. We want to live in an environment
where people take care of each other."

Writers in the field of ecotourism argue that the emphasis of ecotourism is on the quality of the
education provided to the visitor and the benefits upon the destination as a result of responsible business
practices. (Epler-Wood 2002) Many of the interview respondents expressed agreement. For example one
respondent said, “How can we improve the earth’s environment without increasing knowledge about what
it is?” Regardless, most of my respondents also appear to feel that ecotourism is still a subset of nature
tourism, which must involve direct interaction with nature. “You have to encounter the environment, be in
the environment. You can’t just show pictures,” said one interviewee.

Many interviewees also mentioned that ecotourism is more of a company philosophy rather than
isolated ‘eco’ business practices. They felt that one of the first steps in becoming a genuine ecotourism
entity is to establish a formal company mission statement that embodies the values associated with
ecotourism. As one interviewee put it, “It’s a management attitude, a corporate culture regardless of the
company’s size or the type of activities they offer.” Another said, “The company needs to have a
philosophy or mission that all the employees embrace and come up with together.”

4.2.1.3 Ecotourism Term Alternatives

Survey respondents were asked for their opinion on the most suitable name for the ‘ecotourism’
industry in Hawai‘i and the associated certification program in question. They were provided with a list of
nine candidate terms and one blank space for terms not listed. Many of the terms provided were extracted
from the ecotourism literature (Minerbi 1994) (Honey and Rome 2001) (World Tourism Organization
2002), another was a suggestion by a professor of ecotourism here at the University of Hawai‘i, and two
were terms invented by finding Hawaiian words that coincided with the central values of ecotourism and
placing the words ‘travel’ or ‘tourism’ behind them.

Table 8. below shows that the term ‘ecotourism’ was preferred far more than any other term listed,
including those that submitted new terms. In my interviews, it was often noted that the reason why
‘ecotourism’ was the preferred term was primarily because this is the only word, if any, most of the public
is already somewhat familiar with. In the words of one respondent, “This is the word that, as far as I know,
the world at large has knighted to carry this forward.” ‘Ecotourism’ first appeared in the literature in the 1970s (Honey 2003) and although its definition is still being argued over thirty years later, at least it is finally becoming fairly well known. If we were to create a new term, it could take just as long to get it into the lexicon of the average traveler.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Terms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Cultural Tourism</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edu-Tourism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Tourism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Tourism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightened Tourism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malama Tourism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally Sensitive Tourism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloha Travel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is possible that more respondents would have selected ecotourism if the question had been clearer. For instance, one of my interviewees had selected ‘edu-tourism’ on the survey, but during our interview explained that since I had listed that term and that is a more precise definition for what her operation engages in, she selected that term. However, she considered edu-tourism to be under the broader category of ecotourism and would prefer the proposed certification program to stay with the more familiar and inclusive term, ‘ecotourism’.

Although more respondents checked the box for ‘other’ than for ‘eco-cultural tourism’, no two of the ‘other’ words submitted were the same and thus the term ‘eco-cultural tourism’ is actually the second choice word. The ‘other’ terms included: Kokua (cooperative) Tourism, Agritourism, Interpretive Tourism, Edu-cultural Tourism, Adventure Travel, Geotourism, Eco & Culturally Sensitive Tourism, and Educational Travel & Tourism.

4.2.2 Goals of Ecotourism Certification

One of the first few interviews brought up an important factor in the eventual success of an ecotourism certification program, and previously un-addressed by the study. There must be some
agreement on the goals, or intended consequences, of running such a program. The subsequent interviews revealed four different outcomes that a certification program could be geared towards: 1) Recognition of those operations already demonstrating best practices in ecotourism; 2) Education & Elevation of the entire industry to a higher commitment to the values of ecotourism; 3) Monitoring the industry to discourage exploitation of the term; and, 4) Facilitating participation in the industry for members of Hawaii’s host culture, who may face greater barriers to entry.

The interview participants who were questioned regarding program goals (eight of the 13) favored designing a program that endeavors to Elevate & Educate the industry. One person said, “Elevate - good word! Yes, educate the industry and encourage beneficial ‘eco-practices’, rather than punish. Positive reinforcement is best.” Another confirmed this sentiment, stating, “It’s better to educate and train folks to become more ‘eco’. We really should avoid excluding anyone.”

The next most popular goal, receiving six votes from interviewees, was to provide recognition for those companies who exemplify ecotourism ideals already. This goal was favored, mostly, by operators who are renowned for their quality eco-products and thus would benefit from a program aimed to provide some recognition for operations like their own. For example, “Our company mission is to be a conservation organization, educate people and conduct research, so we aren’t really looking for someone to set a standard to aspire to but more for recognition of what we have already achieved, because we feel like we are already there,” said one of these respondents. However, one respondent pointed out that “recognition is nice but you can’t eat it,” exemplifying the cost-benefit analysis that most operators need to do before they can realistically commit their energy into one thing or another. This indicates that the recognition is only valuable if it provides significant exposure and is based on a well-respected certification program. The other two goals, Monitoring and Facilitating Entry, each received three votes, illustrating a concern for these issues but indicating that they probably shouldn’t be the main objectives of a new certification program in Hawaii.

4.2.3 Summary of Program Foundation Results

According to members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association, a Hawaii-based ecotourism certification program should be founded on the following ideas. In order to label one’s business as
‘ecotourism’, the operation must express and contribute to the perpetuation of Hawaii’s sense of place. This means that the business must operate in a way that minimizes any negative impact on, as well as take extra steps to provide positive contributions to, Hawaii’s natural environment, local communities, and cultural heritage. In addition, Hawai‘i ecotourism operators should also foster an appreciation for Hawaii’s unique sense of place, amongst their staff and visitors, through their interpretive training and content whenever possible.

‘Ecotourism’, the term already most widely used, is also the preferred term of most study respondents. Most also support the HEA definition of the term, with a few minor additions and changes. These additions include the importance of the educational component of ecotourism, as well as the importance of Hawaii’s sense of place. A definition based on the HEA definition that incorporates these ideas, such as the one below would probably appeal to most respondents.

“Ecotourism is nature and culture based educational tourism that endeavors to nurture a destination’s sense of place, is ecologically sustainable and supports the well being of local communities.”

The purpose of a certification program should thus be to encourage the visitor industry to make greater efforts toward the above practices, by providing information and assistance to those interested in improving their practice of ecotourism, as well as recognition for achieving excellence in those practices.

4.3 CONFIDENCE IN ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION

Another important factor in the success of ecotourism certification in Hawai‘i, as in any market-based venture, is the degree of confidence held by its potential participants. The survey addressed this issue in three ways. One question asked participants whether they support the establishment of an ecotourism certification program in Hawai‘i. The next two questions were aimed to determine the likelihood that the respondents would actually participate in such a program if one were initiated, indirectly, by questioning them on the quantity and type of benefits they expect the program to produce, and their concerns, or potential risks of such a program.

4.3.1 Certification Program Support

Results presented in Table 9. show that well over half of the respondents were supportive of certification in Hawai‘i, whereas less than 6% were against the idea. Many were unsure. Five out of the 21
undecided respondents made comments expressing that they would be in favor as long as the program met a certain condition, such as affordability, or specifics on who should administer the program. This would imply that, with the right design, promotion and education about certification and its benefits, the undecided respondents might eventually join those in favor of certification, bringing the percentage of industry members in favor closer to 90%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9. Support for Hawai‘i Ecotourism Certification Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Anticipated Benefits of Certification

Survey participants were questioned regarding the improvements they would expect of their business and clientele if certified. The theory behind this question is that people are more likely to participate in activities if they believe their participation will result in tangible benefits to themselves, or to their business, personally. If most of the respondents indicated that they don’t expect certification to result in any of the benefits listed, then one could conclude that the industry is not convinced of the value of such a program and would not be likely to participate. The potential benefits listed included: 1) Increased Market Share/Higher Demand for your Product; 2) Willing to Pay More for your Product; 3) Greater Client Interest in Learning; 4) Increase in Open-Minded Clients; 5) Decreased Resource Use by Clients (e.g. water, electricity, waste generation), and; 6) None of the above. There was also a space for “other” benefits not listed.

Only four out of the 65 respondents to this question, or 6.15%, indicated that they did not expect the certified status to bring them any tangible benefits, by selecting “None of the above.” The other 61 respondents selected at least one improvement they expected certification to bring to their business, and almost 70% of those anticipated two or more benefits to come from certification.

Including those submitted in the space for “other”, there were three general categories of improvements that respondents expected to experience as a result of ecotourism certification: 1) increased profits, 2) improved visitor behavior, and 3) increased industry support or power.

The last row of Table 10. shows that almost half, 42.48%, of the responses to this question indicated that their clientele would improve in a way that would result in higher profits for the company,
which illustrates that a large proportion of the ecotourism industry in Hawai‘i has confidence that participating in an ecotourism certification program is worthwhile from a cost-benefit analysis perspective. Furthermore, even more responses, 55.56%, indicated that certification would improve visitor behavior and therefore increase the positive impacts of tourism on the islands’ society and nature.

### Table 10. Expected Benefits of Certification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>Increased profits</th>
<th>Improved visitor behavior</th>
<th>Increased Support from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Benefits</td>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>Pay More</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Respondents (100%=65)</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Freq for each Type</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Responses for each Type (100%=153)</td>
<td>42.48%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>1.96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.3 Certification Concerns

The positive responses to each of the above questions implies that, once developed, the ecotourism industry in Hawai‘i would be anxious to participate in an ecotourism certification program, thus ensuring success from the demand side. However, participants also noted potential issues that would preclude their participation or thwart the success of the program from an administrative angle. The survey included one question addressing the potential hardships faced by the applicants and a variety of concerns were discussed throughout my interviews, including personal hardships, administrative complexity, as well as additional certification challenges specific to Hawai‘i.

The survey asked respondents to rank a list of three common obstacles noted at an HEA Board of Directors meeting in 2002 and in the literature (Honey 2002). Respondents were also provided with a space to insert a different obstacle that they might consider to have more bearing on their ability to participate than those listed. The first two obstacles listed are commonly associated with ‘red tape’ and included 1) costly application process, and 2) time consuming or complicated application process. The third option was more specific to the issue at hand and was written as follows, ‘high minimum qualifying standards (requiring expensive operational upgrades for some businesses)’. Table 11. below presents the
weighted score for each obstacle and illustrates the relative importance of each. Weighted score was calculated by multiplying the number of times an obstacle was chosen for 1st place by three points, for 2nd place by two, and for 3rd place by one, then adding the sub-totals of each rank resulting in a total score for each obstacle listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighted Score</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Rigidity</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3.1 Time & Money

The results of both the survey and the interview revealed that money and time prevail as the two most prohibitive factors over decisions to participate in any activity relying on voluntary participation. Since most of the ecotourism operations in the State are very small operations, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents felt that steep prices would be the most important factor prohibiting them from participating in a certification program. It also makes sense, then that a time consuming or complicated application process would also be a major hindrance for my respondents, since small businesses operations don’t have the extra staff time to spend on a lengthy voluntary procedure and are often inexperienced in navigating through complex bureaucratic procedures.

4.3.3.2 Program Rigidity Vs. Program Credibility

Criteria that are too stringent for companies to feasibly meet, indicated on Table 4.3.3 as ‘Rigidity’, was of concern to very few survey respondents. They are more concerned about the potential negative impacts of ecotourism than they are over the potential difficulty that they may have meeting these standards. Four out of the six of those that noted ‘other’ obstacles besides the above three listed on the survey, were most concerned about consumer buy-in and the overall validity of the program. This concern was reflected in some of the interviews as well, “Need to get buy-in; consumers need to know that our badge means something and others don’t.” And getting consumers to ‘buy-in’ to the idea of Hawai’i as an ecotourism destination is also believed to be a difficult task, due to our long history as a mass tourism destination. As one interviewee explained, “Because we’ve been so entrenched in large-scale tourism for so long, it’s harder for us than some of the countries in the South Pacific that have been developing their tourism industries only recently, many since the introduction of ecotourism concept.”
Many respondents placed great importance on implementing the costly procedures of personal interviews and site visits by auditors in order to maintain the program's credibility. In the words of one respondent, ecotourism certification “needs to be real stringent to hold those who are certified accountable. Develop a logo like a five-star rating, eventually if it becomes global, people will recognize it as meaning some thing significant.” According to many interviewees, both the on-site audits as well as quantifiable minimum requirements are a must in order to maintain program credibility. Four respondents also mentioned that the addition of “secret shoppers” would greatly increase the credibility the certification program with regard to evaluating the visitor experience aspect of ecotourism criteria. As one mentioned, “You can talk and email all you want, but until you see and experience the product for yourself you can’t really evaluate it. Credibility is important.” However, this activity can be expensive as the “secret shopper” may require salary fees, incur air travel expenses, as well as fees to experience the product, since, as one respondent put it,

“You couldn’t make the company give a free tour, because then the company would know when this person was coming to inspect the tour and could prepare to raise the quality of their visitor experience up to standard for just that one day, and, too, the auditor might feel obliged to report in favor of the company in repayment for the complimentary services.”

There was another concern among interviewees that “some will attempt to purchase a certification without following through, exploiting the certification process.” Another thing that could corrupt the process is politics, said a few respondents: “We can’t let politics get involved. We cannot let the State control the certification program. If the State gets involved it will be a political process and the politics of Hawai’i stink.”

All of these concerns further illustrate the cost-benefit analysis the industry members will certainly consider before participating. They want to be sure that the time and money they do spend in this endeavor is going to provide them with increased profits, and if consumers don’t see the program as credible, it certainly won’t be bringing in extra customers or warrant higher prices for their products.

4.3.3.3 Barrier to Entry for Non-Westerners

Besides those presented on the questionnaire, interview respondents presented several additional points of concern. The one that came up most frequently was that ecotourism certification is a very
‘Western’ notion, steeped in paperwork and other bureaucratic red tape that is often a daunting process even for the average ‘Western’ person, but might be an impenetrable jungle for a non-Westerner to navigate. This is a serious concern considering the fact that some of the goals of ecotourism are to empower local people, reduce economic leakage often associated with conventional tourism, and provide opportunities for the visitor to make authentic and meaningful connections with the host culture and the place itself, because the majority of Hawaii’s host cultures are based on non-Western groups.

The risk in this case is that many local operators may not apply for certification just because the many layers of paperwork involved in the process intimidates them. If ecotourism certification increases the consumer demand for certified ecotourism in Hawai‘i, a local operator providing exactly the same experience with exactly the same business ethics will be at a disadvantage to an operator who moves here from another westernized culture and is very comfortable with the idea of applying for certification, therefore tapping into that consumer demand while the local operator does not. Ecotourism certification, in this case, will not meet its goal of empowering local people, but could in fact undermine that power. One respondent explained this well: “You must understand that only people with certain kinds of cultural skills can efficiently deal with bureaucracy, versus the average local Hawaiian taro farmer who won’t have those skills, which makes it so hard for them to get into the business. We need to provide a way to give them a leg up since they are really the best ones to be leading ecotourism programs. A certification program could just become another bureaucratic barrier to non-westerners.”

Another respondent provided a good example of the issues that arise when someone from a non-western society is forced to operate within the structures erected by western societies, “Even among our cultural staff, sticking to a schedule or fee structure or timeline is so uncomfortable for them when their intent is to make an object and to make it well, irrespective of how long it takes, irrespective of what you’ve promised the person that’s coming in. And so there are those areas where we are sort of shoving a square peg into a round hole.” One possible solution to this problem, suggested during one of the interviews, was to design the program to be based less on paperwork and scientific, numerical data, and instead allowing applicants to contribute in creative ways and present their contributions in an open-ended fashion. This strategy would certainly reduce some barriers to entry, but could also make the judging
process for certification, and levels thereof, more complicated and potentially unfair. Another way that barriers to non-Westerners could be reduced is through training opportunities and technical assistance for operators to better navigate the Westernized application system. This success of this strategy is exemplified in the Costa Rican Certification for Sustainable Tourism, detailed in Appendix A: Certification Scheme Matrix and further described in Chapter 2.

4.3.3.4 Hawaii-Specific Challenges

Several additional challenges both produce Hawaii’s unique sense of place and are produced by the uniqueness of the place. Since it is this sense of place that visitors seek and that the principles of ecotourism seek to protect, the developers of an ecotourism certification program in Hawai’i must endeavor to address these issues as much as possible.

Sustainable Infrastructure. Another common concern amongst my interviewees was the lack of infrastructure available to facilitate environmental sustainability within their business. “Hawai’i is like a developing country because it doesn’t have the infrastructure to do many things sustainably,” said one respondent. Not only is Hawaii far behind much of the rest of the country in recycling efforts, but apparently it is also difficult to find recycled products. One interviewee told me, “I can’t find anyone on Maui to print our brochures on 100% recycled paper” and suggested that the Hawai’i Ecotourism Association negotiate with certain suppliers to provide that kind of thing and in return promise that HEA members will do all of their printing business, or whatever they are selling, with them.

Hiring Local Staff. Related to the previous issue is the challenge of employing local people. One ecotourism operator said it was difficult to find local people with the desired qualifications and skills to work as an interpretive guide. This could be remedied if the certification program includes a mechanism to facilitate the training of local residents to fulfill this need, creating a win-win situation for both operators and the local communities and the success of the certification program.

Government Bureaucracy. One Hawai’i native described the government in Hawai’i to be very unfriendly to the start-up of small businesses. He said that, due to government red tape, he wasn’t able to run his first tour until two years after his business was, or so he thought, all set to go. Certification might be just another layer of red tape discouraging, not only non-westerners, but all local people from entering
this industry. On the other hand, a certification program could reduce the red tape by providing participants a privileged status if they can show the government that they are working toward ecotourism certification, allowing them to skip or speed up some of the steps normally required by government to start a business in Hawai‘i.

The same respondent also mentioned how difficult the government makes it for an individual or a business to contribute to the management of natural resources here. "During the course of my business start up I was an active volunteer for maintaining trails and we actually adopted the Aiea Loop Trail, even though the State Parks Administrator at the time was completely against it. Kurt Cottrell [current director of the State Na Ala Hele Trail Program] convinced him to let us. We did all this work and then when we had our grand re-opening with a ribbon cutting and blessing, the Administrator came up and the only thing he could say was "Who’s going to clean up this gravel pile?" Although the respondent was the only one to mention this kind of problem during an interview, I am also familiar with a similar situation faced by another one of the interviewees who has also been actively trying to adopt a trail she uses for her business, which is in dire need of management. Perhaps with a certification program in place, there will be more operators requesting the government to let them adopt certain natural areas and the government will finally create policy and mechanisms to enable this and our public land areas will be better off.

Poorly Understood Native Ecosystems. Several interviewees noted that there are added challenges of managing natural resources that are as unusual, limited, and fragile as those that exist here in Hawai‘i. One respondent argued that Hawaii’s ecosystems are so complex and unusual that even scientists have yet to properly understand them enough to know what the best way to interact with them, making it almost inappropriate to promote one activity over another.

Unique Cultural Protocol. Regulating, or setting standards on, the issue of appropriate information distribution also poses a significant challenge here in Hawai‘i. Two different respondents mentioned the cultural protocol associated with historical and cultural information. As one respondent said, "some knowledge needs to be earned and since the Hawaiian people had no written language until the arrival of New England missionaries just a couple centuries ago, much of the history is up for debate, and who is to say what is correct and when it is appropriate to share this information?" Certification could help
with this issue by using a group of cultural experts to provide guidelines to applicants on the proper way to go about sharing cultural information. There could be an auxiliary class provided, such as the already existing "Kaanainaloina Hawai‘i: Sharing Hawaii’s Heritage" certification course out of Honolulu Community College or the “Field Interpreter Certification” course at the University of Hawai‘i Hilo campus, which educates guides and tourism operators on the stories they should be sharing and how and to whom. If participation in such classes is a requirement or a heavily weighted criterion for ecotourism certification, this issue could be resolved.

4.3.4 Summary of Certification Confidence

Study participants expressed both a high level of confidence in a Hawaii-based ecotourism certification program and a large quantity of concerns over the potential risks of such a program. The issues of greatest concern were the potentially prohibitive time and money that participation in the program might require, followed by the necessity of maintaining program credibility. If these issues are given highest priority with regards to the design and development of such a program, the probability that the industry will embrace certification will also be high.

4.4 PREFERRED PROGRAM FEATURES

4.4.1 Benefits for Certified Members

Respondents were provided with eight different benefits commonly associated with existing certification programs in various parts of the world (Honey and Rome 2001), plus one blank for ‘other’, and asked to rank the top three that they would find most valuable. The benefits listed included:

- Listing on the ecotourism certification website
- Listing in a travel guide
- Permission to use a certified eco-label, or award logo, on the company’s promotional materials
- Subscription to an ecotourism-oriented newsletter
- Access to workshops and training on topics related to running an ecotourism business
- Land-use permit priority over those companies without certification
- Discounts on insurance, sustainable technology, and supplies useful to ecotourism businesses; and
- The personal satisfaction of knowing that they are being a conscientious business owner

Table 12., on the next page, illustrates the number of times each benefit was chosen as a respondents’ first choice benefit of ecotourism certification. This table does not factor any benefits ranked lower than first. These results show that a listing on a website is perceived to have the greatest amount of benefit to the greatest amount of respondents.
Table 12.

Highest Ranking Certification Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecolabel</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Guide</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL VOTES</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. below illustrates the weighted score for each benefit by category of respondent. Weighted score was calculated by assigning each rank with a corresponding number of points and multiplying that by the frequency a benefit was selected, then adding the sub-totals of each rank.

The results indicate that Hawaii’s ecotourism industry seeks primarily greater market exposure, then business assistance and training. The need for greater exposure reflects ecotourism’s early stage of...
development here in the islands. Hawai‘i is not yet known as an ecotourism destination, but rather is often considered to be a place for conventional resort tourism. Furthermore, world-wide ecotourism is not well known among the general traveling population either, explaining the emphasis on benefits associated with places travelers might look to assist them with their vacation planning. The desire for business assistance and training is also a reflection of the industry stage, as well as the small-scale nature of many ecotourism operations. New and small businesses often struggle with the overhead costs and bureaucratic requirements of running a business, and usually don’t have enough extra funds or staff to invest in adequate training for employees, making the benefits of permitting priority, discounts, and workshops very attractive.

**Website Listing** received by far the highest weighted score and was the benefit most frequently ranked number one, which illustrates the high marketing value of the Internet experienced by the travel industry, and especially the alternative travel market, today.

**Travel Guides** received the second highest overall weighted score, but received less high ranking votes than both Permits and Ecolabels, demonstrating that it is perceived to be generally useful by most service providers, but it’s certainly not the hot medium the internet is amongst the alternative travel market today.

**Eco-certified Labels/Logos** received the second highest number one votes, but only the third highest overall score. This would imply that the use of ecolabels might be more beneficial to one type of operator than another, such as those that rely more on brochures for advertising (i.e. tour operators or visitor attractions), as brochures are one of the most obvious places to call attention to such an award. An analysis of the respondents who indicated a preference for ecolabels revealed that a large proportion, 58.33%, of these respondents were those that provide activities for the tourist to do while staying in Hawai‘i. Those that did not rank ecolabels highest included many providers of services that are generally contacted prior to arriving in the islands or otherwise have less need for brochures, such as accommodations, media providers, travel agents, and transportation providers.

Like Ecolabels, the benefit of **Permitting Priority** received the fourth highest overall score and tied with Ecolabel for second highest frequency of ‘top choice’ votes, demonstrating higher value to some types of operations than others. It is not surprising that Permitting Priority received the second highest
weighted score for Tour Operators since 76% of respondents classified as ‘Tour Operators’, and 55.79% of all respondents, provide hiking tours, or other land-based activities, which often require government issued permit that can be very difficult and costly to acquire.

Receiving Discounts on supplies and equipment appears to be most valuable to the designers and builders of ecotourism facilities. According to one tour guide interviewed, brochure printing costs and small business employee health insurance are examples of discounts the ecotourism industry could really use.

Although Access to Workshops and Training wasn’t one of the highest scoring benefits resulting from the survey, eight of the sixteen people questioned about certification benefits during interviews expressed a desire and need for educational opportunities for their guides, and in fact that educating the industry is probably the most important goal of the certification program in question. Those interviewees who did not mention an interest in receiving training were mostly those members who are already experts in the field, or operate accommodations, which typically do not have as much opportunity to educate their visitors. Table 14. shows that the most popular topics of interest included aspects of Hawaiian ecosystems, such as geology, botany, medicinal plants, and marine life. Other topics requested were Hawaiian history & culture, interpretive skills, general people skills, and Internet marketing.

Table 14. Preferred Educational Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Categories (freq, %)</th>
<th>Topic Sub-Categories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii-Specific Information (11, 47.83%)</td>
<td>Hawaiian Ecology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hawaiian History &amp; Culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hawaiian Language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Guide Skills (7, 30.43%)</td>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outdoor Interpretation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifesaving/CPR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Assistance (5, 21.74%)</td>
<td>Internet Marketing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Newsletters and Personal Satisfaction were the only benefits that seemed to be universally insignificant to respondents across the array of ecotourism providers. According to several of my interviewees, one reason for the minimal interest in newsletters is the fact that most of these businesses are very small mom & pop operations where the owners also do all the work involved, and thus have very little time for reading newsletters.

4.4.2 Certification Costs

4.4.2.1 General Willingness to Pay

Survey respondents were asked to give the maximum annual fee they would be willing to pay to participate in a certification that did indeed provide the three benefits they value most. Of those that responded to this question, $250 was the mode, or the most frequently chosen price businesses were willing to pay for a certification program that fit their needs. The mean or average of all the prices listed by respondents was $327, resulting from a handful of respondents who listed prices far beyond the mode of $250.

The price that study respondents were willing to pay each year was a little lower than the annual fees charged by ecotourism certification programs that already exist. For example, Table 15. shows that Australia’s Nature & Ecotourism Accreditation Program charges participants an annual fee of $320-$1,500, depending on the applicant’s annual revenue. (Nature & Ecotourism Accreditation Program) The Sustainable Travel Eco-Certification Program (STEP) charges certified members $150-$1,250 each year. (Sustainable Travel International Website 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 15.</th>
<th>Fees Associated with Two Existing Certification Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Category</td>
<td>Assessment Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEAP (Reassessed every 3 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest</td>
<td>$198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest</td>
<td>$730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP (Reassessed every 2 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest</td>
<td>$325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest</td>
<td>$3,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most certification programs also charge separate fees for the application process, including application materials, program membership, and assessment fees. Then once the applicant becomes certified, the certification is good for a number of years, during which time the participant must continue to pay the annual fee. The NEAP certification is valid for three years before the participant must reapply, whereas the STEP certification is good for only two years before all the additional fees associated with the application and assessment process must be paid again. If one takes into account all fees involved for each program, the average for each year over a three-year period, presented in Table 15., is $386-1,743 for NEAP and $367-3,650 for STEP.

4.4.2.2 Willingness to Pay by Company Size

As one would expect larger companies to be willing to pay more than smaller companies, the relationship between amount willing to pay and size of the company was also analyzed. Company size was determined in three ways: annual revenue, number of paid staff, and number of rooms for accommodations.

Willingness to Pay By Annual Revenue

As shown in Figure 6., across the whole spectrum of revenue categories there was no clear relationship between revenue and amount willing to pay. However, among the upper-middle categories, including those with an annual revenue from $30,001-$1,000,000, there is a positive trend showing higher prices willing to pay as the company's annual revenue increases.

![Figure 6. Average Price Willing to Pay by Revenue Category](image-url)
It is possible that the lowest for-profit revenue category of <$30,000 would have more to gain than the next revenue class up would, from the exposure that successful certification could provide, explaining the higher amount willing to pay by the smaller class. The most lucrative class of over $1,000,000 in annual revenue is not, on average, willing to spend any more money on certification than the class immediately beneath, which may illustrate the maximum monetary value of certification, advising a future certification program developer to limit the price of maintaining certification to $500 dollars per year for the largest companies.

Willingness to Pay By Staff Size

The Excel CORREL function was used to determine the relationship between the number of paid staff and amount willing to pay. Only a very minute positive correlation of r=0.375 and r²=14% was calculated when including all of the respondents. However, if the outliers, indicated in Figure 7. by squares, are excluded from the calculation, the correlation is strengthened to a correlation of r=0.506 and r²=26%, implying that most companies are willing to pay a little bit more as their staff size increases.

Considering the identity of the two outliers, those respondents who run companies with few staff yet are willing to pay the two highest fees for certification, does help to explain their extremely high willingness to pay. The outlier willing to pay the most runs what could be considered a high-end operation, with an annual revenue in the 3rd highest category. Thus, this respondent may have an appreciation for high-priced goods & services and a little extra revenue to spend on certification. The revenue of the other outlier falls in the 2nd highest revenue class and the operation is well known for its commitment the
principles of ecotourism. It is clear that this respondent places high value on using their financial resources to support groups that protect and perpetuate the land, the culture, and the surrounding community residents, so it is not so surprising that the respondent would also place high monetary value on certification.

Furthermore, when the results are grouped into staff size categories and the average amount willing to pay for each group is plotted, as shown in Figure 8., one finds a clearly positive relationship between staff size and willingness to pay.

Figure 8. Average Willingness to Pay by Staff Size Category

Further analysis indicates that calculating a weighted company size according to both annual revenue and staff size could be the most appropriate method on which to base a sliding scale for certification fees. If the amount of categories for both size types is collapsed to four (1-4) then averaged, there is a much clearer relationship of company size and willingness to pay. Table 16. clarifies how the weights were calculated. Figure 9., below, illustrates this relationship.

Table 16. Company Size Categories and Corresponding Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Staff Size Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-2 paid staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-$80,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-20 paid staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,001-$150,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21-100 paid staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,001-$500,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>101+ paid staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9. Willingness to Pay by Weighted Company Size

Figure 10. below shows an even clearer relationship by calculating average prices willing to pay per weighted size class. Using this method as a basis for determining a sliding scale would suggest that annual fees for certification should start at about $200 for the lowest weighted company size class, adding another $100 for each successive weighted size class, at $300, $400, and $500 respectively.

Figure 10. Average Willingness to Pay by Weighted Size Class
Willingness to Pay By Facility Size

Figure 11., below, shows a distinctly positive relationship between facility size category (for accommodations) and average willingness to pay for each category.

Interviewees were also asked for suggestions on how such a program might decrease its costs without jeopardizing its credibility. In addition to implementing a sliding scale for application fees based on company revenue, seeking additional funding, such as partial government subsidies or grants was suggested several respondents. Also popular was the idea to have a local pool of auditors on each island to cut down on travel expenses.

4.4.3 Criteria & Standards

4.4.3.1. Determining Standards

Who should set the standards? Most study respondents preferred that a panel of experts or agencies representing the different stakeholders work together to define the standards, or criteria, that applicants must meet in order to be certified. Some of the groups mentioned included the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association, Department of Land & Natural Resources, the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, Hawaiian Kupuna (teachers, old-timers), University of Hawai‘i professors, neighborhood boards, the farm bureau, the Sierra Club, environmental scientists and the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority.

How should applications be evaluated? With regards to the method by which applications would be measured, or on what basis the decision to award the certification would be made, the study participants had varying opinions. Many felt that some combination of measurable and non-measurable
information should be submitted. For example, the program could require that all applicants meet some universally applicable, measurable and quantifiable minimum baselines to be certified at all, and then it could employ other more subjective and descriptive methods to determine just how 'eco' the company is beyond the baseline.

Examples of universal, minimum criteria can be found in the Green Globe 21, NEAP, and STEP certification programs overviewed in Appendix A. Both Green Globe and Sustainable Travel International require quantifiable data on resources used and emissions produced by the company, which must meet specific levels in order to pass the first step of certification. See Appendix I: Sample of Green Globe 21 Benchmarking Indicators. On the other hand, NEAP will not certify an applicant unless they comply with 100% of what they call the “Core Criteria”. The “Bonus Criteria” and descriptions of “Best Practice” are used to further determine the award level achieved by the applicant.

Most study participants found the NEAP system slightly more appropriate for Hawai‘i and generally favored using some sort of point system, versus a strict ‘pass/fail’ system, to establish levels of certification to further distinguish operator’s commitment to ecotourism values, encourage operators to continue improving their practices to have less negative impact and more positive impact on the surrounding areas, as well as encourage diversity and creativity amongst certified operators by allowing people to score points in different areas of strength. One interviewee said, “I think a point system would work. If the company excels in one area, it could make up for a lack in another. You might want to include some ‘pass/fail’ elements where you can’t make up for certain things that are unacceptable.”

Who should be excluded? Although many interviewees liked the idea of minimum requirements, there was less consistency over barring participation in the program to certain types of activities or scales of operation. Several interviewees felt that no operator should be absolutely excluded from the process, and that access to participation was of great importance for ecotourism in Hawai‘i to successfully meet its goals. One respondent associated with a large hotel said, “You shouldn’t cut it off at certain number. I would like to be an example to other bigger operations to embrace the culture by preservation and education, and to provide opportunities for visitors and those in the visitor industry to connect with the ‘aina. Otherwise you ace out the bigger companies who probably could do a lot for ecotourism, who can
reach a lot more people that may not have considered the importance of nature and culture.” On the other hand, several respondents agreed that the scale should be appropriate to the place. In other words, “real ecotourism cannot be out of scale with what can be developed by local people with their own money, or it would destroy the culture. The business must be at least 50% owned by the actual operators. Local people must own their own economy versus a distant economy owned by foreign shareholders.”

**Should certification require certain carrying capacities?** The question of carrying capacities for specific activities and destinations was also a sticky subject. Some interviewees were adamant that establishing specific carrying capacities for each activity was impossible due to the variety of destination conditions and subtle nuances of each operation, which could effectively increase or decrease their individual impact on the destination and alter the necessary carrying capacity. Others stated that these limits were necessary and that zones of activities should be established, including zones completely prohibited to commercial use. “The ancient Hawaiians had it right when they declared certain places kapu (off-limits) to people. That’s why visitor centers and museums are good. No company should be taking visitors into pristine areas.”

**What criteria should be required?** Determining the specific criteria and standards is a complicated issue. It is clear, from the above results that this aspect of a certification program needs to be explored in much further detail with input from experts in the various disciplines encompassed by ecotourism.

**4.4.4 Certification Program Administration**

Survey respondents were asked to select their preferred administrators for a Hawai‘i program from a list of types of groups commonly associated with the administration of other ecotourism certification programs, along with local examples of those groups. As all of the respondents were members of the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association, and therefore agree with and support what that association stands for, it is not surprising that ‘non-profit organization’, which had HEA listed as an example, received an overwhelming majority of the votes, over 70%, as shown below in Table 17. However, over half of those respondents who chose HEA as a favored administrator of a certification program also selected one or more other groups, indicating that they favored a collaborative effort to administer the program. Regardless of
exactly which groups were selected, 41% of all the respondents voted for some sort of joint administration, illustrating the Democratic ideal of checks and balances, and equal representation of all affected parties. There was a little more support for local administration than there was for international control, which is not surprising given that administrators from outside Hawai‘i are less likely to be aware of Hawai‘i’s very unique environmental and cultural landscape, and thus may not properly address those issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17. Preferred Certification Program Administrators</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Votes per Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Respondents who voted for each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter presents a summary of the study and recommendations for ecotourism certification in Hawai‘i, followed by some considerations for the future, including potential resistance to certification, further research possibilities, as well as new developments in the field.

5.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

Ecotourism is a growing, yet controversial industry. It has the potential to harness the power of the global market to preserve nature, empower local people, and inspire travelers if it is done at the right time, in the right place and with the right attitude. Otherwise, it could do more harm than many conventional tourism developments. In response, a proliferation of ecotourism certification programs has appeared on the international scene, each designed to use the great power of the market to encourage the development of the right kind of ecotourism and prevent any negative consequences.

With a largely tourism-dependent economy, based on such a unique and fragile natural and cultural landscape, Hawai‘i has a lot to gain by encouraging locally appropriate principles of ecotourism within both the mass tourism context as well as its emerging ecotourism industry. And it has a lot to lose if it doesn’t. An ecotourism certification program could provide a good tool by which to do this. However, certification can also make matters worse if not designed appropriately, as it could narrow the meaning of ecotourism into those aspects easiest to measure, in addition to other problems such as creating an unfair marketing advantage to certain operators or encouraging behavior inappropriate for Hawaii’s unique environment and culture. By questioning those who are currently involved in the ‘ecotourism’ industry throughout the islands, this thesis was designed to determine if and what type of ecotourism certification would be a viable method of generating an industry that contributes to, rather than degrades, the vitality of this dream destination, this historical and ecological landmark, this home we call Hawai‘i. The data was obtained primarily from self-administered mailed questionnaires and personal interviews with ecotourism operators throughout the State of Hawai‘i. The data collection was conducted over a period of about five months, between March 2004 and August 2004. The survey was analyzed with descriptive methods
available through Microsoft Excel and the interviews were analyzed using the software package, QSR Nvivo 2.0.

5.2 RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The research data indicates that Hawaii’s ecotourism industry generally agrees on the concept of the term ‘ecotourism’ and overall is supportive of the idea of certification. However, most industry members in Hawai‘i also believe that there are special considerations such a program must make in order to succeed in Hawai‘i. A statewide definition of ecotourism must incorporate the Hawai‘i sense of place and endeavor to perpetuate both the value of ‘ohana’, or family, as well as the value of education. The top goal of certification would be to elevate the entire industry, rather than single-out any individual operations either for their successes or failures. The design of the program and events leading up to its inauguration could best support this goal by placing priority on creating and promoting the program’s credibility, with a secondary focus to keep the costs to a minimum. Finally, tangible benefits, in the form of marketing advantages, educational opportunities, networking opportunities, and privileges over non-certified operations should be delivered.

5.2.1 Preliminary Actions

Before anything else, ecotourism guidelines must be established. The research suggests that a round table of experts from different stakeholder organizations should be responsible for this task, including representatives for each of the four performance areas associated with ecotourism goals: environmental sustainability, cultural integrity, community benefits, and educational quality. There should also be representatives of the tourism industry to provide input on feasibility of certain standards, reality of the industry, and related regulations.

Next, the public, consumers, and the industry itself need to be educated about ecotourism and the benefits of ‘real ecotourism’ must be promoted. The Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association, and experts of relevant subject areas from the University of Hawai‘i, and other Hawaii-based organizations could collaborate to provide a series of short courses on a variety of topics aimed to provide current and future ecotourism operators with the tools to produce high quality ecotourism products. Courses might include educational content about Hawai‘i, such as Hawaiian natural history, including
marine ecosystems, botany, and geology, as well as Hawaiian cultural history, including the historical significance and mythology of popular ecotourism destinations around the islands. In addition, this training effort could include some skills training courses, such as outdoor interpretation techniques and courses on proper behavior with respect to Hawaiian culture and ecosystems. If these courses are kept very cheap or free to local residents and brief, it should encourage broader participation. The universities and community colleges in Hawai‘i may also want to consider adding ecotourism certificate programs in relevant majors, such as tourism industry management, business, or natural resources management in order to equip our future industry leaders and land managers with this powerful tool.

Shortly before Hawai‘i is ready to launch the actual certification program, a website providing program logistics as well as operating guidelines could be developed. To increase exposure, it should be linked to the websites such as those of the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association, the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, and the Small Business Association of Hawai‘i, as well as other niche tourism association websites like the Bed & Breakfast Association and the Hawai‘i Wellness Tourism Association. A page listing general guidelines, specific base-line standards, as well as examples of how the different categories of ecotourism operators can meet the standards should be included on the site and possibly also published as a special insert to the local Sunday paper. Other pages detailing how one can participate in the process and the benefits of participation should also be included on the website.

A state-sponsored public awareness campaign to increase local support, visitor demand, and visitor sensitivity, would be useful. To gain local support, local journalists could be approached to interview Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association board members on the value of ecotourism and interview individual ecotourism operators around the islands on the positive contributions they make to our communities as human-interest stories for our local newspapers, radio programs, and television programs. Travel writers for the inter-island and cross-pacific in-flight magazines could also be contacted to reach visitors with similar types of stories. The Hawai‘i Visitor & Convention Bureau could include an insert about the values of and opportunities for ecotourism in Hawai‘i in the free travel-planning packet they mail to future visitors to Hawai‘i.
5.2.2 Certification Program Framework

5.2.2.1 What to Certify

Existing certification programs often differ in the scope of what will be evaluated and certified under each application. Some programs require applicants to apply separately for each product (i.e. each individual tour, type of accommodation or educational program) and then once certified they are permitted to use the logo in conjunction with that product only. Other programs evaluate an entire operation with each application. In conjunction with the idea of preserving Hawaii’s sense of place, many interviewees noted that ecotourism cannot be defined merely by a handful of individual actions, but is defined rather by the corporate culture of an operation or company philosophy that permeates everything they do. With that in mind, one might suggest that a Hawaii-based certification program use the second method of evaluating an entire operation, rather than individual products. This way there is less chance for exploitation by a large company which is not genuinely committed to ecotourism values, which might endeavor to design one tour to meet ecotourism criteria, just to get the logo, even if it never runs the ‘ecotour’. This will also simplify and minimize the amount of costly evaluations that must be conducted.

5.2.2.2 How To Certify

Potential applicants could begin by obtaining the application form on the website or by mail. This might consist of one section for contact and payment information and another section with a checklist for testifying their compliance to basic criteria as well as blank spaces provided for describing features of their operation not covered by the checklist or innovative practices, which could increase their certification score.

Like the STEP program, the applicant should also be required to submit the contact information of three local, non-profit or government organizations that are familiar with the applicant’s operation. This combination of organizations should represent all three of the main areas of concern, including environmental conservation, cultural stewardship, and the nearby residential community. The administration will then contact references to solicit their opinion on the impact of the applicant’s operation on the welfare of the group they represent. This step would encourage operators to establish symbiotic relationships with other groups in their community, become more aware of the needs of their community,
and perpetuate the Hawaiian value of ohana. It will also provide a relatively simple mechanism for checks and balances to ensure program credibility in a non-scientific, non-Western method.

Provided there is adequate funding, the last step in the evaluation process could employ an anonymous scout, like the ‘secret shopper’ often used for restaurant reviews, to experience the applicant’s product unannounced, under the guise of an average tourist to evaluate the educational quality, operational ecological and cultural sensitivity, and overall visitor experience.

5.2.2.3 Certification Levels

Applicants who pass the minimum certification requirements would be awarded a certain certification rating depending on the level of effort, beyond the minimum, that the operator makes toward creating tangible benefits for their surroundings. Based on an analysis of several existing certification programs, presented in Appendix A: Certification Scheme Matrix, five possible levels of certification would be ideal for encouraging both broad participation and continuous improvement. These levels should be based on a number of points received from the various audits and the application form.

5.2.2.4 Program Fee Structure

A certification program should be funded primarily by applicant fees with some funding provided by hotel accommodations tax or start-up grants. Like many existing programs discussed in Appendix A: Certification Scheme Matrix, there should be a separate application/audit fee in addition to an annual fee for the duration of the certification should the applicant succeed. The fees charged to applicants should be based on a sliding scale depending on the operation’s weighted size class, calculated by an average of the company’s annual revenue category and its staff size category. The initial fee covering the application fee would need to be determined according to the operational expense of the method chosen and any subsidies from grants received. The annual fee should range from $200-$500 depending on weighted company size class.

5.2.2.5 Certification Rewards

Of course there are many more benefits that would be useful to ecotourism operators than are feasible for any certification program to realistically provide. At the time of initial program inception, one might recommend that at least one benefit from each of the following categories be provided to successful
applicants: marketing benefits, educational benefits, networking benefits, and privileges. Below are examples of benefits to consider, listed in order of priority, as shown by the research results.

**Marketing Benefits**
1. Website listing & Permission to use logo in marketing materials
2. Travel guide listing
3. In-flight videos showcasing eco-certified operators
4. Magazine articles showcasing eco-certified operators
5. Representation of Hawai‘i eco-certified operators at travel expos
6. Recognition events: yearly awards, eco-challenge

**Educational Benefits**
1. Workshops & seminars for eco-certified operators on topics such as:
   - Hawaii-specific Information
     - Hawaiian ecology and ethno-botany
     - Hawai‘i’s environmental preservation issues
     - Hawaiian history, culture & language
   - Tour Guide Skills
     - Interpersonal skills
     - Outdoor interpretation
     - Lifesaving/CPR
   - Operations Assistance
     - Internet marketing
     - Networking
     - Sustainable technology
2. Semi-annual Newsletter including events, success stories, resources, tips, and trends in Hawaii’s ecotourism industry
3. Email updates on industry trends, such as internet search terms

**Networking Benefits**
1. Discounts on things like insurance, printing, sustainable technology, related equipment, and reciprocal discounts for other certified products.
2. Intern Program through the University of Hawai‘i Travel Industry Management Program
3. Buying blocks to gain access to recycled, organic, and sustainable products for Hawai‘i consumers
4. Idea sharing with other members through local meetings with rotating presentations by each certified operator at their site

**Privileges**
1. Land-use permit privilege over non-certified operators for use of public resources
2. Facilitated opportunities for indigenous people and/or long-time residents to enter and succeed in the industry
   - Tax breaks
   - Free classes
   - Start-up funding
5.3 THE JOURNEY FORWARD

5.3.1 Potential Opposition

Although the ecotourism certification recommendations carefully consider the successes and shortcomings of existing certification programs, as well as the hopes and concerns of many members of Hawaii’s current ecotourism industry, there remains great potential for opposition from several groups.

The issue was not discussed in-depth with any cultural practitioners, environmentalists, or educators. Thus, it is possible that many of the ecotourism operators’ ideas will not be agreeable to members of these other groups. Even one of the interviewees expressed some concern that certification may not be acceptable in any shape or form if not completely controlled by native Hawaiians. She said,

"Mikahala Roy and her father built the heiau [traditional Hawaiian burial site or temple] right outside of the King Kamehameha hotel. She decided to start a company doing historic walking tours of Kona. You can’t get any more authentic and more concerned about the bīna, but there’s no way she would ever want to be certified by a body that’s first of all not even Hawaiian. Who are we to tell her what’s good or not good when she works her whole life to protect the aina?"

Certainly, there needs to be much further discussion with the above stakeholder groups, before any plan is launched.

One group with potentially serious objections to certification would be the resort tourism industry here in Hawai‘i. These are the firms with some of the greatest financial power in the islands, and if they feel that ecotourism certification efforts might undermine that power, they could make it very difficult to proceed. Measures must be taken to get these firms to embrace the idea. Efforts could be made to encourage partnerships between the big resorts and certified ecotourism operators. Input on the process should be requested of these resorts and opportunities should be provided for them to market their support for the initiative, such as a listing as “Ecotourism Supporter” on the certification website for those resorts that agree to provide free space to hold some of the training workshops or others that donate financially to the cause.
There may also be conflicts with some of the existing ecotourism certification programs that are designed to cover the region of Hawai‘i. Green Globe 21 intends to be the number one certification program worldwide and the Sustainable Travel Eco-Certified Program is designed to certify all ecotourism and sustainable tourism operations that are based in the United States. If Hawai‘i launches its own program, these programs could be expected to object.

5.3.2 Future Research

This study did not solicit the views of all the stakeholders involved, but rather focused only on the opinions of the industry members. To really assess the feasibility and value of an ecotourism certification program, or even just a standard definition, in Hawai‘i, the voices of all the stakeholders must be heard. One might recommend that this study be replicated to address environmentalist groups, cultural groups, community groups and even the academic community.

One crucial ingredient in the creation of an ecotourism certification program is the determination of the actual criteria. This is a daunting task that will require experts from a variety of fields, community meetings, and scientific study of impacts to determine. However, the effort can be minimized if Hawaii were to adopt the general framework and much criteria of an existing program, and then reviewed by these experts, proposed to communities and revised as needed.

As a test of the findings of this research, the Hawai‘i Ecotourism Association may want to implement an application document, like those associated with certification, for membership with the organization. By requiring members to testify to their level of commitment to the principles of ecotourism, via a questionnaire, in which certain answers yield a certain amount of points, the HEA can establish levels of members and increase the value of membership.

5.3.3 New Developments

A promising development for ecotourism certification is currently in progress on the global arena. Ever since the World Ecotourism Summit in 2002, the Rainforest Alliance, an international non-profit conservation organization has been working in conjunction with several other groups to design a Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council. (Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council 2004) This council will essentially ‘certify the certifiers’ by creating some standard guidelines for setting up a certification
program, regardless of world region, endorsing the programs, and providing a directory that consumers from anywhere going anywhere can access to search for certified ecotourism anywhere on the globe without having to know what the region’s program is called or if they even have one. This is an enormous step in the right direction towards ecotourism certification actually meeting its goals, by reducing confusion and assisting with the set up of standards and evaluation processes in different areas.

Since the initial writing of this thesis, the Hawaii Tourism Authority project to determine a statewide definition for ecotourism has been completed and a definition has been proposed. It has yet to pass through the legislature, but it reads as follows:

*Ecotourism in Hawai‘i is a tourism activity that connects visitors with Hawaii's natural and cultural landscapes as an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable strategy that results in a responsible exchange of value between the host community, the visitor, and the “place.”*

5.4 CONCLUSION SUMMARY

This research implies that, with ample outreach, further discussions and testing, ecotourism certification could help Hawaii's economy thrive while protecting the fragile resources it depends on, thereby achieving substantial gain in all the three legs of society’s three-legged stool: the economy, the environment, and society.
Figure 12. The Three-Legged Stool (Wissink 2003).
APPENDIX A:

CERTIFICATION SCHEME MATRIX

Hands on marine life education at Maui Ocean Center, Maui 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDIX A: CERTIFICATION SCHEME</th>
<th>GREEN GLOBE 21 (GG21)</th>
<th>NATURE &amp; ECO-TOURISM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (NEAP)</th>
<th>CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (CST)</th>
<th>SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECO-CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (STEP)</th>
<th>SMARTVOYAGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERVIEW</td>
<td>ISSN:</td>
<td>ISSN:</td>
<td>ISSN:</td>
<td>ISSN:</td>
<td>ISSN:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPONSORING ORGANIZATION(S)</td>
<td>WITC (original); Green Globe 21 joint venture for-profit company (current)</td>
<td>Ecotourism Association of Australia &amp; Australian Tourism Operators Network (original); Ecotourism Association of Australia (current) (non-profit membership organization)</td>
<td>Costa Rican Tourism Institute</td>
<td>Sustainable Travel International, non-profit membership organization</td>
<td>Conservation y Desarrollo (C&amp;R) &amp; Rainforest Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</td>
<td>Worldwide</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Enterprises based in the United States &amp; operating anywhere</td>
<td>Galapagos Islands, Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTORS COVERED</td>
<td>Accommodations, Tours, Attractions</td>
<td>Accommodations, Tours, Attractions</td>
<td>Accommodations, Tours, Attractions</td>
<td>Accommodations, Tours, Attractions, Transportation</td>
<td>Tourist Boat Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM DEFINITION OF INDUSTRY CERTIFIED</td>
<td>Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.</td>
<td>Nature Tourism = Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas. Ecotourism = Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation</td>
<td>We define Sustainable Tourism as the balanced interaction of three basic factors within the tourism industry: 1- Proper stewardship of our natural and cultural resources; 2- Improvement of the quality of life of the local communities; and 3- Economic success, that can contribute to other programs of national development.</td>
<td>Sustainable Travel refers to travel and tourism services that maintain and preserve the ecological integrity of the environment while meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of current or future generations. It includes &quot;true&quot; ecotourism and &quot;responsible&quot; adventure travel.</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism is environmentally friendly tourism that contributes to the protection of ecosystems and the well-being of local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASIC CONCEPTS</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM GOAL(S)</td>
<td>To facilitate environmentally sustainable ecotourism</td>
<td>To provide industry, protected area managers, local communities and travelers with an assurance that a certified product is backed by a commitment to best practice ecological sustainability, natural area management and the provision of quality ecotourism experiences.</td>
<td>To improve the way in which the natural and social resources are utilized, to motivate the active participation of the local communities, and to support the competitiveness of the business sector in the context of the country's tourist industry.</td>
<td>To enhance tourism providers' triple bottom line of economic profitability, respect for the environment and social responsibility, creating benefits for consumers, resource managers, host communities and the tourism providers themselves.</td>
<td>To transform the concept of sustainability into a something real, practical and necessary, in the context of competitiveness, with the aim to improve the way tourism relates to its environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES for each STAKEHOLDER</td>
<td>GREEN GLOBE 21 (GG21)</td>
<td>NATURE &amp; ECO-TOURISM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (NEAP)</td>
<td>CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (CST)</td>
<td>SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECO-CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (STEP)</td>
<td>SMARTVOYAGER</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>Provides guidelines for product improvement, marketing advantages and assistance, increased profitability through efficient resource use</td>
<td>Provides guidelines for product improvement, marketing advantages and assistance, increased profitability through efficient resource use</td>
<td>Increases competitiveness of the national tourism product, provides marketing advantages and assistance, increased profitability through efficient resource use</td>
<td>Increases operator satisfaction for positive contributions to the community, increases profitability through efficient resource use, increases worker efficiency (due to improved training, pay, treatment, facilities), provides marketing advantage and assistance, information sharing and partnerships, credit opportunities, access to better technology</td>
<td>Provides consultation for starting a new ecotourism venture, networking opportunities with other accredited businesses &amp; suppliers, access to research and cooperative marketing opportunities, marketing advantages and assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>Provides a tool for recognizing genuine ecotourism products</td>
<td>Provides a tool for recognizing genuine ecotourism products</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Provides a tool for recognizing genuine ecotourism products</td>
<td>Provides a tool for identifying genuine ecotourism operators and sustainable destinations; provides quality guarantees for accredited operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities</td>
<td>Encourages tourism providers to contribute to local communities</td>
<td>Provides a tool for recognizing genuine ecotourism products, tool to determine mixture of tourism activity that helps maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts</td>
<td>Encourages growth in other sustainable industries, and thus increases employment opportunities for Costa Ricans</td>
<td>Encourages tourism providers to contribute to local communities</td>
<td>Provides monitoring and regulation of tourism activities; encourages increased employment opportunities, increased sales of local goods &amp; services, increased access to conservation funds, increased cultural expression and enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Managers</td>
<td>Provides a tool for recognizing genuine ecotourism products</td>
<td>Provides a tool for recognizing genuine ecotourism products</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Improves dialogue and cooperation between land managers and tourism operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Encourages contributions to conservation and protection of local and global environmental quality</td>
<td>Decreases tourism providers' negative environmental impact on and use of natural resources</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Encourages tourism providers to contribute to the protection of the unique natural resources of the Galapagos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN GLOBE 21 (GG21)</td>
<td>NATURE &amp; ECO-TOURISM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (NEAP)</td>
<td>CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (CST)</td>
<td>SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECO-CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (STEP)</td>
<td>SMARTVOYAGER</td>
<td>HORIZONS: SASKATCHEWAN, ECOTOURISM ACCREDITATION SYSTEM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>APPLICATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>PROCESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>APP</strong></td>
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<td><strong>P</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paperwork</strong></td>
<td><strong>Benchmarking Report = submit quantifiable data on consumption patterns etc.</strong> Certification = Submission of relevant legal &amp; company documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>154-page application form, including all relevant instructions, contact information and decision-making information. Contact information for 2 references must be provided on the form. Certification is determined mostly from yes/no questions, in addition to open-ended questions, and documents of verification submitted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13-page list of yes/no questions weighted according to relevance and tallied for an overall score for each category and award level is based on score of lowest-scoring category; can be completed on-line or on paper.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Benchmarking = submitting quantifiable performance data that is evaluated and scored against National performance data and best practices, including a list of professional and stakeholder references to verify the applicant's commitment to sustainability. 2. Self-Audit Questionnaire = sector specific yes/no questions with weighted score.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Application form, containing a detailed description of the tour boat vessel, the supporting infrastructure and questions requiring descriptions and explanations regarding compliance with criteria and requiring contact information for 3 references+C42; Evaluation Report compiled jointly by the company and an ESS representative, which includes a Site Inventory &amp; Assessment (zoning, accessibility, land uses, flora/fauna, etc), Natural History Information (important wildlife areas, landforms, natural processes, etc), Area Sensitivity Visitor Information Plan (who uses the site, interests, length of stay, demographics, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verification/Auditing</strong></td>
<td>Independent 3rd Party On-site audit is conducted once the company has been successfully Benchmarked and Certification fees paid, during which time the assessor will verify compliance with each criteria listed on the Self-assessment Checklist (described below) and review all relevant documents, interviews with staff, and inspection of facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References &amp; legal documents are consulted to verify application information. Random on-site audits are conducted once the company has been certified. Additional audits may be conducted if feedback from customer surveys indicate a breach of certification standards.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Initial on-site visit from Costa Rican Tourism Institute to explain the program, then a formal assessment is made, based on the listed criteria, and recommendations are made to the company, then if when the company implements the recommendations, an inspection team completes the survey form and if the results are posted on the web and a written evaluation is sent to the National Accreditation Commission.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Once paperwork is submitted, a STEP certified on-site auditor is appointed to visit the site and verify the claims of the self-audits. Random audits also take place once the applicant has been certified, and will be given 7 days notice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Audits are conducted by representatives and teams from C&amp;R and the Rainforest Alliance, at which time the company is evaluated against the list of certification criteria. After application form is reviewed, a Pre-site audit conducted by a C&amp;R representative to provide suggestions, followed by a complete site audit done by a C&amp;R team, then once certified annual audits are conducted by C&amp;R &amp; Rainforest Alliance representatives, as well as random, informal and unannounced audits.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Before the paperwork is submitted, an ESS representative visits the site to assist the operator. After submission, 2 ESS board members revisit the business to conduct an on-site audit.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>Assessor's report and recommendations are sent to Green Globe 21 staff to make the final decision.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>An independent Assessment Committee reviews the application then forwards the application with their comments to the ESS Panel to make the final decision.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The National Accreditation Commission, a voluntary committee, headed by the Minister of Tourism and composed of representatives from government, NGOs, scientific organizations, tourism industry, and universities, reviews all applications and makes the final decision.</td>
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<td>voluntary Evaluation Committees determines whether or not to certify an applicant and at what level. Decision is based on auditor's report, applicant's Benchmarking application, and professional references provided by the applicant. This committee is made up of representatives of various stakeholder groups including government &amp; non-profit environmental, business, tourism, and educational organizations.</td>
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<td>Certification Committee composed of at least one representative from C&amp;R and one from the Rainforest Alliance, plus 2-3 international specialists</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ESS Board of Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requirement Categories &amp; Key Performance Areas</td>
<td>GREEN GLOBE 21 (GG21)</td>
<td>NATURE &amp; ECO-TOURISM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (NEAP)</td>
<td>CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (CST)</td>
<td>SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECO-CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (STEP)</td>
<td>SMARTVOYAGER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Performance Areas: Natural Focus: Interpretation &amp; Education, Ecologically Compatible Infrastructure, Ecologically Sustainable Practice, Contributing to Conservation, Ecotourism Benefiting Local Communities, Cultural Respect &amp; Sensitivity, Customer Satisfaction, Responsible Marketing,</td>
<td>1 Level</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Performance Areas: Natural Focus: Interpretation; Environmental Sustainability; Contributions to Conservation; Working with Local Communities; Cultural Component; Customer Satisfaction; Responsible Marketing</td>
<td>3 Levels: Nature Tourism, Ecotourism, &amp; Advanced Ecotourism</td>
<td>3 Levels: no special name, just level 1, level 2 etc depicted by number of points</td>
<td>5 Levels: no special name, just level 1, level 2 etc depicted by number of points</td>
<td>4 Levels: bronze, silver, gold, platinum</td>
<td>1 Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Performance Areas: Physical &amp; Biological Environment, Hotel Facilities, Customers (Interpretation), Socio-economic Environment</td>
<td>Level 1: Compliance with at least 80% of core criteria; absence of &quot;fatal flaws&quot; and a written commitment for continual improvement in subsequent years.</td>
<td>Level 1: compliance with at least 20% of core criteria in first 4 performance areas listed below; Level 2: 100% of core criteria in all 8 performance areas; Level 3: all of the above plus an unspecified % of bonus criteria</td>
<td>Level 1: answer &quot;yes&quot; to at least 20% of questions in each category; Level 2: 40%; Level 3: 60%; Level 4: 80%; Level 5: 95%</td>
<td>Level 1: Compliance with at least 80% of the certification criteria, absence of &quot;fatal flaws&quot; and a written commitment for continual improvement in subsequent years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>339 (Average per Sector Total = 234)</td>
<td>393 (very specific)</td>
<td>Impact Monitoring &amp; Quality Control; Sustainable Tourism Issues; Best Professional Practice; Key Performance Areas: Education (Staff &amp; Clients), Consumer Satisfaction, Socio-Economic Benefits, Environmental Benefits &amp; Sustainability, Cultural Respect, Accurate &amp; Realistic Marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Level</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 level</td>
<td>1 Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Levels: no special name, just level 1, level 2 etc depicted by number of points</td>
<td>5 Levels: no special name, just level 1, level 2 etc depicted by number of points</td>
<td>5 Levels: no special name, just level 1, level 2 etc depicted by number of points</td>
<td>5 Levels: no special name, just level 1, level 2 etc depicted by number of points</td>
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<td>1 Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>339 (Average per Sector Total = 234)</td>
<td>393 (very specific)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>339 (Average per Sector Total = 234)</td>
<td>393 (very specific)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total = 339 (Average per Sector Total = 234)</td>
<td>Benchmarking = 72 (Depending on applicant's service sector and relative size, a selection from the total 72 questions must be answered; average per sector = 62); Self Audit Questionnaire = 267 (average per sector = 172);</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Specific Questions/Criteria</td>
<td>Number of Categories</td>
<td>Number of Award Levels</td>
<td>Level Requirements</td>
<td>Requirement Categories &amp; Key Performance Areas</td>
<td>Certification/Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total = 267 including: Benchmarking = 6 quantifiable criteria for each sector/country; Certification = 182; Advanced Certification = 79</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3 Levels: Benchmarked, Certification &amp; Advanced Certification</td>
<td>Level 1: meet all sector &amp; country-specific baseline criteria under &quot;Performance Level Benchmarks; Level 2: pass 1st level, satisfy all baseline criteria listed in International Ecotourism Standard in each performance area; Level 3: must meet all of the above AND satisfy at least 75% of Ecotourism Best Practice Criteria listed in the International Ecotourism Standard</td>
<td>Key Performance Areas: Natural Area Focus: Interpretation &amp; Education, Ecologically Compatible Infrastructure, Ecologically Sustainable Practice, Contributing to Conservation, Ecotourism Benefiting Local Communities, Cultural Respect &amp; Sensitivity, Customer Satisfaction, Responsible Marketing,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENEFITS TO APPLICANTS</td>
<td>CERTIFICATION FEES</td>
<td>INFORMATION SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logo/Eco-Label, Website listing &amp; entire webpage on GG21 website, including brochure &amp; webinar material &amp; links to own sites), Leaflets, Newsletters, Conferences, Exhibitions, Nature Magazines, Industry Publications, Certification identification on global distribution systems used by travel intermediaries</td>
<td>Sliding scale depending on employees or rooms</td>
<td>Honey &amp; Rome, 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo/Eco-Label, Website listing, Discounted Advertising in EAA’s Australian Ecotourism Guide, Features in NEAP commercials aired on Qantas Airlines</td>
<td>Sliding scale depending on annual revenue</td>
<td>VIST 2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo/Eco-label, Website Listing, Representation in many world tourism fairs and events</td>
<td>No fees; completely subsidized by National Accreditation Institute</td>
<td>GG21 Website: <a href="http://www.greenglobe21.com">www.greenglobe21.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo/Eco-label, Website Listing, Features in e-newsletter, CST Best Practices Guide; on-line self-evaluation calculation; personal consultation for company improvement; training of personnel</td>
<td>Sliding scale depending on annual revenue</td>
<td>NEAP Website: <a href="http://www.ecotourism.org.au">www.ecotourism.org.au</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance after the pre-site audit by the C&amp;R technical team</td>
<td>Sliding scale based on the size of the boat</td>
<td>CST Website: <a href="http://www.sustainable-tourism.co.cr">www.sustainable-tourism.co.cr</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discounts with program Partners, Cooperative with Carbon Sequestrian Programs, Alternative Travel Search Engines</td>
<td>Same for all applicants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Marketing**

**Educational**

- CST Best Practices Guide; on-line self-evaluation calculation; personal consultation for company improvement; training of personnel

**Networking/Partnerships**

- Access to 100,000s of frequent flyers through a partnership with the International Airline Passengers Association
- Discounts with program Partners, Cooperative with Carbon Sequestrian Programs, Alternative Travel Search Engines

**Fee Structure**

- Sliding scale depending on employees or rooms
- Sliding scale depending on annual revenue
- No fees; completely subsidized by National Accreditation Institute

**Assessment Fee (min-max)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$325-$3,600</th>
<th>$196-$730</th>
<th>$0</th>
<th>$325 - $3,600</th>
<th>$1600 per day plus travel expenses on average</th>
<th>$50 (Canadian $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$225-$6,000</td>
<td>$320-$1,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$150 - $1,250</td>
<td>$1500 plus</td>
<td>$50 (Canadian $)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual/Recurring Fee (min-max)**

| $550-$9,600 | $518-$2,230 | $0 | $475 - $4,850 | unknown |

**Total First Year Fees (min-max)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$325-$3,600</th>
<th>$196-$730</th>
<th>$0</th>
<th>$325 - $3,600</th>
<th>$1600 per day plus travel expenses on average</th>
<th>$50 (Canadian $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$225-$6,000</td>
<td>$320-$1,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$150 - $1,250</td>
<td>$1500 plus</td>
<td>$50 (Canadian $)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial Assistance**

- Applicants who gross less than $125,000 annually may qualify for financial support

**INFORMATION SOURCES**

- Honey & Rome, 2001
- VIST 2002
- GG21 Website: www.greenglobe21.com
- NEAP Website: www.ecotourism.org.au
- STI Website: www.sustainabletravelinternational.org
- personal communication with founders
- Rainforest Alliance Website: www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/sv
- Honey & Rome 2001
- ESS Website: www.ecotourism.sk.ca
- VIST 2002
APPENDIX B:

INTERNATIONAL ECOTOURISM STANDARD

(Green Globe 21)
The international ecotourism standard is presented in three parts:

PART A: defines a requirement for an Ecotourism Policy, meeting Regulatory Framework requirements and for Benchmarking against the Green Globe Sector Benchmarking Indicator for Ecotourism.

PART B: defines requirements for 8 Ecotourism Principles (Performance Areas).

PART C: defines a requirement for an Ecotourism Product Minimum Impact Code and provides a Schedule of Codes of Conduct.

User Guide
A comprehensive User Guide is at an advanced stage of development and will be released shortly on the web. This will provide comprehensive information and examples that will help ecotourism product achieve Ecotourism Certification against the GREEN GLOBE 21 International Ecotourism Standard. The User Guide will provide a step-by-step guide to the key ecotourism performance areas, illustrate best practice, and provide templates and case study examples. The User Guide will be available on: www.ggasiapacific.com.au www.ecotourism.org.au
PART A: ECOTOURISM POLICY AND FRAMEWORK

A.1. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Managers of an ecotourism product shall:

- maintain an up to date register of relevant environmental, public and occupational health and safety, hygiene and employment legislation, regulations and other requirements to which the ecotourism product is required to adhere;
- comply with relevant legislation, regulations and other requirements;
- maintain records of compliance, and
- where compliance was not maintained, record the remedial action taken to ensure compliance is attained as soon as practicable.

A.2. ECOTOURISM POLICY

An ecotourism product shall have a guiding policy that:

- is appropriate to the size, location, nature, scale of activities, and services provided by the ecotourism product;
- commits to comply with relevant environmental legislation and regulations;
- commits to staff training;
- commits to planning and monitoring environmental and social performance through setting relevant targets based on the principles of Ecotourism;
- commits to the collection of specified BENCHMARKING information;
- commits to achieving ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE for at least three identified ecotourism principles;
- is reviewed annually; is adopted and promoted by senior management of the ecotourism product;
- commits to contributing to conservation and management of the natural areas, culture, and heritage site/s visited;
- includes a commitment to promoting regional and global conservation, and
- is available on request to stakeholders and is on public display.

A.3. BENCHMARKING PERFORMANCE

An ecotourism product shall be Benchmarked above baseline performance against the Sector Benchmarking Indicator for Ecotourism.
PART B: ECOTOURISM PRINCIPLES AND RELATED PERFORMANCE AREAS

SECTION ONE: NATURAL AREA FOCUS

The principle
*Ecotourism requires a direct, personal experience of nature.*

B.1 Product information, operational records and customer feedback demonstrate that:
- the majority of each customer's activity time is spent within a natural area or with a natural area focus;
- the prime focus of the product is presentation of the natural values of the local area;
- the product helps customers to directly and personally experience nature and do so without causing damage;
- opportunities are provided for each visitor to experience nature in relative solitude.
SECTION TWO: INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

The principle
Ecotourism provides opportunities to experience nature in ways that lead to a greater understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment.

B.2.1. INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

B.2.1.1. Ecotourism products shall include at least three of the following interpretation opportunities that allow visitors to learn more about the natural and cultural heritage of the area being visited.

Face-to-face interpretation
- a tour led by a qualified guide;
- educational talks or lectures by experts;
- theatre performances;
- other interactive educational activities (e.g. role-plays, junior ranger program, craft activities - provide details).

Static/non-personal interpretation
- pre-travel educational material (printed, electronic, or web based);
- printed materials including brochures, educational fact sheets and interpretive leaflets;
- reference material held in a small library or holding;
- audio-visuals;
- displays (with interpretive signage and/or brochures);
- self-guiding trails (with interpretive signage and/or brochures);
- other (provide details).

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE At least four interpretive opportunities must be provided, one of which must be face-to-face.

B.2.2 CONTENT OF INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

The principle
Content used for interpretive materials and activities has been checked for its accuracy by reference to credible sources, and is relevant to both the site and audience.

B.2.2.1. A register of the major interpretive and educational stories for the region/site and prime reference sources is kept.

B.2.2.2. The source of the major interpretive stories is verified through cross-checking from the following appropriate sources:
- reference books, scientific journals or the like;
• professional persons (scientists, academics, anthropologists, environmental managers, etc.);
• knowledgeable local people (specifically indigenous people where relevant) who have a high level of recognition;
• scholarly film and television documentaries.

B.2.2.3. A holding or small library of interpretive resources is available.

B.2.2.4. The Interpretive program (in written materials and activities) shall contain content that communicates:
• the conservation significance of the area;
• minimal impact methods appropriate to the area;
• appropriate behaviour in culturally sensitive regions/sites.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** if the interpretive content also communicates the key principles of ecotourism and the role of ecotourism certification.

B.2.3 INTERPRETATION PLANNING

**The principle**
Adequate planning of Interpretation is undertaken so that effective communication occurs.

B.2.3.1 An interpretation plan has been prepared for the entire suite of the interpretation activities program and includes:
• a summary of interpretive resources and materials;
• details of interpretive content;
• relevant themes/messages that address the natural, cultural and social values of the site/local area;
• the main audience and their needs;
• goals and objectives in terms of educational and/or conservation outcomes;
• suitable interpretive methods; and
• contingency planning.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** an interpretation plan is prepared which includes:
• details of the resources/infrastructure and materials required for the interpretive program and individual interpretive activities;
• budget;
• risk assessment and risk mitigation;
• links to themes and messages of related or regional attractions;
• monitoring and evaluation techniques including performance benchmarks.

B.2.3.3 The interpretation program is monitored with records kept that include:
• customer participation rates;
• customer feedback from participation.
B.2.3.4 The interpretation program is evaluated using at least one of the following techniques and regular review and improvement of the interpretation program conducted:

- written visitor comments including compliments and complaints;
- formal customer surveys;
- written feedback from focus groups;
- formal written peer review.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE integrates at least one formal technique of evaluating the interpretive program.**

**B.2.4 STAFF TRAINING**

**The principle**

Service staff in contact with customers are able to provide accurate information on the natural values, cultural heritage and conservation issues of the sites visited, and guides can provide quality interpretive experiences.

B.2.4.1 All customer service staff will attend induction training that includes:

- the natural and cultural values of the area;
- the environmental management issues in the area;
- the principles of ecotourism and how they are achieved by the product; and
- practices that staff are to follow as part of their duties to minimise adverse impacts.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is a training manual and/or the development of supplementary resource information kits for staff**

B.2.4.2 Ecotour Guides can demonstrate competence through a portfolio of evidence or training records in the following:

- knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage values of the area;
- skills in interpretation and communication;
- an understanding environmental and conservation management issues of the area;
- relevant minimal impact procedures;
- where relevant, specialist hard skills/formal qualifications for "adventure" activities such as snorkeling.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE Lead or Head Guides are qualified either through a Guide certification scheme or through competency based, on-the-job training which has been formally recognised by an appropriate training authority.**
SECTION THREE: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

The principle
_The product employs environmentally sustainable practices in both development and operation of product to ensure that its activities do not degrade the environment._

B.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The principle
_The ecotourism operator has identified the environmental risks that its products could cause, and is consequently prepared to respond appropriately to threats or disasters._

B.3.1.1 An environmental management approach appropriate to the type and scale of the ecotourism product shall be documented and include an assessment of:
- the nature and scale of the product's activities;
- the environmental characteristics and management issues in the area;
- the potential for environmental harm from planned, accidental and emergency situations and provided appropriate responses (including the provision of emergency response equipment) to minimise likelihood of events and mitigate impacts if they occur.

This documented system must identify and monitor:
- staff training requirements so that the capabilities to implement the environmental approach exist;
- mechanisms to maintain aspects of best practice ecological sustainability and undertake continual improvement toward set targets of other aspects not currently at best practice;
- appropriate steps to correct situations not conforming with the Ecotourism Policy and other relevant performance targets, and prevent their reoccurrence.

The environmental management approach must be approved, implemented and reviewed annually by senior management.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** is where an Environmental Management System (EMS) has been prepared which meets the requirements of ISO 14001 and/or the GREEN GLOBE 21 Standard for Travel and Tourism companies.

B.3.1.2. So as to meet the objectives of the environmental management approach, operational staff shall be trained to identify and respond to all foreseeable environmental risks related to the operation. Training shall cover:
- an understanding of the natural and cultural values of the area;
- measures which are to be taken to prevent environmental harm;
- measures which are to be taken to respond to an emergency;
- advice to be given to customers in regard to protecting the environment.
B.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The principle

Ecotourism operations are established on the basis of a scientific understanding of potential environmental impacts.

B.3.2.1 Established ecotourism products that required a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment (or similar requirements) shall provide evidence of the Assessment and evidence of official approval for the ecotourism product.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where a formal assessment of environmental impacts is not required by law for approval of the product but was nonetheless undertaken to identify, assess and minimise potential and ongoing environmental impacts.

B.3.2.2 NEW PRODUCTS have an environmental impact assessment process that includes:

- an evaluation of alternative sites and designs for the product – with the aim being to select the environmentally preferred site and design for the product;
- assessment of the existing integrity of ecosystem processes;
- determining the known sensitivity of the ecosystem processes to human-induced change (including the potential for cumulative environmental impacts);
- identifying the risk of irreversible damage to ecosystem processes;
- describing mechanisms to effectively monitor ecosystem processes;
- evaluating strategies to minimise environmental harm and prevent irreversible environmental damage.

B.3.3 LOCATING AN ECOTOURISM PRODUCT

The principle

Ecotourism is located only where it is appropriate and ecologically sustainable.

B.3.3.1. The Operator of the ecotourism product is able to provide evidence that:

- the operation is a legally permitted use in the area;
- where the site has been acquired and/or access secured, there has been appropriate compensation for landowners and/or previous users.

B.3.3.2 The operator of the ecotourism product can provide evidence that site selection has been made after evaluation of the following criteria:

- areas of high conservation value have been avoided;
- previously disturbed sites are selected in preference to undisturbed sites;
- the ability to effectively rehabilitate the natural processes on the site after disturbance;
- potential adverse effects on local communities are minimised;
- sites that have high cultural significance are avoided – unless the product involves presentation of cultural values and the site is the appropriate place to do so;
• if there are traditional custodians of the site they have endorsed the product.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE includes an independent expert appraisal of the above points.**

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE includes measures are formally in place that ensure local communities and businesses have access for traditional economic activity, social or community use, and tourism business ventures.**

**B.3.4 CONSTRUCTION METHODS AND MATERIALS**

**The principle**
Maximum use is made of sustainable materials, construction methods minimise negative environmental impacts and staff and contractors are aware of the environmental and heritage values of the site and the measures needed to protect them.

B.3.4.1 In constructing, establishing and maintaining ecotourism product infrastructure evidence that environmental impacts have been minimised through the application of at least 3 of the following requirements (NEW PRODUCTS must achieve at least 6):

- excavation has been kept to a minimum;
- building materials have been sourced from sustainably managed, renewable resources;
- sustainable building materials have been sourced locally;
- recycled building materials have been used as a dominant source of material;
- timber treated with arsenic or copper is not used;
- soil and gravel used in construction is free from weeds and plant diseases;
- vehicles used to transport materials to the site are cleaned to control the transfer of weeds, fungi and diseases;
- renewable energy is used to provide power used in construction;
- waste to landfill has been minimised during construction;
- water run-off from a disturbed site is minimised.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved where 6 of the requirements listed above have been met for existing structures and all have been met for NEW PRODUCTS.**

B.3.4.2 Provide evidence that construction staff, employees and contractors are briefed on natural and cultural heritage values of an area and measures necessary to protect them.

B.3.4.3 For areas of special historical or cultural significance provide evidence that appropriate materials and methods have been used with the goal of maintaining the historical and/or cultural identity of a place.
B.3.5 SITE DISTURBANCE

The principle

The operator of the ecotourism product shall endeavour to cause minimal disturbance to the sites it uses. Where degradation has occurred as a result of the construction process or operation of the product, rehabilitation is undertaken.

B.3.5.1 In ecotourism product establishment provide evidence that impacts have been minimised through the adherence to the following:

- extreme land shaping and surface modifications have been avoided, with the objective of re-establishing a landscape that reflects the character of the local landscape;
- drainage follows natural pathways and concentration of overland flow has been avoided;
- where feasible, sealing of land has been avoided with the objective of not impeding infiltration to groundwater;
- minimal clearing of native vegetation and post development stabilisation and replanting has been carried out;
- landscaping reflects the character of the nearby natural environment,
- the program of work ensures that wildlife movement is not disturbed; breeding sites are avoided, and that breeding seasons are avoided; and
- there is minimal disturbance to cultural heritage (when relevant).

B.3.5.2 For NEW PRODUCTS product establishment provide evidence that negative impacts have been minimised through ensuring the following:

- a record of the natural and cultural values of the site is made prior to the commencement of construction of buildings and infrastructure or any other work that involves site disturbance;
- a program is developed and implemented to protect native vegetation, natural water flows, biodiversity, landscape, and cultural heritage during development of the site, and
- landscaping is conducted using native, locally occurring plant species.

B.3.5.3 In managing an ecotourism product, provide evidence that impacts have been minimised through the adherence to the following:

- a program of work has been prepared and implemented which has the goal of protecting endangered species, biodiversity, native vegetation, natural water flows, landscape and cultural heritage of the site;
- conservation of rare or endangered species has been maximised through an understanding of their presence, their needs and management practices such as:
  - avoiding disruption of wildlife movement
  - avoiding breeding sites and breeding seasons;
- the use of pesticides and herbicides that cause residual pollution are avoided;
- monitoring to ensure there is no ongoing erosion (and rehabilitation of any existing erosion occurs).
ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where rehabilitated or degraded land is used for the construction of buildings and other infrastructure.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where a program of re-establishing with native, locally occurring species is implemented where exotic (or native but not locally occurring) plant species exist.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where a drainage, and if relevant, erosion and sediment control plan has been prepared and implemented.

B.3.6 VISUAL IMPACTS
The principle
Ecotourism buildings and infrastructure do not dominate the visual landscape.

B.3.6.1 In the design, construction and maintenance of ecotourism products at least two of the following considerations are applied:
• building forms are compatible with the physical and cultural landscape;
• the height of buildings and structures is below the tree line or screened by topographical features;
• buildings and other structures are painted in colours which do not sharply contrast or conflict with the landscape;
• native vegetation is retained or included in landscaping to screen facilities;
• roads, tracks and car parks are screened by topographical features, or are otherwise designed to minimise visual impacts.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved if four of the above measures are met.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where vehicles, vessels and aircraft are painted in colours that do not sharply contrast or conflict with the natural or cultural landscape.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where vehicles, vessels, aircraft, buildings, and structures use traditional design (at least in style and colour schemes, but where possible, in materials).

B.3.7 LIGHTING
The principle
Ecotourism product shall minimise the impact on the environment of artificial lighting.

B.3.7.1 Ecotourism product management shall implement at least four of the following requirements:
• natural light provides all necessary illumination to all areas of buildings during daylight hours;
• external lighting is limited to that necessary for orientation, security, and safety;
• compact fluorescent bulbs are used wherever possible;
• pathways, corridors and external areas are illuminated by lights governed with movement sensors;
• illuminated signage is only used for emergency exits;
• outside spotlights do not point above the horizontal;
• incandescent floodlights are not used outside public areas;
• customers are provided with portable lights to avoid fixed outside lighting.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved if six of the above measures are in place.**

**B.3.8 WATER CONSERVATION**

**The principle**

*Water consumption is minimised and supply of water for the ecotourism product is ecologically sustainable.*

B.3.8.1 Where water is drawn directly from natural sources (such as from a local river or stream, a water storage constructed on a local river or stream, or from a local bore), the take of water by the ecotourism operator has to be sustainable, and not reduce to unacceptable levels:

• the amount of water available for local communities;
• the amount of water available for local vegetation and native animals;
• downstream water flow;
• groundwater resources.

B.3.8.2 Water shall be conserved by implementing at least five of the following measures:

• small sinks (less than five litres) in guest rooms;
• low-flow shower-heads;
• use of treated sewage effluent;
• use of rainwater;
• dual and/or low flush toilets;
• composting toilets;
• provision of showers rather than baths;
• automatic turn-off taps;
• water-efficient gardens;
• water-efficient dishwashers;
• water-efficient laundry washing machines;
• guests encouraged to reuse cloth towels before laundering;
• guests provided with written advice on the importance of managing water use;
• tap aerators and flow restrictors;
• reuse of grey water.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE requires implementation of seven of the above measures.**
ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where treated sewage effluent is used for purposes other than irrigation, such as toilet flushing.

B.3.9 TREATMENT OF WASTEWATER AND EFFLUENT

The principle

Sewage and effluent is minimised and treated to a level such that no environmental harm results from discharges.

B.3.9.1 Ecotourism products shall minimise environmental impacts caused by the disposal of wastewaters by:
- secondary treatment of wastewater (with effluent reuse and composting where practical);
- only using direct disposal or septic systems where the ongoing impacts on ground and surface waters can accommodate the loads;
- having a management system in place that covers:
  - sewage treatment plant failures and
  - preventing hazardous or toxic substances (including oil and grease) entering wastewater.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is treatment of wastewater to tertiary level, or secondary level with disinfection, and effluent being reused.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE requires use of environmentally acceptable cleaning chemicals.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is treatment of wastewater from vehicle washing stations.

B.3.10 NOISE

The principle

Customers have the opportunity to experience natural quiet when they are in natural settings.

B.3.10.1 Ecotourism products shall minimise noise impacts to a level equal to or lower than background noise in the local setting by methods such as:
- controlling noise from machinery, generators and air conditioners by using sound insulation;
- minimising the time that motorised transport vehicles (including vessels) are left idling.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved when natural quiet prevails for the majority of each customer’s time in natural areas.
B.3.11 AIR QUALITY
The principle

Ecotourism product has minimal impact on local air quality, and on global greenhouse gas emissions.

B.3.11.1 Air emission impacts shall be minimized by:
- using LPG, natural gas, or ethanol-based fuel;
- avoiding chlorofluorocarbon [CFC] emissions;
- avoiding the use of two-stroke engines for outboard motors and small motorised vehicles – using instead using electric, diesel or four-stroke engines;
- prohibiting smoking in any vehicles, vessels, or aircraft, or in any buildings used by guests.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE Prohibiting smoking in natural areas.

B.3.12 WASTE MINIMISATION
The principle

The waste minimisation hierarchy of REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE underpins operation of the ecotourism product.

B.3.12.1: Waste shall be minimised by the implementation of at least four of the following actions:
- avoid packaged or over-packaged goods – where possible purchase materials in bulk and/or reusable containers;
- avoiding using disposable items;
- using organic kitchen waste for animal food or compost;
- using recycled and/or unbleached paper for printed materials;
- encouraging staff and customers to participate in recycling programs, and
- litter encountered is collected and removed.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved when all of the above measures are taken.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved when a waste minimisation strategy is documented and implemented.

B.3.13 ENERGY EFFICIENCY
The principle

Ecotourism product shall strive for maximum energy-efficiency and use a minimum of non-renewable energy.

B.3.13.1 The use of non-renewable fuels will be minimised by implementing at least four of the following actions:
- buildings are designed to take into account climatic conditions (i.e. use of passive solar heating and/or tropical open ventilation techniques to minimise heating, ventilation and air conditioning requirements);
• roofs and walls are insulated;
• use of roofs with low heat absorption in hot climates;
• use of double-glazing for windows in cold climates;
• selection of appliances and white goods (such as dishwashers and refrigerators) on the basis of energy efficiency;
• use of movement detectors to control lighting and/or air-conditioning;
• use of key-tag switches and automatic controls to ensure that air conditioners and other energy consuming appliances are used only when required;
• recovery and use of heat from equipment (e.g. waste heat from a generator is used to heat water, dry laundry etc.);
• use of electricity is managed to take account of peak loads, and
• monitoring energy consumption.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved when six of the actions listed above are undertaken.**

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where one or more of the following renewable energy sources as a total or partial substitute for non-renewable energy:**

- solar (photo voltaic) panels;
- solar hot-water systems;
- micro-hydro systems;
- wind power generators;
- wave/tidal power generators;
- thermal power generators.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE Energy is purchased from a ‘green’ (ecolabel) supplier.**

B.3.13.2 Energy use for transport shall be reduced by meeting at least three of the following measures:

- fuel-efficient vehicles are used;
- all vehicles are regularly serviced and maintained;
- all routes and schedules for tour and support vehicles are arranged to minimise distance travelled;
- congested and peak traffic is avoided;
- staff have been trained in fuel-efficient driving practices;
- electric vehicles are used where feasible.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved when at least five of the measures are undertaken.**
B.3.14 MINIMAL DISTURBANCE TO WILDLIFE

The principle

There shall be minimal disturbance of wildlife, and feeding and other animal behaviour remains as natural as possible.

B.3.14.1 Operators of ecotourism products shall demonstrate that they are actively managed to:
- minimise deliberate and regular intrusion into wildlife habitat that is likely to cause disturbance to natural wildlife behaviour, such as foraging and breeding patterns and
- prevent chasing or harassing of wildlife.

B.3.14.2 Ecotourism products that involve interaction with wildlife (such as feeding) shall demonstrate that they have the appropriate approvals from the relevant authorities.

B.3.14.3 Ecotourism products involving wildlife shall demonstrate that:
- wildlife viewing does not threaten the survival of the species;
- viewing routes are rotated regularly to help protect wildlife;
- unnecessary handling of wildlife is avoided;
- if wildlife is handled, it is only carried out by trained staff;
- guests are advised of adverse impacts of feeding wildlife;
- where feeding of wildlife is authorised, only appropriate food is provided.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved when ecotourism products involving wildlife do not engage in handling or feeding wildlife.
SECTION FOUR: CONTRIBUTING TO CONSERVATION

The principle
Ecotourism shall provide a tangible contribution to conservation.

B.4.1 Operators of ecotourism products shall provide evidence that they contribute to local conservation outcomes through hands-on, in-kind and/or financial assistance that include at least five of the following measures over the previous 12 months:

- recycling;
- removal of litter;
- weed and/or pest control;
- rehabilitation;
- recording of flora/fauna/natural events;
- ecological research;
- development and maintenance of facilities/infrastructure to reduce visitor impact;
- providing input into environmental planning and policy initiatives;
- monitoring tourism impacts;
- support of nominated conservation projects; and
- promotion of conservation issues.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved if eight of the above measures have been undertaken in the last 12 months.**

B.4.2 Operators of ecotourism products shall provide evidence that they contribute to conservation outcomes beyond the immediate area of operation by implementing at least one of the following:

- a donation to, or support of, an environmental or conservation NGO;
- a donation to, or other support for, an environmental research project;
- involvement in a regional or nationwide recycling scheme;
- participation in greenhouse gas abatement and/or carbon sequestration programs.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved by implementing at least two of the above actions.**

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved where the ecotourism product provides tangible support to assist formal protection of a natural area or heritage site that is not an existing protected area.**

B.4.3 An ecotourism product shall be managed to ensure merchandise for sale:

- does not include rare or threatened species, and
- does not include items of significant cultural or heritage conservation value.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is where advice is provided to customers not to purchase merchandise derived from rare and threatened species or heritage artefacts.**

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE The operators of an ecotourism product provide linkages between and promotion of certified “green” tourism businesses and certified ecolabel products.**
SECTION FIVE: ECOTOURISM BENEFITING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The principle

Ecotourism shall provide ongoing contributions to the local community.

B.5.1 Operators of ecotourism products shall demonstrate that at least five of the following measures are being undertaken:

- employment of local guides;
- employment of local ancillary staff;
- purchase of sustainable local products;
- purchase of local services;
- sale of appropriate, locally-made souvenirs and handicrafts;
- cash or in-kind donations are made to local community infrastructure, events and activities;
- discounted access to the product is provided to local residents.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is achieved where one of the following occurs:**

- all of measures above are achieved;
- the local community has equity in the operation;
- a local ‘green to green’ purchasing policy is in place.
SECTION SIX: CULTURAL RESPECT AND SENSITIVITY

The principle
An ecotourism product must demonstrate respect of, and sensitivity to local cultures in both its development and operation phases, preferably embracing cultural aspects of the areas visited. To ensure cultural values are treated appropriately there is a need to consult with local people so that their legitimate aspirations are met and to allow presentation of authentic cultural values.

B.6.1 Operators of ecotourism products shall ascertain if there are people that have a cultural (traditional) affinity with area and consult to ensure that:

- cultural sensitivities are being taken into account;
- cultural protocols are implemented;
- cultural obligations are respected;
- cultural information and interpretation is accurate.

B.6.2 Ecotour guides and customer contact staff shall be trained so that they have working and accurate knowledge of the local culture/s, heritage and people.

B.6.3 Ecotourism product customers shall be advised on appropriate behaviour (and taboos) so as not to offend or break a taboo prior to a visit to a culturally sensitive site or region.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** The ecotourism product contributes to promoting cultural appreciation and understanding through one or more of the following initiatives:

- interpretive material dealing with a local culture has been developed by members of that cultural group;
- local indigenous people or endorsed experts on their culture are employed as guides or guide trainers;
- local indigenous people are offered training in guiding by the operator;
- cultural experiences are facilitated through integrating appropriate and authentic cultural elements from the local region into the product.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** In presentation of cultural material, tourists are made aware of contemporary cultural practices in the context of the evolution of the people’s culture.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** is recognising and respecting intellectual copyright.
SECTION SEVEN: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The principle
Ecotourism products meet or exceed customers expectations.

B.7.1 Operators of an ecotourism product shall maintain informal feedback on customer satisfaction, and use this feedback for product review, through at least three of the following:

- staff discussions with customers;
- provision of visitor books to allow for written comments;
- seeking the views of agents (retailers and wholesalers);
- media reviews of the product;
- phone calls and correspondence from clients.

B.7.2 Ecotourism product managers shall achieve formal feedback through at least one of the following and use this information for product review:

- structured interviews;
- focus groups;
- analysis of comments in visitor books;
- survey questionnaires.
SECTION EIGHT: RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

The principle
Ecotourism provides accurate and responsible information about the product that leads to realistic expectations.

B.8.1 Marketing material generated for the ecotourism product shall provide accurate and contemporary information on the following attributes:

- the natural attributes of the area or site;
- the formal status, if any, of the site (e.g. National Park, World Heritage Area);
- the main nature-based activities available;
- the range and style of interpretive services provided;
- the number of people in typical group (e.g. tour) activities;
- the natural and cultural values (e.g. rare species);
- behaviour that will minimise damage to the environment;
- behaviour that is appropriate in culturally sensitive areas.

B.8.2 All marketing material representing the product avoids presentation of operating practices that contradict minimal impact behaviour (as outlined in Ecological Sustainability Practices and Section C).

B.8.3 Ecotourism product marketing material generated for the product shall provide realistic expectations of what will be encountered/sighted and provides appropriate qualifications.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** Ecotourism product marketing material shall include at least one of the following:

- codes of practice or guidelines that address minimal impact or appropriate behaviour for the environment, or cultures visited;
- description of the key principles of ecotourism, how the product meets these, and the role and benefits of ecotourism certification.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE** Ecotourism product marketing material shall include at least one of the following:

- means of accessing additional information on the destination and/or attractions;
- advice on how the visitors can maximise their enjoyment of the product.
PART C: CODES OF CONDUCT

SECTION 1: ECOTOURISM PRODUCT MINIMAL IMPACT CODE

MINIMAL IMPACT CODES

The principle
Ecotourism products have minimal impacts on the natural, social and cultural environment, and are undertaken in accordance with a defined code of practice.

C.1 Operators of ecotourism products shall develop or adopt a minimal impact code of conduct for their product(s). The Code shall:

- include measures to prevent or minimise environmental harm;
- include measures to prevent negative social and cultural impacts;
- be appropriate for the nature and scale of the ecotourism product;
- be appropriate to the natural and cultural environments visited by the product;
- incorporate elements of the codes of conduct provided in the Schedule of the International Ecotourism Standard;
- incorporate input from a peer review from the ecotourism industry;
- receive endorsement as appropriate from protected area managers, land-owners, government conservation agencies and where applicable, non-government conservation agencies.

SECTION 2: SCHEDULE CODES OF CONDUCT

C.2 Managers of ecotourism products shall have regard to the following Codes of Conduct for ecotourism activities in developing their ecotourism product minimal impact code.

C. 2.1 WALKING AND TREKKING CODE

The following measures are implemented:

- carry out all litter and food scraps;
- in situations where toilets are not available bury waste in a hole at least 15cm deep, and at least 100 meters away from water bodies or campsites;
- utilise defined tracks;
- fill in track log-books and provide monitoring information to management agencies;
- in the absence of defined tracks and to the extent feasible, avoid wet or soft ground; instruct customers to spread out so that no two walkers follow in the same footsteps; and to the extent feasible, avoid walking through vegetation or on fragile soils;
- for day walks (i.e. a walk that does not involve an overnight camp), the maximum group size is 25 people;
- for overnight walks or treks group size is limited to eight visitors or a number approved by the relevant government agency, and
• if camping or preparation of meals is involved, the minimal impact camping criteria (following) is adhered to.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE includes in addition to the above regular monitoring of the condition of tracks and trails by filling in log books and/or making photographic records, carrying out human waste, and rotating tour routes in heavily used areas to minimise impacts.

C.2.2 CAMPING CODE
The following measures are implemented:
• whenever possible, existing official campsites are used;
• where there are no existing campsites, avoid using areas of high conservation value and ensure camps are set at least 30 metres away from the nearest water body;
• washing and bathing with soaps/detergents is carried out at least 100 metres away from the nearest water body;
• where toilets do not exist, human waste is buried in a hole 15cms deep and at least 100 metres away from the campsite and the nearest water body;
• all other wastes are carried out;
• campsite fires, if necessary are set in existing fireplaces and are completely extinguished after use;
• fires are made from firewood that has been brought in or is collected from further afield;
• campfires are discouraged with the reasons explained to visitors.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE
• fuel stoves are used for cooking;
• the condition of the campsite is monitored by filling in log books or taking photographs;
• data from the monitoring program is provided to the relevant management agency;
• the use of campsites is rotated.

C.2.3 VEHICLE USE CODE
The following measures are implemented:
• designated tracks and roads are used where they exist;
• where tracks and roads do not exist, travel routes are selected to avoid sensitive areas such as alpine grasslands, dunes, saltpans, steep hillsides; and, if appropriate, the route is approved by the relevant management agency;
• rivers and creeks are forded only at designated crossings and undertaken at slow speed, and if possible, at a 90° angle to the bank.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE
• only designated tracks or roads are used; if these do not exist the tour does not take place in the area in question;

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• advice from relevant experts such as staff of government agencies, universities, or NGO’s is sought to ascertain the appropriate route and level of use;
• road and track conditions are monitored in log books or via photographic records; and the data provided to the relevant management/government agency;
• the tour operator undertakes remedial work where necessary on tracks and roads (provided this is approved by the relevant government agency);
• tour routes are regularly rotated.

C.2.4 POWER BOAT USE CODE
The following measures are implemented:
• boat wash does not erode river banks, shores of lakes or coastal environments;
• the speed of boats is low enough to ensure that wash does not cause problems and that the enjoyment of others is not affected;
• boats are not anchored or grounded on sensitive environments such as seagrass and live coral;
• where tours use regular routes and make regular stops, mooring rather than anchoring is used;
• bilge water contaminated with oil, grease and fuel is not discharged;
• untreated ballast water is not discharged;
• where pump-out facilities for sewage/sullage exist, sewage and sullage are taken to shore and pumped out;
• where no pump-out facilities exist, sewage/sullage is only discharged where there will not be significant impacts on receiving environments (i.e. not in small lakes, near coral reefs or in land-locked coastal lagoons);
• to achieve the previous two objectives, boats are fitted with holding tanks.
• maintenance of boats (spray painting, abrasive-ballasting, application of anti-foulants, etc.) is only done in appropriately designed and managed facilities;
• anti-foulants that contain heavy metals or biocides are scrubbed and removed in an appropriate facility (where fouling organisms, paint scrapings and sludge are collected and appropriately disposed of);
• anti-foulants are not used in small freshwater bodies and only organotin-free anti-foulants are used in the marine environment.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE
• sewage/sullage and bilge water is not discharged into open water;
• ballast water is not discharged unless treated to ensure that potential diseases and exotic organisms are destroyed;
• anti-foulants that release heavy metals or biocides are not used, tar epoxies are used in preference;
• if feasible, diesel, four-stroke or electric engines are used instead of two-stroke engines;
• noise suppression equipment is used in situations where noise will disturb wildlife or lessen the other people's enjoyment.

C.2.5 NON-POWERED BOAT USE CODE
The following measures are implemented:
- portage of craft follows routes advised by natural area managers to minimise long-term environmental damage;
- portaging of canoes and rafts around whitewater or low water areas is along routes managed for such use and/or involves minimal damage to the bank and/or vegetation;
- mooring of vessels is conducted so that there is minimum impact on vegetation (i.e., when tying to trees a soft wrap is used to prevent rub; when the same location is used repeatedly the area is hardened with use of mooring rings, pylons etc.);
- portage routes and/or regularly used mooring locations are actively rehabilitated or maintained (e.g., banks revegetated; areas closed for rehabilitation);
- regular monitoring of portage routes and/or regularly used mooring locations is carried out (e.g. by way of photographs, log books), and this information is provided to the protected area manager;
- the practices of minimal impact boating are actively promoted to all customers before and during the tour (e.g. interpretive commentary, group discussions, brochures and pre-tour information address this issue);
- a “carry in – carry out” policy is in place for all litter and waste (including food scraps, but excluding human waste).

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE
• human waste is carried out;
• group size is limited to five vessels or less, or the maximum number recommended by the relevant government nature conservation agency.

C.2.6 MINIMISING IMPACTS OF SNORKELING AND SCUBA DIVING CODE
The following measures are implemented:
- when snorkeling or diving, care is taken not to stand on or damage fragile organisms (e.g. coral);
- free swimming animals are not chased, ridden or herded;
- living or dead items that are picked up are returned to their exact position;
- collecting of seashells etc. is discouraged, and only undertaken in accordance with local laws and guidelines;
- souvenirs are not taken from historic wrecks or historical sites;
- spearfishing and other collecting is not undertaken.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE
• pre-planned routes or underwater “trails” that are designed to minimise environmental impacts are provided for snorkelers/divers;
**C.2.7 ANIMAL RIDING AND ANIMAL TOURS CODE**
The following measures are implemented for horse, donkey, mule, camel, alpaca, elephant, and other animal riding:

- animals are in excellent condition before embarking and the animals welfare is paramount (there is no cruelty to the animals);
- travel routes in natural areas are those preferred by the natural area manager;
- animals' hooves, coat and tails are clean (i.e., free of seeds and plant material) before entering areas of high conservation significance.
- wherever feasible, animals are kept on designated tracks and roads provided, keeping to the centre of the track to avoid widening the route;
- where no tracks are available the following procedures are adhered to:
  - fanning out on erosion-prone areas such as grass, loose soils or soft/boggy areas.
  - fording creeks only at designated crossings, preferably at a 90 degree angle to bank;
  - feedback is provided to the natural area manager on track conditions and advise is heeded regarding current appropriate routes and levels of use;
  - oncoming riders are advised of sensitive or impacted road or track conditions.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE**

- weeds are not introduced to, or spread within, natural areas through ensuring that animal feed is clean (free of weeds), approved by the natural area manager, and given using a nose bag whilst on tour. Consideration should be given to ensuring animals are fed weed free feed prior to entering natural areas to ensure weeds are not introduced in droppings;
- remedial works, e.g. assisting water runoff from roads or re-vegetating closed tracks, are undertaken;
- designated tie up facilities for animals are used or a portable fence is carried;
- animals are penned overnight (rather than tied to a tree) at least 30 metres from the nearest water body and in an area at least 15 square metres per animal.

**C.2.8 AIRCRAFT USE CODE**
The following measures are implemented:

- private airstrips and helipads are located as far as possible from public areas;
- flights over protected areas maintain a minimum height of at least 1000 feet or other specified height required by the natural area manager;
- flight paths and altitudes are selected to ensure minimal impacts on wildlife watching (i.e. whale watching, whale shark viewing, penguin or bird rookeries);
• aircraft use does not negatively affect the ability of others to appreciate and enjoy the environment;
• bunding, drip trays, ground liners or hardstands are used to reduce the impacts of fuel and oil spillage;
• refuelling of aircraft does not occur in areas of high conservation value;
• relatively undisturbed ecosystems, where native fauna and people on the ground are likely to be prone to noise disturbance, are avoided;
• aircraft are not operated at low levels over culturally significant sites without prior consultation with the traditional custodians.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE

• flights over protected areas maintain a minimum height of at least 2000 feet or other specified height required by the protected area manager;
• aircraft use is actively discouraged in scenic or culturally sensitive areas;
• other than at designated airports, aircraft do not land within audible distance of a local community.

C.2.9 SPOTLIGHTING CODE

The following measures are implemented:
• low wattage lights or small torches (maximum of 60 watts or 30 watts in a closed forest) are used to detect eye-shine;
• low wattage lights are used for observations (30 watts recommended).
• a maximum of two spotlights per group is used;
• red filters are placed in front of spotlights once an animal has been located;
• spotlights are not shone on animals for such a length of time that is likely to leave them dazed and susceptible to predation;
• group size is limited to 25;
• smoking is actively discouraged;
• visitor behaviour is managed through advise prior to commencing the tour:
  • to keep noise to a minimum;
  • to stay behind leaders holding spotlights;
  • to keep to designated trails;
  • on the correct use of equipment (e.g. torches, red filters, binoculars).
• tours are led on well-made trails;
• tours routes for mammal spotlighting are regularly rotated;
• the playing of taped animal or bird calls is kept to a minimum.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE

• infra-red binoculars are used;
• group size is limited to 10 or less;
• familiarisation of the tour route is conducted be surveying the route in daylight prior to the tour;
• flash photography is prohibited.
When observing turtles laying eggs, the following measures are undertaken:
- lights are no more than three volts, or two-cell torch;
- lights are not shone directly on the turtle’s face at any time;
- turtles leaving the water or moving up the beach are not approached, but avoided until after the body pit has been dug and the turtle begins laying eggs;
- animals are not touched at any time;
- campfires are not lit on turtle-laying beaches; and
- flash photography is prohibited.

When observing glow worms, all of the following measures are undertaken:
- lighting is kept to the minimum level necessary for safety;
- lights are no more than three volts, or two-cell torch;
- lights are not shone directly on the glow worms at any time;
- animals are not touched at any time;
- campfires are not lit near glow worm sites; and
- flash photography is prohibited.

C.2.10 MARINE MAMMAL AND MEGAFAUNA VIEWING CODE
The following measures are implemented when whale, dolphin, shark, whale shark, dugong, manatee viewing:
- where they are in place, codes of ethics produced by management agencies are adopted;
- animals are not chased or herded;
- animals have unrestricted movement;
- particular caution is exercised around any group of animals that includes mothers and young;
- at least one staff member monitors the animal’s behaviour while the activity is occurring;
- where vessels are used ensure that:
  - they are not positioned directly in the path of animals nor used to “leap frog” in a way that repeatedly places the vessel ahead of the animals;
  - engines are not started and vessels not moved off until animals have departed;
  - where several vessels are operating at the same location, radio communication between the vessels is maintained to assist orderly management and safety.
  - all machinery, engines, etc. are soundproofed;
- swimming with megafauna (e.g., dolphins, seals) occurs only with the authorisation of the statutory authority responsible for the animal; and where swimming with megafauna does occur:
  - customers are prepared for their reaction to being at close quarters with the animals;
  - customers are advised not to touch or swim at animals;
  - lines are used in open water, and wherever suitable at reefs;
• where in use, customers are advised not to leave the line;
• visitors are advised to avoid rapid movements;
• instructions on correct use of equipment (e.g., snorkeling gear) is given.
• at least one staff member enters the water before visitors;
• visitors displaying unsuitable behaviour are removed from the water;
• snorkeling gear is used in preference to SCUBA;
• flash photography is prohibited;
• a maximum of six customers are in the water at any one time.

C.2.11 ROCK CLIMBING AND ABSEILING CODE
The following measures are implemented:
• indiscriminate or excessive use is avoided of fixed equipment and chalk;
• chipping of rock, wire brushing to remove mosses and “gardening” in cracks and gullies is avoided;
• use of bolts is minimised and the use of galvanised bolts is avoided;
• sites of geological, cultural or other scientific interest are avoided;
• access to cliffs is only achieved via existing tracks;
• a “carry in – carry out” policy is in place for all equipment and rubbish;
• vegetation, nesting birds or other wildlife are not disturbed.

C.2.12 CAVING CODE
In developed show caves the following measures are implemented:
• all of the following construction and operation measures have been undertaken:
• where an entrance has been created or enlarged for customer access, a chamber has been installed between the cave entrance and the rest of the cave to minimise air and temperature flow;
• pathways or fill that block natural water courses within the cave have been avoided;
• all lighting is powered by electricity and is switched off when customers are outside the cave.
• prior to entering the cave, visitor behaviour is managed through advice to:
• not touch or remove any cave decorations, speleothems, bone and fossil remains, cave dwelling life forms, sediment or watercourse within the cave;
• carry out all litter;
• eating and smoking is prohibited;
• of the legal ramifications if they are found willfully damaging or removing a cave feature.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE Visitors are supplied with coats or slip-on covers for their shoes to minimise lint and dust loss.

ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE is when all of the following construction measures have been undertaken:
• the cave route has been designed to minimise ascents and maximise descents;
During caving in wild caves the following measures are implemented:
- wild caving is not conducted on routes that contains any of the following:
  - crossing of clean flow stone floors in boots;
  - venturing within five metres of high value stalagmite clusters;
  - venturing within five metres of cave-dwelling life forms; and
  - pointing lights directly on cave biota.

The following equipment is used in all wild cave tours:
- battery operated lights, rather than fuel-based systems;
- soft material between ropes and natural anchors such as trees (e.g., carpet or cloth);
- small tackle bags and packs, tightly fitted to the guide's back; and
- cave-marking materials so that missing markers can be replaced and poorly defined routes can be clarified.

All of the following measures are taken to manage customer behaviour:
- helmets are never removed;
- any food eaten is consumed over plastic bags so that no crumbs or waste is left behind;
- visitors are advised of the legal ramifications if they are found willfully damaging or removing a cave feature and
- camping is prohibited.
- the maximum group size is limited to 10 (including the guide);
- information about the location of cave entrances and routes within caves is not provided.

**ECOTOURISM BEST PRACTICE**
- no flow stone is walked on by guides or customers.
- customers are not left in the dark to find their own way through a section of cave that contains any cave decorations, speleothems, bone and fossil remains, cave dwelling life forms, sediment or watercourse;
- maximum group size is limited to five (including the guide);
- wild caving in sensitive caves and extensions does not use: tackle bags and packs, bolting, rigging and construction equipment;
- overalls and boots are washed clean of dirt, lint, bacteria and fungi before taking them into the cave;
- litter patrols are conducted by the operator to remove any litter left after tours.
DOCUMENTS CAPTURED AS RECEIVED
APPENDIX C:

CERTIFICATION for SUSTAINABLE TOURISM QUESTIONNAIRE

(CST – Costa Rica)

Experiences in higher learning with Blue Hawaiian Helicopters, Maui 2004
CST QUESTIONNAIRE

Physical and Biological Environment

1. Policies and programs

1.1 The hotel’s negative environmental impacts are identified, monitored and kept on a written record. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

1.2 Specific environmental mitigation planes have been designed by the hotel to deal with negative environmental impacts or environmental accidents (emergencies). Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

1.3 The hotel continuously participates in programs of environmental improvement of its surrounding areas or other areas of the country. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

1.4 The hotel is member of regional or local organizations that work on solving environmental and social programs. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

2. Emissions and wastes

2.1 The hotel strictly maintains and periodically registers the composition and quality of its residual water (treated wastewater). Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

2.2 The hotel has a certification of the quality of its residual water (treated wastewater) granted by the Department of Environmental Control of the Ministry of Health. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

2.3 The hotel operates a wastewater treatment plant to avoid discharging it directly into the environment. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

2.4 The residual water is discharged without altering the environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

2.5 The residual water is appropriately re-utilized (recycled). Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

2.6 The rainwater is managed and disposed using systems that do not alter the environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

2.7 Any source of pollution located on the hotel’s surrounding area is reported to appropriate government agencies. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

2.8 Warning signs are used to identify contaminated areas. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

2.9 The hotel actively participates on the "Ecological Blue Flag Program" for coastal zones. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

3. Gardens

3.1 Native plants are predominately used on the hotel’s gardens. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

3.2 The hotel does not allow the dispersion of non-native ornamental plants, used on the hotel gardens, to the surrounding environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

3.3 The main tree species on the hotel are identified according to their local and scientific name. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

3.4 The hotel has written information about the plant species located on its gardens. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

3.5 The hotel’s gardens are maintained avoiding the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

4. Natural areas (National parks and protected areas)

4.1 The hotel promotes the visitation of natural areas among its customers. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
4.2 The hotel has detailed information about natural areas of interest for tourists. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

4.3 The hotel complies with the policies and laws establish to regulate tourism activities in natural areas. It also communicates these regulations to its customers. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

4.4 The hotel owns a natural protected area. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

4.5 The hotel's protected area is appropriately managed. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

4.6 The hotel participates in or supports the maintenance or management of a natural protected area (private or public). Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

5. Protection of flora and fauna

5.1 The hotel implements specific actions to promote the no extraction of native flora or fauna by tourist or any other people. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

5.2 The hotel shows its resolution to prevent any commercialization of natural products (animals, plants, and their products) forbidden by law. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

5.3 The hotel does not maintain wild animals in captivity. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

5.4 The hotel implements activities to prevent the artificial feeding of wild animals. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

5.5 The hotel external illumination system does not produce alterations on the natural environment or changes on wild animal behavior. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

5.6 The hotel sources of noise are appropriately located or isolated to prevent alterations to the natural environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

Hotel facilities

6. Formulation of policies

6.1 The hotel has established a sustainability mission and policies. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

6.2 The hotel has prepared a brochure to publish the goals of its sustainability policies. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

6.3 The employees know the goals of the hotel's sustainability mission and policies. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

6.4 The hotel has designed a manual that defines the goal of its sustainability plan and describes its sustainability programs. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

6.5 The hotel's keeps a record of efforts implemented in order to achieve its sustainability goals. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

7. Water consumption

7.1 The water consumption is periodically monitored. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.2 The hotel keeps a record of total water consumption. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.3 The hotel has a water usage plan with specific saving goals. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.4 A person is responsible for the execution of scheduled water saving activities. This schedule is known by all the employees. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.5 Water saving by employees and customers is encouraged by a permanent promotion program. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.6 Water leakage problems are periodically monitored and the hotel keeps a record of location and repairs. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.7 The hotel uses faucet water saving devises. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
7.8 At least every two months, an independent laboratory monitors the quality of drinking water quality and ice used by the hotel. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

7.9 The swimming pool water quality is periodically monitored. The hotel keeps record of this process. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

7.10 The swimming pool has a system to daily obtain chloride. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

7.11 The swimming pool water is treated using a chloride free process. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

8. Energy consumption.

8.1 The water consumption is periodically monitored. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.2 The hotel keeps a record of monthly total energy consumption. The energy usage is statistically analyzed. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.3 The hotel has a energy usage plan with specific saving goals. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.4 A person is responsible for the execution of scheduled energy saving activities. All the employees know this schedule. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.5 Natural illumination systems are used wherever is possible. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.6 The hotel has a program of preventive maintenance for all electric installations and equipment. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.7 The hotel promotes the turning off illumination systems whenever they are not necessary. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.8 An energy-efficient illumination system in at least 80% of the hotel facilities. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.9 The hotel uses new technologies for energy saving. For instance, automatic switches for illumination systems and electric/electronic equipment. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.10 The hotel is using alternative energy systems (i.e. solar energy) for illumination. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.11 The hotel is using alternative energy systems (i.e. solar energy) for water heating or other energy needs. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.12 The hot water deposits and pipes are covered with insulated material to prevent heat losses. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.13 The hotel uses natural ventilation and shading and other alternative air conditioning systems. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.14 The hotel uses new technologies to increase the energy efficiency of the refrigeration and air conditioning systems. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

8.15 The hotel has a program to control the leakage of air and other gases from the refrigeration and air conditioning systems. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

8.16 Energy efficient electric equipment is used to cover at least 50% of the hotel's needs. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

8.17 The laundry takes advantage of solar heat to dry clothes, sheets, and towels. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

9. General supplies consumption

9.1 The hotel has a supplies' buying and consumption policy that incorporates environmental and social aspects. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.2 The employees know the standards established by the buying policy. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
9.3 The hotel has a suppliers' manual to guarantee their compliance with the buying policy's social and environmental standards. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.4 The hotel does not use or sell products that are harmful for the environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.5 At least 50% of the printed material used by the hotel are made with free chloride recycled paperweight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

**Food and beverages**

9.6 The food is prepared using preferably fresh products. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.7 The hotel certified organic food products. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

9.8 The hotel menu offers national or regional dishes. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.9 The "canned" food bought by the hotel is acquired in "full" (industrial) size containers that are preferable made of glass or recyclable steel. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.10 The reuse or recycling of containers is a standard practice. The hotel also has specific suppliers of recycling services. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.11 Butter, sauces, sugar, honey and fruit jelly are served on reusable containers. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

9.12 The kitchen, restaurant and bar of the hotel use reusable dishes, glasses, cups, etc. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

**Cleaning and cosmetic products**

9.13 The hotel used non-toxic, non-corrosive biodegradable cleaning products. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.14 The detergents used by the laundry and kitchen are phosphate and bleaching free. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.15 The soup and other cosmetic products provide to customers and employees are biodegradable. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.16 The cleaning and cosmetic products come in biodegradable, recyclable or reusable packaging. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.17 The cosmetics on the customer rooms and toilets are supplied using dispenser containers. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

9.18 The cosmetic product wastes are appropriately recycled or reused. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

**10. Management of solid wastes**

10.1 The quantity and quality of solid wastes is continuously monitored. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

10.2 There is record of the production of wastes by room or hotel section. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

10.3 The hotel has solid waste reduction plan with specific goals. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

10.4 A person is responsible for the execution of scheduled solid waste reduction activities. All the employees know this schedule. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

**Organic wastes**

10.5 Organic wastes are deposited in separated containers. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

10.6 The organic wastes generated are composted or recycled. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a
Inorganic wastes

10.7 The hotel has separated containers for classifying different kinds of inorganic solid wastes (glass, paper, plastic, and steel). Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
10.8 The room service employees classify the inorganic solid waste not classified by the customers. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
10.9 The hotel has specific area where the final classification of inorganic solid waste is performed. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
10.10 The hotel participates on a recycling program. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

Final destiny of wastes

10.11 The solid wastes generated are appropriately storage before their final disposal. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
10.12 The hotel verifies and guarantee that the final disposal of wastes is efficiently done. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

11. Training

11.1 All the employees are informed and know about the sustainability policies of the hotel. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
11.2 The hotel maintains a training program for employees according to its responsibilities. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
11.3 The employees actively participate on the design of the environmental activities and policies of the hotel. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
11.4 The employees periodically participate on meeting that deal with hotel sustainability issues. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
11.5 The hotel has a strategy that provides incentives to the employees to suggest improvements to hotel's sustainability program. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
11.6 The hotel periodically evaluates and control the results of its employee training program. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

Customers

12. Communication and involvement

12.1 Customers are provide with cultural, historic and ecological information about the area where hotel is located. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
12.2 The hotel has an information program for the guests which provides details of the its sustainability goals as establish by the STC. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
12.3 The hotel declares under oath that all the information contained on its publicity materials is strictly true. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
12.4 The publicity material of the hotel contains information and promotes the goals of the STC. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
12.5 The consumers are informed and encouraged to participate on the different STC programs implemented by the hotel. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
12.6 The hotel provides the customers with information about the environmental protection actions developed in the region. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
12.7 Information about the socio-cultural activities developed in the region is provided to the customer by the hotel. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
13. Room conditioning (management).

13.1 The rooms have information and necessary facilities to allow the appropriate separation of solid wastes by the guests. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

13.2 The rooms have information and necessary facilities to allow water and energy savings by the guests. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

13.3 The hotel has a program to promote non-daily washing or towels, sheets and others. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

13.4 Non-smoking areas and rooms are clearly established by the hotel in order to reduce air contamination. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

14. Management of guest groups

14.1 The customers are encouraged and oriented to visit protected areas and other natural attractions. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

14.2 The hotel has specialized tourist guides to provide detailed information to the customers about these natural areas. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

14.3 The hotel has designed an effective program to encourage the guest to keep clean and undamaged the natural areas they visit. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

14.4 The guests are provided with information about proper ways of behavior and their responsibilities when visiting natural areas. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

14.5 The tours and other related activities sold by the hotel promote a constructive interaction between the guest and nature. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

15. Customer feedback measurement.

15.1 The hotel analyzes the opinions of the guests about the STC on a survey questionnaire specifically design for this purpose. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

15.2 The results of this survey are reported at least every 6 months to the Ministry of Tourism and the STC Commission. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

15.3 The guests have access to a paper form where they can state their complaints about the STC and the operation of the hotel in general. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

15.4 In relation to the STC results and the hotel services, the hotel has design and established some kind of guarantee for the guests. This guarantee is easy to implement or obtain. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

Socio-economic environment

16. Direct economic benefits

16.1 60% of the hotel's employees are people from the local community. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

16.2 The hotel provides training to local people so that they can effectively work at the hotel. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

16.3 The administrative employees of the hotel are Costa Ricans. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

16.4 The hotel contributes and supports the training of human resources for complementary tourism activities. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

16.5 The hotel hires the human resources trained on complementary tourism activities. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

16.6 The hotel does not hire anybody illegally. It also does not hire anybody below the minimum conditions (salary, benefits, etc.). Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
16.7 The job opportunities offered by the hotel are not creating undesirable situations on the local community. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

17. Indirect economic benefits

17.1 The publicity material of the hotel informs about leisure activities organized by the local community or local enterprises. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.2 The publicity material of the hotel informs about beneficence activities developed in the local community. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.3 The hotel actively participates supporting the development of cultural, artistic and sport activities. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.4 The hotel takes advantage and promotes the consumption of inputs produced locally. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.5 The hotel's store sales handicrafts and other products from the local region. Local people and businesses produce these products. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

17.6 Handicrafts and other artistic adornments produced in Costa Rica are used to decorate the rooms and other hotel facilities. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.7 The hotel has specific programs that promote national tourism. It offers reduced rates for Costa Ricans. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.8 The hotel supports or has permanent commercial relation with at least one national micro-enterprise. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.9 The technology, materials and equipment used by the hotel are produced locally or have an important national component. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

17.10 The hotel facilitates maritime or terrestrial transport to people from the community on frequent basis or in emergency cases. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

18. Contribution to cultural development

18.1 The promotion of the hotel integrates cultural elements from the local region and communities. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

18.2 The hotel has a designated area where local organizations, previously obtaining the hotel authorization, can expose their tourism projects and initiatives. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

18.3 The hotel allows the use of its facilities for important community reunions. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

18.4 The hotel publicizes and promotes cultural activities and expressions. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

18.5 The hotel prohibits the use and promotion of sexual commerce activities, prostitution, and drug dealing or other social problems. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

18.6 The hotel has established practical actions against sexual harassment and promotes equal opportunity for both genders. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

18.7 The hotel promotional and guiding signs do not interfere with the cultural, social, and natural environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

19. Contribution to the public health

19.1 The demand of basic services (water, electricity, roads) is not competing with those of the local communities. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no [ ]n/a

19.2 The hotel participates as facilitator of the preventive public health programs. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no
19.3 The control of plagues is done with substances and procedures that do not affect customers, employees, local people, wildlife animals and environment. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

20. Infrastructure and security

20.1 The hotel has contributed with the community to the maintenance or construction of infrastructure. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

20.2 The hotel uses its influence and knowledge to help solving the infrastructure problems of the local communities. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

20.3 The hotel is involved in associations or committees that work to improve the condition of the local community. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

20.4 The hotel support of the tourist security programs being developed. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no

20.5 The hotel has and enforces an ethical code that benefits morality and security. Weight: 3 [ ]yes [ ]no

20.6 The hotel implements practical actions to guarantee the security of its customers and employees. Weight: 1 [ ]yes [ ]no

20.7 The hotel has contingency plan to deal with natural disasters or emergencies. Weight: 2 [ ]yes [ ]no
APPENDIX D:

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECO-CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

(STEP – Sustainable Travel International, USA)

Sustainable technology opportunities
The Alternate Source, Big Island of Hawai‘i 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Eco-Certified Sustainable Travel Program: principle Categories and corresponding Criteria</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>All necessary licenses, permits and approvals have been obtained for each of the regions where the travel and tourism provider (hereinafter referred to as the “company”) provides its programs and / or services. Please provide a list of each permit, permit number, expiration date, contact name and number via email.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>All federal, state and local rules, regulations, ordinances, and other requirements that the company is obliged to adhere to are documented and maintained by the company in an up-to-date register.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>All of the company’s operations are undertaken only in locations and in a manner condoned and / or specifically recognized as appropriate by the area’s resource manager.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Policies, Mission and Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>The company has a written sustainability policy that incorporates relevant criteria under each ESTP principle category appropriate to it’s environmental, economic, and social footprint as well as the location, nature and scale of its programs and / or services. Please provide an electronic copy of your sustainability policy.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>The company has implemented an on-going system for assessing, monitoring and reporting its cumulative social, cultural, ecological, and economic impacts in each of the regions in which it operates.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>The company has implemented a strategy to mitigate its cumulative impacts, the results of which are monitored by an independent third party.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Specific environmental mitigation plans have been designed by the company to address negative environmental impacts and / or environmental emergencies.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>The company has prepared an environmental management plan that meets the international environmental standard ISO 14001. Please provide an electronic copy of your environmental management plan.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>The company has received an audit of its environmental management plan from a recognized environmental professional within the last two years, and the auditor’s recommendations for improvement have been implemented.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>The company is a member of regional or local organizations that work on solving environmental and social problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>The company publishes its sustainability goals and keeps a record of efforts as they relate to implementing and achieving its sustainability business practices.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>The company’s employees know its sustainability goals and policies.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>The company produces a sustainability report based on the Global Reporting Initiative – Tour Operator’s Initiative (TOI) for Sustainable Tourism Development. Please provide an electronic copy of your sustainability report based on the TOI.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>The company has a customer communication campaign on sustainability to raise awareness of sustainability issues and provides information on traveling in a responsible manner.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The company has constructed or renovated all of its structures and facilities in accordance with a formal environmental impact statement written by an independent third party that addressed, minimized and mitigated the impacts to the local ecosystem.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The company prepared a soil and water management plan in designing its structures and facilities, and the plan was implemented to minimize point-source pollution as well as runoff, erosion and sediment control.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>The company’s soil and water management plan was approved and / or certified by a recognized environmental consultant and / or the governing local body within the past two years.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The company’s operations do not cause any soil loss, water and / or air contamination, or impacts on its property, adjacent property or leased land such as erosion and sediment pollution to lands and waterways that are down slope.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>The company’s has rehabilitated areas disturbed from constructing or renovating its structures and facilities through re-vegetation utilizing endemic species.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>During the constructing or renovating of its structures and facilities, the company maximized the use of renewable and recyclable materials and implemented sustainable building practices to minimize environmental impacts.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Program management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Provide total number of certified businesses utilized in company operations annually. Required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Total number of certified accommodations, service providers and operators utilized annually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Total value of certified travel and tourism product purchased annually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Total value of all travel and tourism product purchased annually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Total number of subsidiary operations owned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Total number of certified businesses utilized in company operations annually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>All accommodations utilized by the company have less than 40 rooms, except those utilized for pre and post trip client lodging, which have less than 100 rooms.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>All accommodations utilized by the company make use of certified organic foods in related food services provided to the company.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>All accommodations utilized by the company promote non-daily washing of towels and linens.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>All accommodations contracted by the company utilize at least one of the following technologies to increase their energy efficiency: alternative energy systems – solar, wind, geothermal, biomass or small-scale hydro energy; Energy Star® certified products or equivalent; natural ventilation and shading, heat loss prevention – double-paned windows, curtains/blinds, insulation for roofs, walls (in cooler climates) and hot water pipes.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Each motor coach or cruise ship-based tour has no more than 50 clients per guide.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Each tour involving self-propelled recreation has no more than 10 clients per guide and has a maximum group size of 26 clients.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Wherever applicable group size is limited to or smaller than the maximum number suggested by the relevant government, nature or conservation agency.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Each of the company’s guides are fluent in English as well as the national language of the country in which they lead tours.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>The company utilizes certified sustainable tourism accommodations, service providers and operators in each of the areas where such certification programs exist.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>At least one of the company’s guides has received Master Educator or Trainer status from Leave No Trace™ or comparable status from an equally recognized program. This individual trains the rest of the guide staff annually in LNT low-impact practices applicable to each region of operation.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>A “pack it in – pack it out” policy is in place for all litter and waste (including food scraps, spilled food, toilet paper, hygiene products, and trash left from other parties), and a “leave what you find” policy is in place when visiting all protected natural areas.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.13 Public toilets are used whenever possible during camping and/or nature-based programs. When no such facilities exist, human waste is always carried out (when camping in one location for multiple days since latrines are discouraged) or buried 15 centimeters (6 to 8 inches) deep at least 100 meters (or 300 feet) away from water sources, campsites and trails before it is covered.

3.14 Campfire impacts are discouraged, but when necessary are minimized through the following measures: existing fireplaces are used, firewood is not collected from the surrounding environment unless it can be broken by hand, fires are kept small, and guides ensure fires are fully extinguished and ashes are scattered before breaking camp.

3.15 Camping tours always utilize existing campsites, and are set at least 60 meters (or 200 feet) away from the nearest water source on durable surfaces (e.g., rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow); fuel stoves are always used for all cooking; and structures, trestles or furniture are never built.

3.16 Campfire tours utilize public cleaning facilities whenever possible. When no such facilities exist, washing is carried out at least 100 meters (300 feet) away from water sources with small amounts of biodegradable soaps and cleaners; strained dishwasher is always scattered.

3.17 Walking, hiking and trekking tours incorporate minimal impact practices and always keep to established trail systems yielding to other trail users and walking single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy, where such trail systems do not exist, wet or soft ground is avoided, and groups are spread out to limit impacts.

3.18 Off-road vehicle usage and biking tours incorporate minimal impact practices by keeping to established routes, avoiding widening of routes, and fording streams only at designated crossings at 90 degrees to the bank.

3.19 Horseback and trail riding tours incorporate minimal impact practices by keeping to established trail and road systems (and where these do not exist, riders spread out to limit impacts on fragile ecosystems); avoiding widening of routes; fording streams only at designated crossings at 90 degrees to the bank.

3.20 When entering protected conservation areas, horseback and trail riding tours: only utilize the minimum number of animals that are necessary, ensure that all animals are fit, calm, healthy, and experienced; and bring along bring adequate equipment for grazing restraints to prevent overgrazing and the girding of live trees.

3.21 Rock climbing and rappelling programs incorporate minimal impact practices that include avoiding each of the following: excessive use of fixed equipment, bolts and chalk, chipping or wire brushing rock to remove vegetation; disturbance of wildlife and areas of scientific or cultural interest; and accessing routes on non-established trails.

3.22 Caving programs incorporate the following minimal impact practices: educating customers about proper behavior (i.e., no smoking, touching stalagmites or stalactites, or removing any cave feature); designing routes to minimize impacts and the need for human-made construction; and adopting the governing speleological society's code of ethics (or the U.S. Canadian, or Mexican standard if none exists).

3.23 Boat usage incorporates minimal impact practices by not affecting river, lake or coastal ecosystems; anchoring or mooring on sensitive environments; discharging untreated or contaminated water and sewage into the environment; and if applicable, portaging in a manner that causes damage to the environment.

3.24 Snorkeling and SCUBA diving programs incorporate minimal impact diving techniques though providing pre-planned routes and resting stations for clients and educating clients and programs to avoid direct contact with corals or other flora and fauna, or collecting living or dead items or historically significant souveniers.

3.25 Aircraft usage incorporates minimal environmental impact by avoiding noise disturbance and scenic or culturally sensitive areas, observing wildlife watching regulations; or flying at a minimum height of 1000 feet over protected areas (or at a height specified by protected area managers), and fueling is undertaken in a manner as to reduce impacts from spillage.

3.26 Regular feedback is provided to the protected area manager for all natural areas utilized as part of the company's programs and/or services.

4.0 Air emissions and wastewater

4.1 Provide total annual volume of carbon dioxide sequestered i.e., offset by your company's investment in carbon dioxide sequestration projects. The total amount of carbon dioxide generated from your company is primarily based on your solid waste, energy consumption, and work-related travel as entered in 8.1 and 10.1. These figures can easily be tallied using a carbon calculator for businesses (e.g., www.ClimateNeutral.com/pages/metrics.html or www.CLevel.co.uk/businesscalc.html).

4.2 The total air contaminants and greenhouse gases emitted directly into the atmosphere from the company's operations meet or exceed statutory requirements.

4.3 Non-smoking areas and rooms are always available for the company's clients in order to reduce their exposure to air contamination.

4.4 The company periodically registers the composition and quality of its residual water/treated wastewater through a recognized environmental professional.

4.5 The company's residual water/treated wastewater that is discharged into any ecosystem meets or exceeds statutory requirements, so it does not alter the environment.

4.6 The company's residual water/treated wastewater is treated to remove all hazardous materials, oil and grease, then it is re-utilized or recycled.

4.7 The company's rainwater is managed and disposed of using systems that do not alter the environment.

4.8 Any source of pollution located on the company's property or in their region(s) of operation is reported to the appropriate government agencies.

4.9 Warning signs are used to identify contaminated areas on the company's property or in their region(s) of operation.

4.10 The company utilizes a carbon calculator for businesses (e.g., www.ClimateNeutral.com/pages/metrics.html, or similar method) to determine its total carbon outputs and appropriately allocates the resources necessary to achieve carbon neutral status.

4.11 Travel and tour companies whose clients require airline or other transport services to participate in their programs utilize a carbon calculator for businesses (e.g., www.ClimateNeutral.com/pages/metrics.html, www.CLevel.co.uk/businesscalc.html, or a similar method) to determine their client's total carbon outputs, and the fees required to offset the associated carbon outputs.

4.12 The company has a program in place to assess voluntary fees from their clients for offsetting their client's total carbon outputs. 100% of these fees are appropriately allocated to achieve carbon neutral status.

5.0 Parks, protected areas and unique ecosystems

5.1 The company includes a visit to at least one officially established protected area as part of each and every one of its programs and/or tours.

5.2 The company provides detailed information about each officially established protected area visited to its clients.

5.3 The company complies with the policies and laws established to regulate tourism activities in natural areas, and these policies and regulations are communicated to its clients as required.

5.4 The company participates in or financially supports the maintenance or management of private and/or public natural protected areas.
### 5.5 The company provides opportunities for its clients to participate in or financially supports the maintenance or management of private and / or public natural protected area(s)...

### 5.6 The company's operations are not visually dominant (i.e., measures have been taken to minimize visual impacts and / or meet local regulations where applicable).

### 5.7 The company ensures that the noise pollution from its operations are appropriately located (or isolated) and meet local regulations where applicable.

### 5.8 The company ensures that the noise pollution from its operations are not dominant over the background noise in nearby natural areas ensuring the natural environment and other user groups are not adversely affected.

### 5.9 In arid and desert environments, the company always conserves water sources by ensuring employees and clients bring in enough water required for their activity.

### 5.10 If it is necessary to utilize desert springs, the company avoids polluting them by using containers to dip from water sources, not swimming in pools or small streams, and not exposing water sources to body oils, lotions or sunscreens.

### 5.11 In arid and desert environments, all tours are restricted to the most-impact resistant surfaces and cryptobiotic soils are always avoided.

### 5.12 When venturing off-trail, the company avoids fragile terrain and terrain that is critical to wildlife. Since walking on some vegetation is unavoidable, all of the company's guides who lead off-trail tours are knowledgeable of which plants are most resistant to trampling, and they educate their clients accordingly.

### 6.0 Flora and fauna protection

| 6.1 The company's facilities are xeriscaped i.e., landscaping only utilizes naturally occurring / endemic species. | 1 |
| 6.2 The company's landscaping is maintained through the use of organic fertilizers. | 2 |
| 6.3 The company promotes no removal or extraction of cultural or historic structures and artifacts as well as rocks, native plants and other natural objects to clients and employees. | 1 |
| 6.4 The company avoids the introduction or transporting of non-native species. | 1 |
| 6.5 The company actively prevents any commercialization of rare, endangered or protected flora and / or fauna as part of its operations and relations with regional and / or local service providers. | 2 |
| 6.6 The company does not keep wild animals in captivity unless they are involved in a recognized wildlife rehabilitation program. | 1 |
| 6.7 The company prevents its clients and employees from artificially feeding wild animals. Additionally, food and trash are always securely stored to avoid inadvertently feeding wild animals. | 1 |
| 6.8 The company always observes wildlife from a distance and avoids wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young or in winter. | 1 |
| 6.9 The company's external illumination system(s) does not alter the natural environment or change wild animal behavior. | 1 |

### 7.0 Water consumption

| 7.1 Provide annual volume of potable water used as described by the sum of your associated bills for the previous 12 months. | Required |
| 7.2 The company has a water usage plan with specific saving goals relevant to local environmental conditions in each area of operation. | 2 |
| 7.3 The company has appointed an employee to execute scheduled water saving activities, and this schedule is known by all employees. | 2 |
| 7.4 The company always encourages employees and clients to save water through a permanent, written promotion program that provides facilities, information and advice for minimizing water usage. | 1 |
| 7.5 The company currently utilizes at least three of the following water conservation measures in its operations: tap aerators; low flow showerheads; low flush or composting toilets; grey water reuse; bringing drinking water into natural areas. | 2 |

### 8.0 Energy consumption

| 8.1.1 Provide annual electricity and fuel used as described by the sum of your associated bills for the previous 12 months. | Required |
| 8.2 Total number of services completed on all vehicles utilized in operations to manufacturers recommendations: | Required |
| 8.3 The company has an energy usage plan with specific savings goals which are regularly monitored and evaluated by a designated employee who has been trained in the execution of scheduled energy saving activities. | 1 |
| 8.4 The company always encourages employees and clients to save energy through a permanent, written promotion program that provides facilities, information and advice for minimizing energy usage. | 2 |
| 8.5 The company utilizes natural illumination systems in its facilities where possible, and when natural lighting is inadequate, lighting is minimized to the level required to provide safety and security. | 1 |
| 8.6 At least 50% of the appliances, electronics, and lighting, and heating and cooling equipment utilized by the company in its operations are energy-efficient and / or Energy Star® certified products. | 3 |
| 8.7 The company is using alternative energy systems (i.e. solar, wind, geothermal, biomass or small-scale hydro energy) for illumination, water heating and / or other energy needs. | 3 |
| 8.8 The company currently utilizes at least three of the following heat loss prevention measures in its operations: double-paned windows; curtains and / or blinds; insulation in roofs; insulation in walls (in cooler climates); insulated hot water pipes. | 1 |
| 8.9 The company uses alternative air conditioning systems such as natural ventilation and shading. | 1 |
| 8.10 The company takes advantage of solar heat to dry laundry (i.e., clothes, sheets, and towels). | 1 |
| 8.11 The company minimizes transport energy needs through at least three of the following measures: vehicles are regularly serviced and maintained; tour routes are planned to minimize travel distances; fuel efficient vehicles are purchased or leased (e.g., hybrid gas-electric, hydrogen fuel cell, diesel bio-fuel, or other low emission alternatives); clients are encouraged to use public transport; and / or employees are encouraged to carpool, walk, bike or use public transport to get to work. | 3 |

### 9.0 General consumption

| 9.1 Provide volume of recycled / eco-friendly products purchased for the previous 12 months. | Required |
| 9.2 Total annual volume of paper purchased - be sure to specify unit (usually lbs.). | |
| 9.3 Other recycled products purchased annually - be sure to specify unit. | |

---

**Note:** The table above includes a list of items related to the company's environmental and energy consumption practices. Each item is accompanied by a rating or indication of importance. The requirements are indicated where applicable.
### Total annual volume of recycled products purchased - be sure to specify unit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>The company has a waste minimization plan with a focus on improved resource productivity that has been implemented and is being documented. Please provide an electronic copy of waste minimization plan.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>The company has implemented a waste minimization plan with the goal of reducing waste by 50% within 5 years and over 90% within 10 years.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>The company has a policy to purchase recycled and/or reused products that is documented and promoted to employees.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>The company does not use or sell products that are (or may be) harmful for the environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>At least 50% of the printed materials used by the company are made with unbleached/chloride free paper containing at least 20% post-consumer recycled paper.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>The company commits to decreasing overall paper usage by 10% annually, and this paper savings program has been implemented.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>At least 50% of all of the company's sales and marketing-related communications with its customers are through paperless transactions such as electronic marketing, e-mail, and/or telecommunications.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>The company maximizes the use of certified sustainable wood products, renewable and recyclable materials, and locally produced products.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>The company uses non-toxic, non-corrosive biodegradable cleaning products.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>The detergents used in the company's laundry and kitchen are phosphate and bleach free.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>All cleaning and cosmetic products purchased by the company come in biodegradable, recyclable, reusable or reusable packaging.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.13</td>
<td>The company commits to increasing the utilization of certified organic food products (e.g., pesticide and antibiotic free products) by 10% annually for consumer-direct food services, and this program has been implemented and is being documented.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>The company's menu offers regional dishes featuring locally produced food in each of the areas in which it operates.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>The company always purchases food in bulk quantities where available, food purchases are selected to minimize packaging, and small portion packaging is not used (e.g., condiments, cosmetic and cleaning items).</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>Reuse and/or recycling is a standard practice for the company, and employees and clients are encouraged to participate in its recycling programs and to leave natural areas litter free.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.17</td>
<td>The company participates in a recycling program in each of its regions of operation.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18</td>
<td>In areas where recycling programs don't exist, the company has provided assistance in establishing a local recycling infrastructure.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>Non-perishable food items are always served in reusable or recyclable containers.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>The company never uses disposable items. Reusable dishes, glasses, cups, utensils, etc. are always utilized in its operations.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Solid waste management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Provide volume of solid waste going to landfill / being recycled for the previous 12 months. This will require totaling up the number of bins collected and deposited per month. Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>The company has a solid waste reduction plan with specific goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>The company has appointed an employee to execute scheduled solid waste reduction activities, and this schedule is known by employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>During programs, employees and/or clients have the information and facilities necessary to appropriately separate solid wastes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>The solid wastes generated by the company are appropriately stored before their final disposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>The company verifies and guarantees that the final disposal of wastes is undertaken efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>At least 50% of the organic wastes generated by the company are composted or recycled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>The company has separate containers for recycling different kinds of inorganic solid wastes (glass, paper, plastic, and steel).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>The company’s employees and/or clients always separate inorganic solid wastes for recycling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>The company has designated an employee to oversee the final classification of inorganic solid wastes before they’re recycled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Provide a measure of employee training. Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>All of the company's employees and partners are educated, trained and knowledgeable about its sustainability policies, and how they are to be adhered to in daily operations and product and/or service offerings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>The company supports and encourages all employees to undertake regular and relevant professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>The company's employees and/or partners actively participate in the design of its sustainable business practices and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Each of the company's guides receive special training and education in low-impact travel - in a social, cultural, ecological and economic context - and in regional conservation issues and/or projects related to the specific areas where they lead programs and/or provide services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>Each of the company's guides are selected with consideration to their knowledge, commitment to, and awareness of the principles of sustainable travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>The company's employees periodically participate in meetings that deal with sustainability issues that affect its operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>The company provides incentives to employees and partners who suggest improvements to its sustainable travel program, policies and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>The company periodically evaluates the results of its employee training program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### # Eco-Certified Sustainable Travel Program: principle Categories and corresponding Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>Client communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>The company provides all clients with accurate information and/or interpretation designed to foster a better understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural, and historical heritage of the people being visited as part of each of its program and/or service offerings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>For each program and service it offers, the company provides all clients with each of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Accurate information about the characteristics of the region being visited</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Formally recognized values that make the region special</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* General information (including emergency contact numbers, packing list, detailed itinerary with trip ratings, guide to guest ratios, transportation details, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Means of accessing additional information about the region (e.g., books, web sites, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Details about how and where the company allocates its voluntary contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>The company’s interpretation programs are planned and designed in conjunction with local officials to ensure that they’re relevant and delivered accurately by competent, knowledgeable employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>The company declares that all the information contained in its marketing materials is 100% accurate, is not misleading or deceptive, and sets realistic client expectations. Please provide an electronic copy of all marketing materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>The company promotes the principles of sustainable travel, minimal impact codes of practice, cultural sensitivity, and their related goals to its clients, employees and partners through its marketing materials and web site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>The company will include the ESIIP logo and its associated rating in its printed marketing materials and on its web site home page (or another relevant web page) with a hyper-link to its detailed rating and web page on the Sustainable Travel International web site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>The company provides all of its clients with information about environmental issues and initiatives in each of the regions in which it operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>The company provides all of its clients with opportunities to contribute to environmental issues and initiatives in each of the regions in which it operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>The company always provides information about socio-cultural activities that are found in each of the regions in which it operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>Group management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Clients are encouraged and oriented to visit protected areas and other natural and/or cultural attractions as part of each program and/or service offered by the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>The company has specialized, trained guides to provide detailed information to its clients about each protected area and/or natural and/or cultural attraction that its clients are encouraged to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>The company has implemented an effective program to encourage its clients to keep all protected natural areas and culturally significant areas visited clean and unspoiled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>The company’s clients are always provided with information about proper ways of behavior and their responsibilities when visiting natural areas and encountering wildlife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>The company’s tours and other related activities promote a constructive interaction between their clients and nature and involve minimal disturbance to wildlife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>The company’s marketing promotions integrate cultural elements from the regions and/or communities where it provides programs and/or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>The company’s marketing and operations that feature and/or are relevant to local cultures are always developed and approved by the cultural group(s) being visited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>The company provides resources, training, financial assistance or in-kind support to educate local communities on maintaining their cultural integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>Companies with public facilities have a designated area where authorized local organizations can expose their tourism projects, culture, handicrafts, and other initiatives to clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.10</td>
<td>The company allows the use of their facilities for important community events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>The company prohibits any involvement in exploitive practices such as child prostitution, selling endangered species products, and harming threatened habitats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>The company takes action against sexual harassment and promotes equal opportunity employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.13</td>
<td>The company’s field operations do not negatively impact the integrity of the local communities’ social structure, culture, or natural environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>The company’s customers are always briefed on socially/culturally acceptable behaviors as to minimize their impact while visiting local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>The company meets annually with representatives from local communities where it operates to determine how it is affecting them socially/culturally and to ensure that their rights and aspirations are recognized and incorporated into its operational decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>The company meets with representatives from local communities where it operates to introduce and propose any significant changes to the scale and/or nature of its operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>Through a formal social impact study conducted by a recognized specialist, the company has identified how to minimize negative impacts on local communities where it operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>Client feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>Total number of customer complaints received annually in the form of negative feedback: Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of customer complaints received annually in the form of positive feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>Through the utilization of a client/employee feedback questionnaire provided by Sustainable Travel International, the company agrees to self-monitor its sustainable travel practices and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Eco-Certified Sustainable Travel Program: principle Categories and corresponding Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>Direct economic benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>Provide measures of direct economic benefits to host communities and conservation efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Number of employees living within a 20-mile radius from your domestic work place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Number of employees living within a 10-mile radius from your work place(s) abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Total annual value of goods purchased - be sure to specify unit (usually USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Annual value of local goods purchased - be sure to specify unit (usually USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Annual value of donations to local community projects less total annual net revenues - be sure to specify unit (usually USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Annual hours of in-kind contributions to local communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>The company contributes at least 3% of its annual net revenues to local and / or international not-for-profit organizations for conservation, community development, protecting rare and endangered species, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>At least 60% of the company’s gross trip revenues remain in the local communities where it provides programs and / or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>At least 75% of the company’s employees are people from local communities and regions where it provides programs and / or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>At least 66% of the company’s guide staff are people from local communities and regions where it provides its programs and / or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>At least 90% of the company’s partner organization’s employees are people from local communities and regions where partner organization provides its programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>Tour guides are actively encouraged to research eco-friendly partners, operators, accommodations, and possible conservation and community development projects that can be incorporated into the company’s programs and / or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>The company provides resources, training, financial assistance or in-kind support to local tour operators and / or community-based organization without the necessary resources to gain successful certification from a recognized credible sustainable tourism entity. If applicable, provide detailed information for the tour operator(s) and / or community-based organization(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>The company provides resources, training, financial assistance or in-kind support to local people so that they can work for the company; improve their chances of gaining more highly skilled work, research and / or monitor environmental impacts in areas of client visitation, and / or implement conservation practices locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>The company contributes to and supports the training of human resources for complementary tourism activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.11</td>
<td>The company utilizes locally owned or public transportation providers in each of the regions where its programs and / or services are offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.12</td>
<td>The company has a contract with a community food cooperative to purchase food in bulk on a regular basis throughout its operating season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.13</td>
<td>At least 50% of all of the accommodations utilized by the company are owned and operated by local people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.14</td>
<td>The company’s hiring practices and labor arrangements are not exploitative; they conform to local laws and international labor standards, and meet or exceed minimum legal conditions (salary, benefits, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.15</td>
<td>The company is not creating adverse conditions in any local communities where it provides programs and / or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>Indirect economic benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>Provide measures of indirect economic benefits to host communities and conservation efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Total annual value of goods purchased domestically - be sure to specify unit (usually USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Total annual value of goods purchased abroad - be sure to specify unit (usually USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>The company’s marketing materials, pre-trip materials and / or employees inform clients about activities organized and / or offered by local communities or local businesses whenever such programs and / or services are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>The company actively participates in and / or supports the development of cultural, artistic and sport activities in each of the regions where it provides programs and / or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>The company utilizes locally produced goods and promotes the consumption of locally produced goods to its clients whenever such goods are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>The company stocks handicrafts and other products produced by local people and businesses from each region where it operates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Handicrafts and other works of art

18.5 Handicrafts and other works of art produced locally are used to decorate the company's facilities and / or the accommodations it utilizes in regional operations.

18.6 The company has specific programs that promote tourism in the countries in which it operates and encourages involvement from local citizens.

18.7 The company supports or has a cooperative commercial relationship with at least one local business in each of the region's where it provides programs and / or services.

18.8 The company utilizes locally produced technology, materials and equipment whenever such services and good are available.

18.9 The company provides resources, training, financial assistance or in-kind support to the development and / or maintenance of local communities' infrastructure in each of the regions in which it operates.

18.10 The company is involved in associations or committees that work to improve and contribute to the welfare of local communities in each of the regions in which it operates.

18.11 The company contributes best practice ideas with non-competing travel and tour companies through professional seminars, publications, workshops, etc.

### Public health

19.1 The company's demand for basic services (e.g., water, electricity, roads, food and other resources) never competes with local communities' needs in any of the regions where it operates.

19.2 The company controls hazardous materials and / or illnesses so that they never affect clients and employees or local people and ecosystems.

19.3 The company either organizes or actively participates in (e.g., provides labor, transport, and or financial assistance) annual clean-up and / or resource maintenance days.

19.4 The company has provided physical, financial or in-kind assistance for two of the following in each of its regions of operation: substantial litter / rubbish removal, rehabilitation or maintenance to areas of negative client impact; and / or reduction of feral animals and / or non-native plant infestations.

19.5 The company's clients spend more than 1/3 of their time participating in research, management or rehabilitation of protected natural or cultural areas that are visited as part of the company's programs.

### Ethical Business Practices

20.1 The company's top level management has established an ethics policy, the ethics policy is effectively communicated to all employees, and top level management set important examples of ethical behavior for all employees.

20.2 The company demonstrates sound business practices by treating all clients, employees and partners with respect and fairness, and resolving disputes in a fair and expeditious manner.

20.3 The company conveys a clear, professional message to employees, clients and local communities in the regions in which it operates concerning the ethics of the company and its expectations of employees.

20.4 The company has established a customer service program and / or policies that comprehensively cover expectations on everything from telephone courtesy to handling dissatisfied customers.

20.5 The company has trained employees to meet, if not exceed, expectations as they relate to its customer service program and / or policies.

20.6 The company's products and / or services are not undervalued or overvalued so that customer have realistic expectations of the value of said products and / or services.

20.7 The company helps potential clients make informed buying decisions by being forthcoming and providing clients with detailed information pertinent to the situation.

### Subtotal: Triple Bottom Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Impacts</th>
<th>69</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E:
SMARTVOYAGER CRITERIA

(Galapagos Islands, Ecuador)

Respecting wildlife – viewing from a distance
Wildside Specialty Tours, O‘ahu 2004
ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
FOR TOURIST BOAT OPERATIONS
IN THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

(Jan/02/01)

CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT
RAIN FOREST ALLIANCE

January, 2001
STANDARDS

I. COMPANY POLICY

The company policy must comply with national legislation and international agreements, as well as the environmental strategy and procedures outlined in this document.

1. The company must comply with the laws and regulations of Ecuador, international agreements applicable to Ecuador, and the rules in this document. (See Appendices IV y V)

   I.1.1 The tourist operation must have all permits required by the State of Ecuador (DIGMER, Ministry of Tourism, SPNG, etc.).

2. The company must have a manual that details the policy, standards and procedures to be followed by the operation.

   1.2.1 The manual must specify the obligations and responsibilities of each employee.

II. CONSERVATION OF NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

The tourist operation must support and promote conservation of the Galapagos National Park and Marine Reserve. (See Appendix VI)

1. The company must actively participate in national organizations involved in finding solutions to the islands' social and environmental problems.

   II.1.1 Contribute with facilities to courses and training programs (guides and technicians)

   II.1.2 Support required by Charles Darwin Scientific Station, Galapagos National Park.

   II.1.3 Give cultural support to educational institutions.

   II.1.4 Support control agencies such as SICGAL and SESA.

2. The company must support conservation programs.
II.2.1 There must be a quantifiable system demonstrating support of conservation programs.

II.2.2 The company must participate continually in the islands' environmental protection, remedial, and clean-up programs.

3. The sale of the boat's products must contribute to the conservation of the islands and awareness-raising among tourists regarding the significance of their activity.

II.3.1 A fixed quota, which will go to conservation programs, must be established on all products for sale.

II.3.2 These products must display a "conservation" label.

4. The administration must organize regular meetings, which all employees must attend, on the theme of sustainable tourism, including environmental and social issues.

II.4.1 There must be a written register of all participants.

II.4.2 There must be a written register of the suggestions, both ones that may be adopted in the future, and those that have been implemented.

II.4.3 There must be a person in charge of this activity.

5. The company must motivate its employees to participate in the conservation activities and programs adopted by the business.

II..1 There must be a register of employee participation in the various activities.

6. Strategies for protecting endemic Galapagos flora and fauna must be implemented.

II.6.1 The company must prohibit, in its areas of jurisdiction, the sale and consumption of any flora, fauna, or derived products whose use are restricted or prohibited by law. (As an example, see in Appendices VII y VIII information about for endangered woods and a list of threatened and endemic species from Galapagos).

II.6.2 Fishing from the craft or boats is prohibited.

II.6.3 The delineation of areas authorized and unauthorized for tourist activity must be respected. (See Appendix IX)

7. The boat operators must aid the SPNG in the patrol of marine activities in the reserve.
11.7.1 Any detected anomalies and violations must be reported to the SPNG.
11.7.2 There must be someone responsible for reporting and maintaining a register of such anomalies.

III. REDUCTION OF NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The tourist operation must prevent, mitigate and compensate for any environmental damage done to the Galapagos Islands and Marine Reserve

1. The boat craft must be certified in accordance with the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) 73/78 agreement of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

2. The company must be aware of, and able to identify, negative environmental impacts that its operation is causing or could potentially cause.
   III.2.1 There must be a person responsible (related to the administration), as well as a written register of these impacts.

3. The company must reduce the negative impacts caused by its operation and must have the capacity to act in the case of an environmental emergency.
   III.3.1 An action plan for reducing negative environmental impacts caused by boat travel (contamination, introduction of exotic species, behavioral impacts on marine birds and mammals, ecological and behavioral impacts at visiting sites, generation of waste, increased pressure exerted on resources by local populations resulting from tourist activity) must be in place.
   III.3.2 There must be a contingency plan for acting in the case of an environmental emergency.
   III.3.3 In case of an environmental emergency, the relevant authorities must be informed of the situation and action taken by the craft as soon as possible.

4. All machines used on the boat (motors, generators, desalinators, separator of oil substances from bilge water, air conditioning system, hot water tanks) must meet the manufacturer's maintenance standards.
III.4.1 Someone is to be in charge of this maintenance and there must be a control register.

III.4.2 Periodic check-ups must take place.

5. All machines used on the boat (motors, generators, desalinators, separator of oil substances from bilge water, air conditioning system, hot water tanks) must function at the optimum threshold level (O.T.L.) for energy consumption.

6. There must exist an energy conservation campaign on the boat that involves employees and clients.
   III.6.1 Electrical energy consumption must be monitored, in general or during tourist season.
   III.6.2 Energy-saving and high durability light bulbs must be used.
   III.6.3 Hot water tanks and related tubing must be covered in insulating material.
   III.6.4 Insulating material must be used in parts of the air conditioning system exposed to high temperatures.

7. The craft's air conditioning and refrigeration systems must not contain refrigerants such as CFCs or other gases destructive to the ozone layer. If such refrigerants do exist, they must be phase out and replaced by acceptable systems within a predetermined timeframe.

8. The cellar’s air conditioning and refrigeration systems on the Islands must not contain refrigerants such as CFCs or other gases destructive to the ozone layer. If such refrigerants exist, they must promptly be replaced by acceptable systems.

9. Gas and air leaks from the boat’s air conditioning system must be strictly controlled.

10. Maintenance work on the craft must be carried out in a way that does not cause any environmental damage.
    III.10.1 There must be a procedures manual for maintenance work.
    III.10.2 No anti-rust paints containing TBT may be used.
    III.10.3 No paint containing lead may be used.
III.10.4 Maintenance work taking place on the Islands must be carried out in areas designated as suitable by DIGMER, or within adequate facilities at Port of Guayaquil.

11. The boat must have a system for reducing the release of gaseous contaminants into the atmosphere.

**Boats**

12. External two-stroke motors must promptly be replaced by electric ones (preferably) or by four-stroke motors.

13. Boat motors must be kept in good working order (oil spills avoided, kept well-tuned and fueled).

   III.13.1 Someone must be in charge of maintenance and carry out regular check-ups and keep a control register.

14. The company must prohibit the unnecessary running of boat engines.

15. The level of noise produced on boats must not affect the human health nor that of the ecosystem.

   III.15.1 Noise levels a worker can be exposed must not exceed 85 decibels, for a maximum period of 6 continuous hours.

IV. **LOWERING THE RISK OF INTRODUCTION AND DISPERSAL OF EXOTIC SPECIES**

The tourist operation must prevent the introduction of species from the continent to the islands and the dispersion of species between islands. (See Appendix X)

1. Introduction of food must be done under strict environmental health control and according to law.
2. The transport of insects from one island to another must be prevented. To this end, the possibility of attracting insects to the boat with light must be reduced.

   IV.2.1 A minimum number of bulbs must be used on deck, while complying with national and international maritime regulations.

   IV.2.2 The lights on deck must be kept off as often as possible, excluding when they are essential or required by national and international maritime regulations, when the boat is very close to an island.

   IV.2.3 Those bulbs whose types is not specified by national and international maritime regulations must be replaced by light bulbs that do not attract insects.

3. The boat must be fumigated regularly to avoid infestations.

   IV.3.1 The fumigation must be performed by authorized personnel.

   IV.3.2 There must be a control register.

   IV.3.3 Bait traps rather than chemical products must be used to control infestations in the kitchen.

   IV.3.4 Outside of the kitchen, repellents should be used to control insects.

4. Appropriate measures must be taken to avoid the presence of organisms on the boat as a result of maintenance work on the continent.

5. The company must have its own control system for avoiding the introduction of exotic species.

6. Products from the continent must be stored in storage rooms that prevent the presence of organisms.

   IV.6.1 Ventilation systems and passageways must be secure in order to prevent the entrance of organisms (insects, rodents, etc.)

   IV.6.2 Fumigation must be performed by authorized personnel.

   IV.6.3 There must be a control register to record application cycles and the products used.
7. The cargo transported from the continent to the islands must be strictly controlled to avoid the presence of organisms.

IV.7.1 All materials sent from the continent to the islands must be carried in clean and disinfected containers.

IV.7.2 The cargo must be properly packed to avoid the introduction of organisms.

IV.7.3 There must be strict control and supervision.

IV.7.4 Someone must be in charge of this control and keep a register (checklist) for the dispatch and reception of cargo.

IV.7.5 Must comply with established standards included in the Galapagos inspection and quarantine system (SICGAL) (See Appendix X).

IV.7.6 The company must support SICGAL by monitoring compliance with the established quarantine system, reporting any irregularities, and providing alternative suggestions.

V. JUST AND PROPER TREATMENT OF WORKERS

The tourist operations must increase the socioeconomic welfare and quality of life of its workers and their families.

Hiring

1. All boat employees must have legal residency of the islands.

2. Employees must be properly hired according to Ecuadorian legislation.

3. There must be no discrimination based on race, sex, religion or political affiliation in the hiring of workers, according to clauses 100 and 111 established by the International Labor Organization (ILO). The workforce must be hired directly by the company.

V.3.1 There must be no discrimination with respect to salary, advantages, or work conditions between local and foreign workers.

V.3.2 The company cannot, by any means, oblige workers to withdraw from unions, associations, or any other group, nor can it influence political or religious beliefs.
4. Contracting third parties for development of activities, products or services, must only be done in exceptional cases, and these workers must be ensured the same rights and benefits as permanent workers.

5. Workers must have a salary equal or higher than the industry’s minimum wage for the respective region and country, according to the workers tasks, experience, and level of responsibility.

6. Minors cannot be hired, according to the law and agreement 138, recommendation 146 (minimum age) or the International Labor Organization.
   V.6.1 It is prohibited to work more than eight hours a day and forty-two hours a week for those older than fourteen and younger than eighteen.
   V.6.2 Hiring those younger than fourteen is prohibited.
   V.6.3 If the company uses the services of employees younger than eighteen, the following information must be recorded:
      • Age
      • First and last names (of both parents, or guardians, if applicable)
      • Place of residence
      • Work position
      • Number or hours to be worked
      • Salary

7. The company must comply with the following regulations when hiring foreigners:
   V.7.1 They must have a written contract.
   V.7.2 They must have the proper documents, whether it be a passport of safe-conduct issued by the appropriate institution in their respective country or by the authorized consulate in Ecuador.
   V.7.3 To have the proper residency document as established by Galapagos’ updated legislation.

8. The company cannot fire pregnant or lactating workers, except as a result of a just cause or serious misbehavior.
9. If a sanction is to be applied to any workers who disobey standards defined by the company, the later must first analyze the case and its seriousness, and then apply the sanction.

Freedom of Association and Opinion

10. The rights of the workers to free organization and collective bargaining must be respected, according to the Agreements 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization.

V.10.1 The right of all persons to organize freely for ideological, religious, political, economic, labor, social, culture, or any other kind of reason must be respected.

V.10.2 This right may be subject to democratic law to protect national security, public order, public health, and the rights and liberties of others, on behalf of society's interests.

11. The company must consult and inform employees about technical and organizational changes it wants to implement and the possible social, environmental and economic impacts of these changes.

Security, Occupational Health and Basic Services

12. Employees who work on the boat must be provided with life insurance.

13. Workers must be provided with medical services.

14. Working conditions must be conducive to safety, health, order and cleanliness.

15. Bathrooms must be kept clean.

16. Noise levels must not exceed 85 decibels of continuous noise.
17. Workers must use any safety equipment that may be required for their activities. Protective equipment and accessories must be properly maintained.

18. Dignified living conditions and basic health conditions must be provided to workers on the boat.

V.18.1 Temporary workers must be provided dignified living conditions and basic health conditions.

V.18.2 Potable water, bathrooms and showers shall be made available to workers.

V.18.3 Sanitary services must be adequate based on the number of users and health security criteria.

V.18.4 Cabins must have adequate space and capacity for workers, as well as proper ventilation and lighting.

VI. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

All personnel involved with the tourist operation must receive regular environmental education and training appropriate to their specific roles, in order to reduce the possibility of generating negative impacts.

1. Employees must be informed of the company’s environmental policy.

2. There must be a system for dissemination of information and instructional material (chalkboard, flipchart, pamphlets, audiovisuals, etc.).

Environmental Education

3. An environmental education program for all employees in the craft must be in place. If necessary, the program must offer different levels to suit temporary and permanent employees, and it should be designed in a way that allows for regular monitoring and evaluation.

VI.3.1 Events and activities must be documented.
VI.3.2 An attendance list shall be kept and all activities reported.

4. All employees must know, in practical terms, the importance of the Galapagos ecology.
   VI.4.1 Workers must participate at least once in the guided excursions.

Training

5. A training program, with the aim of improving the performance and ability of employees, in terms of progression of their activities and treatment of clients, must be in place and designed in a way that allows for regular monitoring and evaluation.
   VI.5.1 A library with material available for consultation must exist.
   VI.5.2 There must be a report on all available training material.
   VI.5.3 Events and activities must be documented. An attendance list shall be kept and all activities reported.

6. Employees must be trained to prevent negative environmental impacts caused by boat travel and in how to act in the case of an environmental emergency.
   VI.6.1 Boat officials, crewmen, and guides must know the environmental risks and impacts that result from poorly-managed tourism.
   VI.6.2 There must be a training program for employees, based on their functions, regarding adequate handling of solid waste, energy and water conservation, and use of biodegradable products.

7. All employees must know the standards implemented by the company.
   VI.7.1 The specific requirements and functions of these standards must be understood in detail by all employees.

8. The company must train workers in the following areas:
   VI.8.1 Valid laws, rules and standards.
   VI.8.2 Safety, emergency procedures, and first aid.
   VI.8.3 Health.
   VI.8.4 Natural and cultural history.
VII. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND LOCAL WELFARE

The company must make a commitment to the welfare and socioeconomic development of the Galapagos Island Community.

1. The tourist operation must support those local economic and cultural development initiatives that are environmentally responsible.

2. Tours led by the company must seek to engage tourists in local economic, social and cultural community activities to support the Islands' sustainable development.

   VII.2.1 The company must keep a list of the tourist-related services offered by local organizations with conservationist mandates and all required permits.

3. During an operation’s planning process, local populations and social groups must be considered and consulted on matters that directly affect their quality of life.

   VII.3.1 A forum for communication with local populations and social groups for analyzing aspects that directly affect their quality of life must be developed and recommendations reached in consensus must be implemented.

4. The company must support the community in cases of need or emergency.

5. The company signs must not affect the landscape, natural ecosystems, or public buildings or monuments.

6. Local communities must be given priority when hiring

7. The company must support training programs for local tourism personnel.

   VII.7.1 The company must establish an internship programs for Galapagos students.
8. Agricultural products consumed on the boat must, where possible, be grown on local farms through environmentally responsible practices.

9. The company must promote national tourism with annual (or more frequent) programs of promotion and fare reduction, focusing on the ecological importance of Galapagos Islands.

VIII. STRICT CONTROL OF USE, SUPPLY AND STORAGE OF MATERIALS

Tourist business must plan and control the consumption, supply and storage of materials taking into consideration the wellbeing of tourists, workers, local communities and conservation of natural ecosystems.

Consumption of Products

1. There must be a policy, based on environmental criteria, for acquisition and use of products. Preferable products include those which are biodegradable, recyclable, returnable, of low toxicity, or certified as green, organic or produced in an environmentally responsible way, etc.

2. There must be someone in charge of acquiring products who is trained in health and environmental considerations.
   VIII.2.1 Characteristics such as 'biodegradable' must be written on the product label.
   VIII.2.2 A monthly register of all products used by the boat must be maintained.
   VIII.2.3 Health registers that correspond to products produced by industrial means must be kept.

3. Where possible, preference must be given to suppliers who offer the following specifications on their products:
   VIII.3.1 environmental certification
4. Cleaning products must be biodegradable, phosphate free, and free of corrosive or highly toxic ingredients.

5. Soap and other cosmetic products for client and employee use must be biodegradable.

6. Gas used in the boat must be lead-free. The type of gas to be used must be above 85 octane, that which is known in Ecuador as 'super' gas; if diesel is used it must be filtered.

7. Products which are environmentally harmful (those which contain CFCs, asbestos, benzols, etc.) must not be used or sold.

8. The operation must use recycled, bleach-free paper for printing at least 50% of its promotional or informative material.

9. Consumption of food, cosmetic (shampoo, soap, and others), and cleaning products must be continually monitored, and a monthly statistical analysis of general or guest consumption must be performed, and a chronological record must be kept.

10. The boat's water supply must not affect the availability of water on the Islands.

Boats must promptly replace land water supply systems with desalinators.

Desalinated water must be fit for human consumption.

11. There must be water dispensers.

12. The boat must have a water saving campaign.

VIII.12.1 Water-saving taps and showers must be used on the boat

VIII.12.2 There must be a register and system for checking for leaking pipes and someone be in charge of this
VIII.12.3 Water consumption must be monitored by use of meters and recorded in a register

13. The quality of water on the boat must be fit for various types of human consumption (drinking, cleaning, swimming or hydro-massages)
   VIII.13.1 Periodic analyses of water quality must be performed.

Boat storage

14. There must be specific storage areas for:
   VIII.14.1 food
   VIII.14.2 detergents and cleaning products
   VIII.14.3 gas and lubricants
   VIII.14.4 tools and replacement parts
   VIII.14.5 bed linen

15. Storage areas must have the following characteristics.
   VIII.15.1 Adequate ventilation and lighting
   VIII.15.2 Freedom of moisture
   VIII.15.3 Shelves must be waterproof
   VIII.15.4 Someone must be in charge of maintaining and cleaning the storage area, and keeping a register
   VIII.15.5 Stored products must be inventoried and labeled
   VIII.15.6 Adequate labeling
   VIII.15.7 Regular maintenance and cleaning

16. The food storage areas must meet the following requirements:
   VIII.16.1 To control infestations, bait traps must be used instead of sprinkling chemical products
   VIII.16.2 To control insects outside, repellents must be used
   VIII.16.3 Food must be organized according to type and expiration date, so that products with earlier expiration dates get to be used first
VIII.16.4 Areas for different foods must be properly marked

17. The boat's kitchen must have the following characteristics:
   VIII.17.1 Adequate ventilation and lighting
   VIII.17.2 Odor remover
   VIII.17.3 Equipment must be in optimum condition
   VIII.17.4 Shelves must be covered in waterproof material
   VIII.17.5 Dishes and utensils must be stored in specific locations
   VIII.17.6 There must be adequate labeling
   VIII.17.7 There must be regular maintenance and cleaning
   VIII.17.8 Someone must be in charge of the maintenance and cleaning, and a register must be kept

18. The boat's refrigerators must meet the following specifications:
   VIII.18.1 Standard III.7 is required
   VIII.18.2 Regular maintenance and cleaning.
   VIII.18.3 Someone must be in charge of the maintenance and cleaning, and a register must be kept.

Storage of Materials on the Islands

19. Materials stored on the islands must be kept in adequately-equipped cellars.

20. There must be storage areas for:
   VIII.20.1 food
   VIII.20.2 cleaning products
   VIII.20.3 gas and lubricants
   VIII.20.4 paint
   VIII.20.5 bed linen
   VIII.20.6 other material.

21. Food must be stored in areas with the following characteristics:
VIII.21.1 There must be adequate and filtered ventilation that eliminates the entrance of insects.

VIII.21.2 Adequate lighting

VIII.21.3 There must be no entrances at ground level, in order to avoid the entrance of terrestrial animals.

VIII.21.4 Shelves must be covered in waterproof material

VIII.21.5 Someone must be in charge of maintaining and cleaning the storage area.

VIII.21.6 To control infestations within storage rooms, bait traps and sprinkling chemical products must be used.

VIII.21.7 To control insects outside storage rooms, repellents must be used.

VIII.21.8 Food must be organized according to type and expiration date, so that products with earlier expiration dates get to be used first.

VIII.21.9 Areas for different foods must be properly marked.

VIII.21.10 Maintenance and cleaning operations must take place on a regular basis. A register must be kept.

22. The boat’s refrigerators must meet the following specifications:

VIII.22.1 Standard III.8 is required

VIII.22.2 Regular maintenance and cleaning.

VIII.22.3 Someone must be in charge of the maintenance and cleaning, and a register must be kept.

23. Gases and Lubricants must be stored in cellars with the following characteristics:

VIII.23.1 Cement walls capable of retarding flame. The height of the walls must be proportional to the volume stored in the tanks.

VIII.23.2 Cement floor or fully impermeable.

VIII.23.3 There must be absorbent material (sawdust) to collect spills and a small retaining wall at the entrance of the storage room.

VIII.23.4 Access and storage areas must be marked.

VIII.23.5 Access areas must be no smaller than 1.5 m.

VIII.23.6 Stored materials must be separated from the wall by a distance of 30 cm.

VIII.23.7 The ground must have an incline of at least 1\%.
VIII.23.8 To control possible spills, there must be collector canals that comprise a closed system and lead to a recipient.
VIII.23.9 The roof must prevent the entrance of water.
VIII.23.10 Lighting must be electric.
VIII.23.11 There must be a natural ventilation system which permits permanent cross circulation of air.
VIII.23.12 Fuels and lubricants must be placed on specific, properly marked spots.
VIII.23.13 There must be adequate fire equipment, based on the size and capacity of the storage areas, and it must be placed in a strategic place.
VIII.23.14 Pouring of fuels and lubricants must be done using appropriate mechanisms, such as trestles, keys, and manual pumps, to avoid spills.
VIII.23.15 There must be regular maintenance and cleaning.
VIII.23.16 Someone must be in charge of the cleaning and a register must be kept.

24. Storage areas for cleaning products, paint, linen and other materials must have the following characteristics:
VIII.24.1 The walls must be of cement.
VIII.24.2 The roof must be made out of cement to prevent the entrance of water.
VIII.24.3 Shelving must be impermeable.
VIII.24.4 Lighting must be electric.
VIII.24.5 There must be adequate lighting and ventilation.
VIII.24.6 Items must be adequately labeled.
VIII.24.7 Stored articles must be ordered according to type.
VIII.24.8 There must be adequate fire equipment, based on the size and capacity of the storage areas, and it must be placed in a strategic place.
VIII.24.9 There must be regular maintenance and cleaning.
VIII.24.10 Someone must be in charge of maintenance and cleaning, and a register must be kept.

IX. INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT AND EMISSION CONTROL
Boats must follow a plan for integrated solid and liquid waste management that includes reduction, reuse, recycling, and adequate final treatment and disposal of waste generated by tourist activity. In addition, gaseous emissions from all machinery on and outside of the boat must be controlled.

1. A system that ensures the collection of waste must be in place.

**Reduction and Reuse**

2. Reusable containers, rather than disposable ones, must be used to serve food such as butter, marmalade, sauces, etc.

3. Durable containers and dishes must be used in place of disposable materials such as aluminum, plastic or paper.

**Recycling**

4. There must be a garbage-sorting system.
   - IX.4.1 Organic and inorganic waste must be separated.
   - IX.4.2 Inorganic waste must be rinsed if it has been in contact with food.
   - IX.4.3 Inorganic waste must be separated (glass, plastic, paper, aluminum etc.) according to local recycling programs.
   - IX.4.4 There must be a garbage-sorting campaign that involves employees and clients.
   - IX.4.5 The boat must have adequate and well-marked garbage recipients placed in strategic spots to facilitate separation.
   - IX.4.6 Cleaning staff must sort garbage that has been discarded improperly by clients.
   - IX.4.7 There must be a storage room where final sorting takes place and waste is placed in recipients.

**Final Deposition of Wastes (with the exception of residual waters)**
5. It is prohibited to throw out garbage, except in the case of food waste, where the following criteria must be taken into consideration:
   IX.5.1 Food waste may be disposed of on land only if adequately treated, including sterilization of waste and avoidance of the introduction of organisms, or:
   IX.5.2 When crafts are to dispose organic waste on land, it should be done within a given area, as established and approved by the regulatory agencies that handle waste on the Islands.
   IX.5.3 Organic waste can be disposed of into the sea as far as possible from shore, and at least 4 km away, the minimal distance established by national and international regulations. Waste disposed of into the sea must be crushed before discharge.

6. The boat must establish a system that ensures proper final disposal on shore.
   IX.6.1 The company must participate in a recycling program, to which separated trash must be sent.
   IX.6.2 Someone must be in charge of delivering the various types of garbage to shore and a register must be kept.
   IX.6.3 Lubricant wastes must be returned to shore and a delivery register must be kept.
   IX.6.4 Precautionary measures must be taken to ensure that residues generated by maintenance work (paint, oil, garbage, metal, etc.) do not enter the sea.
   IX.6.5 Materials that can be reused on the islands include glass (colored, for jars; base for material such as cement in the construction of roads or houses), organic material (composted paper and food waste), oil (depending on the destination), and paper (processed with clay and used as stuffing or covering).
   IX.6.6 The program can require tourist boat operators to rinse (if contaminated by food), separate waste from food. The boat crew can place the waste fluid in recipients to be carried back to Guayaquil for recycling and processing.

7. The production of solid waste must be monitored during tourist season.
Final Treatment and Disposal of Waste Waters

The boat must not contaminate marine waters with untreated sewage.

8. If possible, sewage must be separated from gray waters. (That which comes from urinals, toilet tanks - or any water that has mixed with these sources - is considered as 'sewage'; water from taps, showers, drains that has not mixed with sewage or toxic liquids is considered as 'gray waters'. (See Appendix XI)

9. The boat must have one storage tank for sewage and another for gray waters.

10. Sewage and gray waters must be treated before final disposal.

IX.10.1 All efforts should be made to prevent contamination from the treatment process of sewage.

11. They can be deposited in the sea as far as possible from shore, and at least at the minimal distance established by national and international regulations.

Emission Control

12. A regular control system must be implemented that leads toward meeting national and international established regulations.

X. INTEGRAL MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF TOURISTS

The operation must reduce the impact of tourists on the Galapagos Islands and Marine Reserve. Tourists must be willing to comply with these standards as a commitment to reduce pressure on the area's natural and cultural resources.
Promotion

The promotion will be the starting point to establish good communication channels between operators and clients to ensure the tourist has a clear understanding of the place he/she is going to. It must be made clear that, while the company offers a tourist excursion service in a perfectly sustainable manner, the operation is set up to regulate, demand and pursue environmentally-friendly behavior from tourists throughout their visit.

Promotion of the tour must involve ecological and cultural attractions of the region, emphasizing nature as the principal attraction.

Guest Areas

1. Information and labeling must be in English and Spanish so that the client can participate in anti-contamination programs:
   X.1.1 water conservation
   X.1.2 energy savings
   X.1.3 garbage separation
   X.1.4 use of reusable containers
   X.1.5 delayed collection of towels and bed linen for changing
   X.1.6 use of provided cosmetic products

2. There must be maps and informative material (written and audiovisual) about the Islands.
   X.2.1 Mechanisms to facilitate dissemination (chalkboards, flipcharts, etc.) of daily schedules and activities must be placed in a strategic place.

Information previous to the trip

3. Information should be available to passengers before the trip.
   X.3.1 Pamphlets on the peoples and ecosystems to be visited must be made available.
X.3.2 Clients should be encouraged to learn about the places to be visited through a reference bibliography.

X.3.3 Before taking the plane, clients should have information on the norms of appropriate behavior in the Galapagos, so as to minimize their impact on visited areas.

X.3.4 Clients must be informed of the solid waste management problem in Galapagos.

X.3.5 Clients should be advised not to bring disposable products, or if they must to bring them back to the continent.

X.3.6 Information should be given on the danger of exotic species and on the measures that should be taken to avoid their introduction.

X.3.7 Information must be provided on the necessary equipment for travel (clothing and accessories).

Information during the trip

4. The boat must have an information program for guests concerning their environmental policy, and incentives for participating in the various programs.

   X.4.1 The company must provide tourists with accurate and detailed information about the ways in which they can contribute to the conservation of Galapagos Islands. They are:

   • Through a donation; and
   • By becoming members or partners of NGO's supporting the Islands.

5. Information on ways to participate in the Islands' protection programs that are being developed on the Islands must be provided to tourists.

6. Information on ways to participate in the Islands' socio-cultural programs being developed in the surrounding communities must be provided to tourists.

7. Clients must be informed of the problems of Galapagos and ways they can participate in the solutions.
8. The client must be given information (audiovisual – videos; written – pamphlets, posters, etc.) on the history of the Archipelago. The information must be available in English and Spanish.

9. The client must be given information (audiovisual – videos; written – pamphlets, posters, etc.) on the ecology of the Archipelago. The information must be available in English and Spanish.

10. Tourists should be informed of the importance of compliance with norms and the existent sanctions for environmental damage.
   X.10.1 They must be advised of the products whose purchase is prohibited.

Guides

11. The company’s guides must be prepared to give a short speech about safety measures for swimming and snorkeling. Guides should also be capable of performing rescue and first aid maneuvers, while waiting for the doctor on board.

12. Guides must be qualified (see Appendix XII)
   X.12.1 Guides must be certified by the PNG.
   X.12.2 They must know the company’s environmental policy.
   X.12.3 They should have leadership skills.
   X.12.4 New guides must receive training.

13. Guides must take into consideration the following criteria when carrying out tours:
   X.13.1 Each guide must lead groups of no more than 12 tourists.
   X.13.2 The guides must guide the group in a way that minimize the impact on the areas visited.
   X.13.3 The guide must prepare travelers for all of the encounters (environmental and cultural) throughout their visit.
   X.13.4 A garbage bag must be brought along on every visit to shore.
14. Guides must collaborate with the PNG in patrolling activities taking place in the park and report any anomalies or offenses that are noted.

15. Guides must prevent environmental impacts by providing adequate information, including:
   X.15.1 An explanation of the local regulations.
   X.15.2 A list of the specific norms of the visited areas.
   X.15.3 Guidance on appropriate behavior along the paths with respect to animal and plant species.
   X.15.4 Information on adequate waste management and use of biodegradable products.
   X.15.5 Information on the difficulty level of each trip, and the way to avoid causing harm to the environment.
   X.15.6 Necessary precautions to avoid introduction of exotic species.
   X.15.7 Information about the ecosystem, without creating false expectations for spotting rare or endangered species.
   X.15.8 An explanation of the prohibition of collecting samples (shells, sticks, stones, etc.)
   X.15.9 An explanation of the prohibition of purchasing products made with prohibited materials, and the reasons for it.

16. Permanent guides must attend certified updates twice a year, based on the terms of their work (interpretation, conservation and tourism).

Visitor sites

17. The company must restrict activities to the marked areas established by the National Park and Marine Reserve Administration, and the number of visitors allowed in each area. (See Appendices IX and XIII)
   X.17.1 It is prohibited to visit areas unauthorized by the PNG.
   X.17.2 It is prohibited to deviate from the park-authorized itinerary.
   X.17.3 Someone must be in charge of the itinerary and maintain a control register.
18. Visits must always take place with a naturalist guide. (See Appendix XII)

19. The company must plan visits to various sites, permitted by the National Park and Marine Reserve Administration, to avoid intensive overuse of a few sites.
   X.19.1 Visits to areas saturated by tourists must be avoided.

20. Areas of operations that meet conservationist criteria and sell local crafts or other products should be visited.

21. The tourist operation should visit existing interpretation centers in the Archipelago.

XI. SAFETY

The tourist operation must guarantee the safety of all involved individuals.

1. The boat must be certified according to International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Maritime Organization agreements. We also recommend compliance with health and safety codes tailored to this area (see example in Appendix XIV).

2. Every craft must hold the ISM certification as required by the corresponding authority and in accordance with the type of boat.

3. There must be a manual on safety and accident prevention policies.

4. Passengers must be informed on all safety measures to be taken while on board.

5. There must be information and signs, in Spanish and English, that inform passengers and crew on how to act in case of an emergency.
   X.1.5.1 Information must be specific about particular guest and crew areas.
   X.1.5.2 Someone must be in charge of ensuring the information is properly disseminated.
6. The boat must be fully equipped with first aid kits.

7. The company must have a permanent medical service on its boats that meets the following criteria:
   - Boats must have a permanent doctor on board if stipulated by national and international maritime regulations.
   - Boats that do not require the service of a permanent doctor on board, according to national and international maritime regulations, must be supervised by a doctor and have at least one certified paramedic on board.
   - Boats that do not require the service of a permanent doctor on board, according to national and international maritime regulations, must have an agreement with other boats in the area who have a permanent doctor so that immediate access to a doctor in the case of an emergency may be possible.

8. The boat must have all necessary medicine, in quantities sufficient to handle any medical emergency. (See Appendix XV)

9. The medical storage areas must meet the following requirements:
   - Areas must be watertight and maintained at an optimum temperature.
   - Shelves must be waterproof.
   - Regular maintenance and cleaning.
   - Someone must be in charge of stock and keeping a register.
   - Medicines must be organized according to type and expiration date, in a way that those with the earliest expiration dates are the first to be used.
   - Medicines must be replaced three months prior to their expiration.
   - Areas for different types of medicines must be properly marked.
   - There must be a current list including detailed information on all stored medicine.
10. The boat's doctor or paramedic must be informed, before the trip, of the tourists' health conditions.
   XI.9.1 There must be medical information cards on each tourist, filled out when the tour is contracted with the company, available to the doctor.

11. Smoking is prohibited on the boat except in designated areas.

12. There must be a controlled entrance and exit system for tourists throughout the tour.

13. The company must provide its employees with earplugs, overalls, anti-slip shoes and any other necessary safety accessories.

14. The boat must have an electrical system safety program.
   XI.14.1 The electrical cable system must be adequate for the boat and in accordance with electrical planning.
   XI.14.2 Regular revisions must take place.
   XI.14.3 Someone must be in charge of the cable revision and keeping a control register.

15. The company must prohibit illegal activities (such as prostitution and drug use) in its areas of jurisdiction.

**Boats**

16. The must be anti-slip material on the boats.

17. All persons must use life jackets.

18. The number of occupants must not exceed the capacity established by the boat manufacturers.

19. The maximum speed permitted for off-board motors will be 5 knots.
XII. PLANNING AND MONITORING

Tourist activity must be planned, monitored and evaluated considering technical, economic, social and environmental aspects.

Planning

1. The company must present a clear and detailed plan of the objectives, goals, people responsible, and a schedule of activities geared toward improving the social and environmental conditions in the short-term, medium and long-term for each of its boats. The detail and scale of the plan must be in relation to the size and intensity of the activity to be carried out.
   
   XII.1.1 The company’s social/environmental plan must be based on the general principles and standards of the certification program.
   
   XII.1.2 The procedures for each activity must be developed, including the objectives, people responsible, time periods, and description of measures to be taken.
   
   XII.1.3 The plan must include new projects or processes to be implemented.
   
   XII.1.4 The plan must be known, understood, developed and kept up to date throughout the company.
   
   XII.1.5 The company administration must designate a representative of the administration to take responsibility for the compliance with the certification standards.
   
   XII.1.6 Appropriate environmental and social impact assessment should be carried out before implementing new operations and processes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

2. A monitoring system of social environmental impacts must be implemented.
XII.2.1 All possible social and environmental impacts that may arrive under normal and irregular conditions must be considered in terms of operation, accidents, emergency situations and past, present and future activities.

3. Monitoring and evaluation of impacts generated by the activity must take place frequently and should provide information that contributes to the monitoring of the process.
   XII.3.1 The information must be documented and easily accessible at any moment.

4. The company must be capable of demonstrating the compliance with standards and the process of continual improvements.
   XII.4.1 Maintain an updated control system to register compliance with the certification standards as well as a plan for corrective actions (See Appendix XVI).

5. At the end of each tour, clients should be surveyed about their opinion of the environmental program and the tourist operation.
   XII.5.1 There must be a written control register with suggestions, possibilities of carrying them out and of those which have been implemented.
   XII.5.2 Someone must be in charge of this activity.
APPENDIX F:

ECOTOURISM OPERATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Raising visitor awareness
Kona Village Resort, Big Island of Hawai‘i 2004
HAWAI'I ECOTOURISM INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE PLACE AN "X" IN THE BOX CORRESPONDING TO YOUR ANSWER CHOICE UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE. WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE USE THE ENCLOSED SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE TO MAIL IT BACK TO THE RESEARCHER. Please remember that your participation in this survey is voluntary and you may choose to discontinue at any time.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
Wendy Bauckham ~ PO Box 61435, Honolulu, HI, 96839 ~ Phone: (808) 384-2006 ~ Email: wbauckha@hawaii.edu

Mahalo For Your Participation!

The Hawai'i Ecotourism Association has adopted the following definition for ecotourism:

"Ecotourism is nature and culture based tourism that is ecologically sustainable and supports the well being of local communities."

1. Do you agree with the above definition?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral/Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1a. What changes, if any, would you suggest be made to the above definition? _____________________________________________________________

2. What is the most suitable name for the “ecotourism” industry in which you operate, here in Hawai’i? PLEASE SELECT ONLY ONE.

- Ecotourism
- Sustainable Tourism
- Eco-Cultural Tourism
- Responsible Tourism
- Aloha Travel
- Enlightened Tourism
- Malama ("nurture" in Hawaiian) Tourism
- Edu-Tourism
- Environmentally Sensitive Tourism
- Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): ____________________________________________

PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES TO BE IMPORTANT TO THE INTEGRITY OF HAWAI’I’S ECOTOURISM INDUSTRY BY CIRCLING ONE OF THE NUMBERS ON THE RIGHT. (3=Very Important, 2=Important, 1=Not Important)

3. Environmental Protection: 3 2 1

4. Cultural Enhancement: 3 2 1

5. Community Improvement: 3 2 1

6. Nature Experience: 3 2 1

7. Educational Awareness: 3 2 1

8. Economic Viability: 3 2 1

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE BACK SIDE OF THIS SHEET.
The following is a brief description of some existing international ecotourism certification programs. PLEASE REVIEW THEM IN PREPARATION FOR ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

**BENEFITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Globe 21 (international - private)</th>
<th>Nature &amp; Ecotourism Certification Program (Australia - government)</th>
<th>Sustainable Travel International (USA - Non-profit Org.)</th>
<th>Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Costa Rica - government)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Listing on their website</td>
<td>• Listing on their website</td>
<td>• Listing on their website</td>
<td>• Listing on their website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of logo</td>
<td>• Use of logo</td>
<td>• Use of logo</td>
<td>• Use of logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annual Benchmarking Assessment Report</td>
<td>• Listing in local guidebooks</td>
<td>• Monthly electronic Consumer Travel Report™ e-Newsletter</td>
<td>• Training for Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ads on in-flight videos on Qantas Airlines.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Priority participation at various world tourism events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Assuming that Hawai‘i adopts an ecotourism certification program, which benefits would you perceive to be most valuable? PLEASE RANK THE TOP THREE BY PLACING A NUMBER IN THE CORRESPONDING BOX, USING #1 TO INDICATE THE MOST IMPORTANT.

- [ ] Listing on Website
- [ ] Access to Workshops & Training
- [ ] Listing in Travel Guides
- [ ] Land-use permit priority
- [ ] Use of Eco-certified Logo/Label
- [ ] Discounts on insurance, supplies or sustainable technology
- [ ] Ecotourism Newsletters
- [ ] Personal Satisfaction in being a conscientious business owner
- [ ] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COSTS</th>
<th>Green Globe 21</th>
<th>Nature &amp; Ecotourism Certification Program</th>
<th>Sustainable Travel International</th>
<th>Certification for Sustainable Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Year Fees (US Dollars)</td>
<td>Sliding scale depending on # employees/rooms</td>
<td>Sliding scale depending on annual gross revenue.</td>
<td>Sliding scale depending on annual gross revenue.</td>
<td>Completely subsidized by government at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual: $225 - 6,000</td>
<td>Annual: $320 - 1,500</td>
<td>Annual: $150 - 1,250</td>
<td>Annual: $150 - 1,250</td>
<td>Annual: $150 - 1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: $550 - 9,600</td>
<td>Total: $600 - 2,315</td>
<td>Total: $475 - 4,850</td>
<td>Total: $475 - 4,850</td>
<td>Total: $475 - 4,850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Assuming that Hawai‘i adopts an ecotourism certification program that would provide you with your top three benefits from question #9, what is the maximum annual fee you would be willing to pay?

$__________

11. Which of the following criteria is your business willing to accept? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- [ ] Maximum Group Size: 25
- [ ] Maximum Group Size: 26 with 1 guide for every 10 clients
- [ ] Information Verified By: 2+ recognized sources
- [ ] Information Verified By: Interpretive programs are designed with local officials
- [ ] Local Products & Services: company uses and promotes
- [ ] Local Products & Services: company supports a local micro-enterprise

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.
12. What would be the main obstacle to your participation in an ecotourism certification program? PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING BY PLACING A NUMBER IN THE CORRESPONDING BOX, USING #1 TO INDICATE THE MOST IMPORTANT.

☐ Costly application process
☐ Time consuming or complex application process
☐ High minimum qualifying standards (requiring expensive operational upgrades for some businesses)
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): __________________________

13. Assuming that Hawai‘i adopts an ecotourism certification program, who do you think should administer it? IF YOU FAVOR A PARTNERSHIP, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY, OTHERWISE PLEASE SELECT ONLY ONE.

☐ Industry Association (e.g. HTA)  ☐ Local Government (e.g. DBEDT, Office of Tourism)
☐ Private, For-profit (e.g. Green Globe)  ☐ Non-Profit Organization/NGO (e.g. Hawai‘i Sierra Club, HEA)
☐ International (e.g. United Nations, World Tourism Organization, Conservation International)
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): __________________________

14. In what ways would you expect your business’s clientele to improve if your product is ecotourism certified? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

☐ Increased Market Share/Higher Demand for your Product
☐ Willing to Pay More for your Product
☐ Greater Client Interest in Learning
☐ Increase in Open-Minded Clients
☐ Decreased Resource Use by Clients (e.g. water, electricity, waste generation)
☐ None of the above
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): __________________________

15. Would you like to see an ecotourism certification program established in Hawai‘i?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Undecided
COMMENTS: __________________________

---

**Company Information**

**PLEASE SKIP ANY QUESTIONS YOU DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING.**

16. What services does your company/organization offer? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

☐ Tours/Activities  ☐ Consulting/Design
☐ Visitor Attraction  ☐ Media/Internet
☐ Accommodation  ☐ Travel Agent/Tour Packager
☐ Wellness/Healing-Arts  ☐ Transportation
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): __________________________

16a. If you checked “Tours/Activities” above, to which specific activities (e.g. hiking, bus tours, parasailing, museum tours, lei-making classes, etc.) do you dedicate the most time & resources? PLEASE LIST UP TO 3 OF YOUR TOP ACTIVITIES.

1st: __________________________  2nd: __________________________  3rd: __________________________

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY CONTINUED ON THE BACK SIDE OF THIS SHEET.
17. How does your operation position itself within the market to remain competitive? PLEASE RANK THE TOP THREE BY PLACING A NUMBER IN THE CORRESPONDING BOX, USING #1 TO INDICATE THE MOST IMPORTANT.

☐ Environmental responsibility
☐ Quality of nature education
☐ Social responsibility
☐ Quality of cultural education/authenticity
☐ Uniqueness of experience provided (e.g. type of activities available, location, facilities)
☐ Quality of service provided by your product
☐ Price of your product
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): ____________________________________________

18. Approximately how many people work for your organization in each of the following positions?

Owner/Operators _____ Full-Time Seasonal _____
Full-Time Year-round _____ Part-Time Seasonal _____
Part-Time Year-round _____ Volunteer _____

19. Approximately what was your annual gross revenue from your company in year 2003? (If you do not yet have data for 2003, indicate your revenues from year 2002. If your business has not yet been in operation for a full year, please project your first year annual revenue based on your average monthly revenue so far.)

☐ $0-30,000 ☐ $150,001-500,000
☐ $30,001-80,000 ☐ $500,001-1,000,000
☐ $80,001-150,000 ☐ $1,000,001 or more
☐ N/A – My operation is Non-Profit

20. If your ecotourism product includes accommodation, what is the total number of guest rooms for all properties involved?

☐ Less than 10
☐ 10-70
☐ More than 70
☐ N/A – My product does not include any accommodations.

21. If you have any additional comments about ecotourism certification, please write them in the space below.
APPENDIX G:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 1

Connecting visitors with science & nature
Hawai‘i Forest & Trail, Big Island of Hawai‘i 2004
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 1

Ask participant regarding any curious comments/responses given on the survey.

What is your personal philosophy on ecotourism? Should ecotourism in Hawai`i focus on different principles or activities than ecotourism in other parts of the world?

Do you think the general ecotourism industry in Hawai`i is improving the social, cultural or natural harmony of the islands in any way? Why or why not?

How does your ecotourism operation differ from conventional tourism operations?

How is your operation unique from the rest of the ecotourism industry?

Would your operation face any particular challenges or advantages if applying for ecotourism certification? Do you have any unique conditions, such as a particularly fragile natural environment, social conflicts, particularly high operational costs, or legal issues?

What is the biggest obstacle you face in your ecotourism operation?

What has been your biggest success or achievement?

How might the benefits associated with ecotourism certification programs improve your business? What kind of benefit would be most worthwhile for your business?

Are ecotourists who come to Hawai`i the type that would be interested in your certification status?

Do you think that type of ecotourist would be enticed to come to Hawai`i if we did have a certification program? Could such a program help to change Hawai`i’s image from a sun and sand destination to an ecotourism destination?

Do you think that the government would embrace the idea of certification? Would HTA or DBEDT consider running the program or supporting it financially?

What would convince you to participate in a certification program? What would be ideal for your business as far as costs (keeping in mind that without funding there cannot be adequate marketing & benefits), rewards, and application process?

Realistically, do you think an ecotourism certification program for Hawai`i would result in more benefits or more costs for your business?

Can you give me some examples of ways in which your business practices responsible tourism (environmentally, socially, or culturally)?
APPENDIX H:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 2

KO'OLEA 'ULA, Abutilon menziesii, an endangered relative of the hibiscus. Few remain in the wild, due to the loss of dryland habitat. Find this rare beauty growing in the Hawaiian Flora collection.

'ALAE 'ULA, Common Moorhen, Gallinula chloropus. Watch for this native Hawaiian bird in the ponds nearby. Less than 500 of these endangered wetland birds remain on O'ahu and Kaua'i.

KAUHALE, a traditional Hawaiian living site. Journey back in time as you encounter thatched structures, stone walls and foundations. Many plants in the area provided raw materials for daily life.
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 2

Personal/Business Background
♦ Person's origin
♦ When/why started business (exp with ecotourism elsewhere)

Defining Elements Of An Ecotourism Operation In Hi
♦ Examples:
  o Hawaii/Hawaiian Sense of Place – effective in nurturing top ecotourism priorities in HI: culture and environment
  o Company-embraced mission statement committing to ecotourism values
  o Operation creates special programs that contribute to the welfare of the community
  o Personal Connection – Authentic Experience
  o Grassroots Community Economics – operators are community residents who own at least 51% of the company
♦ How does your operation (guiding service) fit definition of ecotourism?
♦ What kind of people are your clients? Interested in learning? “ecotourists”

Familiarity with Ecotourism Certification (explain voluntary, levels, auditing process/expense)
♦ Heard of it before me
♦ How/which ones
♦ HTA Ecotourism Task force project

Concerns
♦ Why undecided regarding certification?
♦ Community/industry awareness
♦ Conflicts
♦ Challenges for operators who run ecotourism in HI
♦ Focus of the standards (env, soc, cult)
♦ Term “ecotourism”
♦ Term “certification”
♦ Top Issues: Consumer buy-in, Program Credibility, Barriers to Entry, Who to determine Standards

Goal of Certification
(recognition, monitor/hold accountable, elevate, facilitate entry)

Standards
♦ Specific/Rigid
  o Minimum Baselines
  o Quantifiable
    o Activities you’re familiar with that should have strict carrying capacities?
♦ Flexible
Levels of Certification/based on overall score vs minimum pass/fail
Levels based on areas of strength (env, soc, cult, edu) – in what areas does your service excel/fall behind?
Subjective (no minimum baselines/absolutes)

♦ Combo Rigid-flexible
Some absolute minimums across board for all types of operations
Everything above minimum is given a score for levels or
Everything above minimum is treated subjectively for “pass + written
description of evaluation” or “fail + plus written reasoning of why no
pass”

♦ Who should determine Hawaii’s ecotourism standards?

Auditing/Evaluation Process (explain relation between rigidity & expense)
♦ Importance of Rigidity (refer to goal of cert)
♦ Cost-cutting suggestions
♦ Paper application/declarations, structured interviews, subjective interviews, secret
shoppers
♦ How often should certified company be re-evaluated?

Benefits (refer to survey)
♦ Newsletters-topics
♦ Workshops/Training-topics
♦ Discounts-what kind
♦ Other services desired from HEA membership
APPENDIX I:

GREEN GLOBE 21 INDICATOR SAMPLE

(Sector & Country Specific Minimum Requirements)

Connecting the visitor and the host through the art of lei-making
Ka`anapali Beach Hotel, Maui 2004
### Appendix I: Sample of Green Globe 21 Benchmarking Indicators (source: www.greenglobe21.com)

#### Accommodation (Bed & Breakfests)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability policy</th>
<th>Energy consumption</th>
<th>Potable water consumption</th>
<th>Solid waste production</th>
<th>Social commitment</th>
<th>Resource conservation</th>
<th>Cleaning chemicals Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In place</td>
<td>MJ per guest night</td>
<td>kL per guest night</td>
<td>m³ per guest night</td>
<td>Employees with primary address within 20km of work place / total employees</td>
<td>Ecolabel paper purchased (kg) pa / total paper purchased (kg) pa &amp; Paper and paperboard per capita per day (kg)</td>
<td>Biodegradable cleaning chemicals used pa / total cleaning chemicals used pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>Best practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Yes                   | Yes                | 340(a)                    | 155(a)                 | 0.3(a)            | 0.2(a)                | 0.5(a)                  |
|                       |                    | 215(b)                    | 100(b)                 | 0.3(b)            | 0.2(b)                | 0.93(b)                 |
|                       |                    | 340(c)                    | 155(c)                 | 0.4(c)            | 0.3(c)                | 0.62(b)                 |

(1)(a) Applicable for latitudes 48N to 41N in the United States. Policy based on consideration of climate and national reference data. 
(1)(b) Applicable for latitudes 40N to 33N in the United States. Policy based on consideration of climate and national reference data. 
(2)(a) Applicable for latitudes 48N to 41N in the United States. Policy based on consideration of climate and national reference data. 
(2)(b) Applicable for latitudes 40N to 33N in the United States. Policy based on consideration of climate and national reference data. 
(4) Policy: based on consideration of lifestyle, distance to travel to work data and local employment requirement. 
(5)(a) Policy: Baseline set by reference to national statistics with a minimum of 0.3 and a maximum of 0.5. 
(5)(b) Policy: National reference data for Paper and Paperboard consumption is used in cases where no ecolabel paper is available. 
(6) Policy: Baseline set by reference to national statistics and consideration of the availability of biodegradable substances with a minimum of 0.3 and a maximum of 0.5.
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