



**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF ECOLABELS ON
THE TOURISM SECTOR OF
SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Over the years the rapid growth of the tourism industry has revealed itself to be a major source of income and social improvement for many. However, with this growth comes the undoubtable carbon footprint it carries. As a result, the growth and expansion of many tourism ecolabels have surfaced in the hopes of alleviating the negative environmental impacts the tourism industry imposes.

This study aimed to ascertain the impacts of tourism ecolabels on businesses. It assessed the level of success of the ecolabel within the organisation as well as ascertained the benefits and challenges associated with ecolabel certification. A quantitative research approach was used and the data was collected by means of online questionnaires that were targeted at managers of tourism businesses in South Africa. The study reveals that tourism businesses in South Africa do experience the benefits of being certified with an ecolabel in terms of the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments. However, the high costs associated with being certified, the lack of general public awareness regarding ecolabels and the absence of government support are still prevalent. Consequently, cost reduction, promotion of public awareness as well as government support are the main areas of improvement required by tourism establishments with regard to ecolabels.

DECLARATION

I, Lucinda Bronwyn Arulappan, do hereby declare that this research study is my own work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Reshma Sucheran. I solemnly state that to the best of my knowledge, no part of this report has been submitted here or elsewhere in a previous application for award of a degree. All sources of knowledge used have been duly acknowledged.

Signature:

Date:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EMS:	Environmental Management Schemes/Systems
FFTSA:	Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa
FEE:	Foundation for Environmental Education
GHG:	Green House Gas
ISO:	International Standards Organisation
IUNC:	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LED:	Light Emitting Diode
NEMA:	South African National Environmental Management Act
SDCEA:	South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNWTO:	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WESSA:	Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa
WTO:	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC:	World Travel and Tourism Council

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The considerable increase of tourism activities over the years equates to notable economic and social benefits (Bastič and Gojčič 2012:1012). Patent as one of the most emergent sectors of the global economy, the degree and prospect of tourism growth raises concerns on its negative environmental and social impacts (Kasim 2008:33; Cucculelli and Goffi 2015:1). Conserving these environments is of utmost importance as the same environments that entice and draw tourist to the destination and promotes tourism investment, can also be ruined by tourism. Damage to environmental quality can eventually destroy the tourism industry (de Oliveira 2003:97). Byrd (2007:6), Aras and Crowther (2009,975:979) and Robinot and Giannelloni (2010:157), state that with regards to environmental degradation, many governments and green movements within the tourism sector, have become progressively conscious of the need for more effective procedures to safeguard the environment. For this reason, the green trend is becoming increasingly popular in the tourism sector and the growth and use of ecolabels in the tourism industry is a response mechanism for the need to standardize the green message, by identifying those tourism establishments that actively encourage activities that does not harm the environment (Bowman 2011:270; Chan 2013:1081).

Therefore, this chapter will provide the significance of the research study on the environmental impacts of ecolabels on the tourism sector of South Africa. It will also provide the problem statement, the study aim and objectives, a conceptual framework for the research, the research approach, the limitations and delimitations of the study and the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 Significance of the study

The launch of ecolabels to environmentally vulnerable tourism organizations is presently being implemented in developed nations in an effort to protect the natural resources of a destination (Sasidharan *et al.* 2002:161). This is indeed evident by the many ecolabels that

have emerged to date. Bowman (2011:273) and Gâslason (2013:13) confirm that a study conducted in 2001 by The World Tourism Organization's Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism revealed over 260 voluntary initiatives existing with 104 eco-certification programs in place. The benchmark which ecolabels provide creates a sustainable measure which can help alleviate many social and environmental problems that a country faces (Font 2003:1). However, according to Bowman (2011:273) the challenges faced by tourism certification tools are in fact expected, as green tourism is an intricate multidimensional theory. Specialists have recently begun to give serious consideration regarding challenges and consequences of certification procedure (Font and Buckley 2001: 248-254; Bowman 2011:273).

Environmental concerns i.e. water consumption issues, land degradation, pollution and negative impacts on the natural environment are apparent in South Africa. In South Africa, there are several ecolabels that exist within the tourism industry. These include Fair Trade in Tourism, Green Globe, Heritage Environmental Management Company certification, Blue Flag, Earth Check, Green Range, Green Seal, Certified Wildlife Friendly as well as ISO 14001. These ecolabels are anticipated to have a profound effect on the contribution towards sustainability and sustainable tourism within the country as these ecolabels are considered to be highly compatible with sustainable tourism initiatives (Mahony 2007:1; Font and Buckley 2001:105). Despite the numerous ecolabels within the tourism industry in South Africa, the environmental movement of the country lacks a strong standard measurement and an integrated outline as well as a lack of literature on ecolabels within the South African tourism industry (Death 2014:1215).

The study, therefore, aims to lessen this gap in the literature and will assist the tourism sector of South Africa in identifying the benefits and challenges of ecolabels within the tourism industry. The study will further suggest improvements for the implementation of ecolabels within the sector. This will provide valuable insights for all stakeholders within the tourism industry of South Africa.

1.3 Problem statement

The tourism industry, which commonly generates less noticeable impacts when compared to other industries and is less influenced by governmental pressure, have been slower reactors to

positive environmental action which has resulted in less research consideration (Ayuso 2006:207). Due to the lack of government pressure or regulation, tourism organizations are observed to alternatively employ “soft” measures of environmental sustainability such as the implementation of ecolabels as part of their environmental obligation. However, Font and Buckley (2001:105) maintain that, regardless of the benefits associated with ecolabels, there is no definite proof that supports their views that ecolabels improve the quality of the environment. Therefore, experts (Buckley 2001; Font and Buckley 2001; Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002; Font 2007; Piper and Yeo 2011; Blackman *et al.* 2014), have been giving serious attention towards the challenges and consequences of ecolabelling certification processes. It is, therefore, vital to recognize how emerging nations with fewer resources might respond to tourism ecolabels which are attaining extensive recognition within developed countries (Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002:161). Consequently, further exploration within the developing country of South Africa is necessary in terms of the extent of the benefits and challenges of ecolabels so as to eradicate industry challenges and maximize benefits.

1.4 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to identify benefits and challenges of ecolabels on the tourism sector of South Africa. The objectives of the study are:

- To examine the nature and extent of ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa;
- To ascertain the benefits of ecolabels to tourism businesses in South Africa;
- To determine the challenges facing certified tourism businesses in South Africa; and
- To identify factors that can improve ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa.

1.5 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework suggested in Figure 1.1 indicates that tourism ecolabels offer both benefits and challenges within an organisation. However, the conceptual framework also proposes that the establishment and implementation of improvement methods to address challenges is the only approach available to organizations to ensure environmental benefits of tourism ecolabels. The study will, therefore, explore the impacts of tourism towards the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments from secondary data, identify the benefits and challenges of ecolabels from both secondary and primary data, and, derive improvement

methods from primary data so as to increase benefits on the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments.

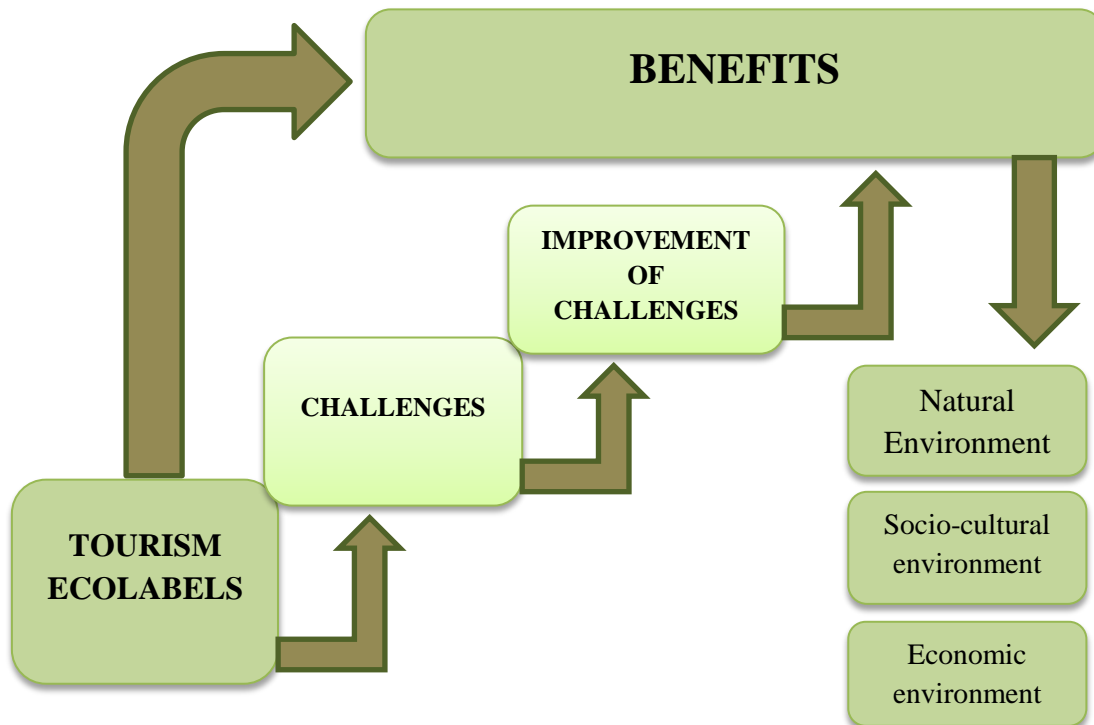


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework

1.6 Research approach

A quantitative research approach was used for this study. Participants of the study included tourism organizations in South Africa that were certified with purposively selected ecolabels. Online, structured questionnaires were administered to targeted respondents as a means of collecting data. The data was analysed quantitatively and presented descriptively.

1.7 Limitations of the study

- The researcher was provided with minimal information from the ecolabel regarding the database as well as specifics of the ecolabel in terms of fees, etc. This information had to be obtained from web sources which also provided marginal information.

Therefore, in-depth scrutiny of certain aspects of the ecolabels being studied was not possible.

- Electronic surveys were employed which meant that control over questionnaires by the researcher was limited. This meant that responses were subject to possible glitches such as inaccessibility to a computer, poor internet connection or other external interruptions which could affect the response.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

- The study is not representative of all establishments certified with tourism ecolabels within the tourism sector of South Africa. Ecolabels examined in this study were based upon permission granted by the Chief Executive Officers/Directors of the ecolabel.
- The study only included those tourism organizations that were certified with the selected ecolabels and is not inclusive of the entire ecolabel certified tourism sector of South Africa.

1.9 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation comprised of five chapters as detailed below.

- Chapter one constituted the preliminary chapter of the study and included motivations for the research along with aims and objectives of the study. Additionally, a conceptual framework for the research study was included in this chapter.
- Chapter two comprises the theoretical background and literature review of the research. Key themes covered in this chapter included the environmental impacts of tourism, sustainable tourism and tourism ecolabels both globally and in South Africa.
- Chapter three discusses the research methods that were employed for the study. In particular, this chapter examines the research design, target population, sampling techniques, measuring instrument and data analysis, issues of reliability and validity and ethical considerations.
- Chapter four presents the data analysis and an interpretation and a discussion of the findings. More specifically, this chapter includes reliability test results (Cronbach's Alpha testing) and study results of the empirical data.

- Chapter five forms the concluding chapter of this dissertation and entails conclusions and recommendations from empirical data and provides implications for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter offered a background to some of the themes and concerns that are to be addressed within this research study. It defined the motivations for the research along with aims, objectives of the study and limitations and delimitations of the study. A conceptual framework of research was also provided and afforded a precise process of the research and its potential outcome so as to meet the aim and objectives of the study. The following chapter will review the literature on the research which will provide a theoretical background for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the world's fastest developing industries and is the primary source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries (Edgell 2008:182; Cucculelli and Goffi 2015:1; Lange 2015:5). The growth of the tourism industry, therefore, visibly marks tourism as one of the greatest financial and societal phenomena of the past century (Bastič and Gojčič 2012:1021), making yearly contributions of trillions of dollars to the worldwide economy (Hsieh and Kung 2013:659). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) world tourism barometer, global tourist entries reached 1 138 million in 2014, which was a 4.7% increase from the previous year (UNWTO 2015).

Zhong *et al.* (2011:2972) acknowledges that tourism growth is largely reliant on the natural and socio-cultural environments, as these environments offer the attraction and appeal of the tourist destination. Although tourism growth has positive economic impacts such as job creation and the enhancement of the image for a destination, it undoubtedly leads to negative impacts on both the biophysical and socio-cultural environments (Kasim 2008:33; Zhong *et al.* 2011:2972; Hsieh and Kung 2013:659; Bodosca and Diaconescu 2015:230). Growing environmental concerns of tourism include increasing noise levels, deteriorating air quality, increasing water contamination, and escalating biodiversity damage (Zhong *et al.* 2011:2972). Negative socio-cultural impacts associated with the growth of tourism includes loss of traditional heritage, change in lifestyle and culture due to mimicking of tourist behaviour as well as the commercialization of tradition artistry (Zhong *et al.* 2011:2972; Bodosca and Diaconescu 2015:230). The need for sustainable management is, therefore, imperative for the tourism industry and is evident in much of the tourism literature (Mihalič 2000; Logar 2010; Miller *et al.* 2010; Zhong *et al.* 2011; Lemos, Fischer and Souza 2012; Padin 2012; Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins 2013).

Holden (2003:95) states that the 1980s had experienced a growth in ecological concern among western cultures, as environmental and conservational problems presented themselves; primarily in tropical forest abstraction, ozone weakening and depletion, and greenhouse gas emissions. Up until the early 1990s, there was inadequate ethical

consideration within tourism research and literature in terms of sustainable tourism practices (Holden 2003:94). Since then, tourism establishments, more commonly the accommodation sector, have embraced various voluntary initiatives to make public their obligation and commitment to sustainable tourism (Ayuso 2006:208). A number of sustainable tourism approaches have subsequently been developed in recent years such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives (Sandve, Marnburg and Øgaard 2014:73), tourism voluntary initiatives (Rivera 2002:333; Ayuso 2006:208; Blanco, Lozano and Rey-Maqueira 2009a:105; Blanco, Rey-Maqueira and Lozano 2009b:112; Blackman and Guerrero 2012:257), codes of conduct, best environmental practices, ecolabels, environmental management systems and other environmental performance indicators (Ayuso 2006:208). Ecolabels or eco-certification programs, believed to be one of the oldest forms of tourism voluntary initiatives, have become increasingly popular in recent years (Buckley 2013:203) as an attempt to improve the environmental performance of the industry (Blackman *et al.* 2014:41). According to Rubik *et al.* (2007:177) and Bowman (2011:273) certification is a form of delivering positive affirmation that helps differentiate between less environmentally harmful products and services, therefore, promoting sustainable tourism purchase and practice within the tourism and hospitality industry.

This chapter reviews the literature on the growth of the tourism the industry with regard to its natural, social and environmental impacts. Literature on the emergence of sustainable tourism and the different environmental measures used in the industry are also covered in this chapter. An overview of ecolabels and its benefits and challenges is further explored in terms of the literature. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of tourism ecolabels in South Africa.

2.2 The growth of the tourism industry

Over the past two decades, the tourism industry has undergone significant growth and change (Liu 2003:459; Blanco, Rey-Maqueira and Lozano 2009b:112; Torres-Delgado and López Palomeque 2012:1). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), income to the value of US\$445 billion was generated from 625 million tourists who travelled worldwide in 1998. From the period between 1995 to 2005, an average international tourist spending increase of 5.2% was noted every year with about US\$680 billion being spent in 2005 (Akinboade and Braimoh 2010:150). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2016), the contribution of travel and tourism to the

global economy has increased for the sixth successive year in 2015, with a total of 9.8% of global Gross Domestic Profit (US\$7.2 trillion). In 2014, the amount of international tourists had reached 1 138 million which was 51 million more than the previous year (UNTWO 2015). This has resulted in many positive outcomes such as favourable predictions of international tourism growth rates of 4% annually over the next decade (WTTC 2016).

According to Rogerson (2004:275), South Africa has experienced substantial growth in the tourism sector, particularly from the late 1980s. Mahony (2007:2) and Saayman and Saayman (2008:81) confirm that the era between 1994 and 2002 saw intense development in the South African tourism sector which included growth in the number of accommodation establishments, game reserves and farms, restaurants, tour operators and the development of new airlines. Since the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has advanced its tourism position from the 52nd to the 17th most visited destination worldwide in 2005 (Saayman and Saayman 2008:81). In 2006, international tourist arrivals to South Africa reached almost 8.4 million which was over a million more compared to the previous year (Akinboade and Braimoh 2010:151).

This development of tourism, stimulated government awareness of the industry as a significant sector to endorse socio-economic growth in terms of sustainable employment, decreasing poverty, community growth and black economic power (Mahony 2007:2). According to Statistics South Africa (2016), 475 664 people were directly employed in the tourism sector in South Africa in 2005, and by 2014, the number of employees increased to 680 617. This growth in industry has, therefore, confirmed the predictions made by the UNWTO in the 2020 forecast, stating that South Africa will continue as Africa's leading destination, exceeding 30 million foreign arrivals and peak growth rates of 8% per annum on average for the predicted period 1995-2020 (Andrews 2011:3).

Conversely, this increase in tourism demand and activity ultimately leads to a large concentration of people in a specific area at a specific time which is referred to as mass tourism. Mass tourism, together with increased infrastructural development results in an alteration of the natural and socio-cultural environments to meet tourist demands (Kontogeorgopoulos 2005:1). These adjustments to a tourism destination and inevitably the people of the destination, lead to many adverse impacts.

2.3 The negative impacts of tourism development

Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter (2002:163) affirm that the significant increase of mass tourism from developed countries have increased negative impacts associated with tourism development in developing countries. Several authors (Rigall-I-Torrent 2008:883; Zhong *et al.* 2011:2972; Deery, Jago and Fredline 2012:64) believe that the rapid increase of international tourism activity results in negative impacts on the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments. According to Gursoy, Chi and Dye (2009:2), it is clear that the increase in tourism generates considerable economic benefits to local people. However, it also contributes to major environmental destruction and enforces unfavourable social and cultural impacts in many destinations.

According to Buckley (2012:528), tourism researchers initially focused their studies towards social and environmental impacts. However, the need to constantly re-evaluate and consider the ever-changing impacts towards the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments prove very necessary in promoting a more sustainable industry (Rigall-I-Torrent 2008:883; Logar 2010:125; Zhong *et al.* 2011:2973; Deery, Jago and Fredline 2012:64; Cucculelli and Goffi 2015:3).

2.3.1 Negative impacts of tourism on the natural environment

Bastič and Gojčič (2012:1012) reveal that while tourism has indeed contributed positively to the global economy, it has unfortunately also contributed to climate change and environmental degradation. The weakening of the natural environment and its resources due to everyday public activity is increasing, along with a significant development of tourism over the recent decades (Stefănică and Butnaru 2015:596). For example, Wong (1998:91) confirms that in Southeast Asia, coastal resort development has mainly been unplanned and impulsive as a means of satisfying tourist demand. These unplanned developments were stimulated by a quest for income and many resort developers were ignorant towards their impacts to the physical environment (Wong 1998:91).

The literature highlights the major environmental impacts to be over-consumption and pollution of water, increased energy consumption and air pollution, noise pollution and environmental degradation.

- **Over-consumption and pollution of water resources**

Water is a vital environmental component for a tourism host destination (Zhong *et al.* 2011:2974) and is considered a vital and scarce resource. Cole (2012:1221) maintains that the tourism sector is recognized for its exploitation and overconsumption of water resources. Tourists utilize water when using the restrooms (at tourist attractions and accommodation establishment which include toilets and wash basins and taking showers and baths), when participating in recreation activities like skiing (which requires the man-made creation of snow), golf tourism (which requires irrigation), swimming pools, spas or wellness areas, for the maintenance and landscaping of hotel gardens and other tourist attractions and for producing food and fuel (Gössling *et al.* 2012:4). Additionally, Zhong *et al.* (2011:2974) confirms that many recreational activities, i.e. boating, surfing, rafting, and swimming, could have unfavourable impacts on the quality of water and refuse left by tourists at beaches, lakes and rivers can further contaminate the water.

Cole (2012:1221) affirms that the accessibility of water in many tourist destinations is reaching an emergency level and the impacts of tourism on both surface level and underground water are extremely high. According to Gössling *et al.* (2012:7) the individual tourist consumes between 84 to 2000L of water per day or reaches 3423L of water per bedroom daily. In Bali, 65% of the islands resources are used by and for its tourism sector (Cole 2012:1223). Also, the water quality in Lijiang in China declined abruptly because increasing tourism caused an escalation in water usage. The decline of water had altered the water usage style of local residents and resulted in deterioration in their quality of living. This further resulted in shop owners, restaurants, hotels and the resident population contaminating the water (Baoying and Yuanqing 2007:124).

According to Gössling *et al.* (2012:4) by the year 2020, tourism's impact on water usage is expected to escalate with higher tourism figures, advanced hotel standards and greater water utilization for tourism activities. Therefore, Wells *et al.* (2016:430) believes that the sustainable management of water usage and wastewater is particularly significant in coastal regions and small islands where the development of tourism is becoming progressively focused.

- **Increased energy consumption**

There is growing concern regarding the international tourism industry consuming enormous amounts of energy (Kelly and Williams 2007:67; Zhang and Gao 2016:226). According to Nepal (2008:90), concerns regarding the consumption of energy from a tourism viewpoint, has been highlighted ever since the release of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry. Emphasis on the tourism industry as being one of the major contributors to increased energy consumption was also stressed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 (Nepal 2008:90; Katircioglu 2014:181).

Kelly and Williams (2007:68) maintain that satisfying the demand for energy at a destination is obtained by converting fossil fuels like natural gasses, coal and oil into different forms of energy. Around 85% of the world's energy is based on the utilization of fossil fuels and with tourism being one of the major sectors in the world economy, the development and operation of tourism has been driven predominantly by its usage of fossil fuels (Nepal 2008:89). Therefore, the growth in tourism activity brings with it a greater demand for energy within the various sectors. For example energy is required for the movement of tourists, catering and hospitality, the maintenance and administration of tourist's attractions and is also required for the construction of new tourism infrastructure (Katircioglu 2014:180; Kelly and Williams 2007:69; Zhang and Gao 2016:226). According to Katircioglu, Feridun and Kilinc (2014:636) it is projected that the energy consumption for the international tourism sector is 14.080 PJ (power joules- which is the unit of energy measurement rather than a watt which is a unit used to measure power consumption) of which 94% of the total amount is consumed by the transportation sector, 3.5% consumed by accommodation and 2.5% consumed by the sectors involving tourism activities.

- **Air pollution**

Consequently, the tourism industry is one of the main contributors to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is known to contribute about 5% of CO² emissions worldwide (Gössling 2013:434; Higham *et al.* 2016:336; Robaina-Alves, Moutinho and Costa 2016:521; Zhang and Gao 2016:227), of which 40% is a result of air travel (Higham *et al.* 2016:336; Zhang and Gao 2016:227). Therefore, the transportation sector of tourism is considered to be a key contributor to energy consumption and carbon emissions which utilizes 243 million tons of

fuel (6.3% of the global production of fuel) annually (Katircioglu, Feridun and Kilinc 2014:635; Zhang and Gao 2016:227). Additionally, a United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) report indicated that 75% of carbon emissions from the tourism industry were caused by transportation (Wu, Han and Tian 2015:184). Stefănică and Butnaru (2015:596) believe that air pollution is established by both land and air transportation as a result of the rapid amount of tourists and their movement. However, airport emissions have recently gained much attention due to the sudden development of air transportation volumes and the projected growth to meet volume requirements in the future (Masiol and Harrison 2014:410). It is noted that over the last two decades, international tourist influxes have advanced by an average of 4% every year and are estimated to sustain a 3.3% yearly advance rate from 2010 to 2030, attaining 1.8 billion visits (Sun 2016:327). Higham *et al.* (2016:336), states that the tourism industry is expected to produce up to 40% of the entire international CO₂ emissions by 2050 as volumes of air travel continue to go beyond fuel proficiency and operational benefits in the industry. Presently, in the island destination of Taiwan, air and land travel have contributed to greater than 60% of the tourism industries carbon footprint (Sun 2016:331).

The effects of air pollution due to misuse of resources are found in many studies of numerous countries. For example, in Portugal, tourism activities are responsible for around 10% of national CO₂ emissions, transportation is responsible for around 89% of CO₂ emissions and the hospitality sector contributed about 5% each for accommodation, food and beverages (Robaina-Alves, Moutinho and Costa 2016:521). Due to tourism activity, Zhong *et al.* (2011:2975) reports that the atmosphere in many tourism destinations in China have been dangerously affected as a result of using coal and other gasolines such as diesel for heating and other tourism activities e.g. the air in Changbai Mountain National Nature Reserve has been contaminated as a result of tourism activities related to culture such as devotion at temples which can additionally negatively affect the quality of the air. Also, research on environmental impacts of eco-tourism in the destination of Yunnan Province revealed that the concentration of sulphur dioxide in the air escalated considerably due to an intense growth in the amount of Tibetan tourist who visited the Songzanlin place of worship in great numbers and burning large amounts of incense for devotion.

- **Noise pollution**

The projected growth of air transportation due to increased tourist predictions during recent years has caused apprehension with regards to the noise levels surrounding airports and their impacts on the neighbouring local public (Ozkurt 2014:120). The soundscape is a significant element of the tourism environment as it assists in promoting a pleasurable environment resulting in a positive tourist experience (Iglesias Merchan, Diaz-Balteiro and Soliño 2014:1; Stefãnica and Butnaru 2015:596). According to Carić (2016:493), noise pollution is still a relatively unknown concern yet it imposes severe problems to plants and animals whose feeding, reproduction and migration habits are influenced by sound. Noise pollution could possibly become a worldwide and increasingly popular topic of concern, compromising the conservation of natural environments due to wildlife disruption, ecosystems destruction and loss of biodiversity (Iglesias Merchan, Diaz-Balteiro and Soliño 2014:2). Additionally, it is suggested that human-induced noise pollution is developing into a worldwide contaminant of natural surroundings. For example, a study conducted in the Penalara Natural Park in Spain revealed that tourists acknowledged unwelcome outdoor noises that troubled their soundscape experience while at the park (Iglesias-Merchan, Diaz-Balteiro and Soliño 2015:7). The study also revealed that many noise disturbances were a result of the tourists themselves and transportation noises were also considered as unsettling.

Tourism activities frequently cause noise pollution by means of various transportation vehicles, recreational vehicles i.e. jet-skis, snowmobiles or equipment used by tourists, as well as traffic noises, which is intensified by the increase of tourist arrivals and their movement within the host destination (Zhong *et al.* 2011:2976; Stefãnica and Butnaru 2015:596). For example, tourist coastal towns have major escalations in the amount of traffic throughout the summer months compared to the winter months which causes an increase in noise levels which can alter the tourist experience negatively due to the degradation of the sound environment (Sánchez-Sánchez, Fortes-Garrido and Bolívar 2015:70). Therefore, many academics and natural resource organizations have started to identify the importance of soundscape protection, for both the tourist experience and the host destination (Iglesias Merchan, Diaz-Balteiro and Soliño 2014:1).

- **Environmental degradation**

The issue of environmental degradation is one of the concerns frequently associated with tourism in developing areas (Geneletti and Dawa 2009:229). According to Neto (2003) the depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation related to tourism activity inflicts serious negative impacts on many tourism destinations. Several authors identify the negative environmental impacts caused by tourism to be:

- **Soil erosion:** This is caused by various tourism activities and is especially serious in mountain regions where trekking is popular. The trampling of vegetation, thinning of forest and widening of trails are also direct results of tourist trekking activity which cause direct degradation to the land (Priskin 2001:639; Neto 2003:216; Geneletti and Dawa 2009:229-230; Zhong *et al.* 2011:2975; Lucrezi and van der Merwe 2014:1; Stefănica and Butnaru 2015:596).
- **Deforestation:** This entails the uprooting of vast amounts of trees and the clearance of native plant life to make land space for new infrastructure and other tourism developments. This is often performed by burning forests which further increases pollution. Another cause of deforestation is the increased demand for fuelwood within the tourism industry (Geneletti and Dawa 2009:230; Gladstone, Curley and Shokri 2013:375).
- **Discarding of waste:** Many tourists are found littering the natural environment while engaging in tourist activities such as trekking or other nature based activities. This is not only degrading to the environment but also results in visual pollution (Priskin 2001:639). Furthermore, ingestion of litter by animals has also been noted (Scheu and Wolters 1991:1029).
- **Eco-system degradation:** This involves uncontrolled tourism activities that result in severe disturbance of wildlife habitats, increased pressure on endangered species and loss of biodiversity. The erection of new tourism infrastructure also causes disruption to wildlife migration. The inflow of tourists and the nature of the industry further brings about the introduction of exotic species of both flora and fauna which can result in the decline of biodiversity in the destination (Priskin 2001:639; Neto 2003:217; Geneletti and Dawa 2009:230; Logar 2010:127; Zhong *et al.* 2011:2972;

Gladstone, Curley and Shokri 2013:375; Lucrezi and van der Merwe 2014:1; Stefănica and Butnaru 2015:596).

- **Growth in destination population:** The development of tourism has brought with it much employment and economic opportunities. Therefore, tourist destinations become overpopulated with people and this has a negative effect on the environment. It consequently leads to competitiveness for natural resources which result in the exploitation of resources by the population (Priskin 2001:644; Logar 2010:128; Lucrezi and van der Merwe 2014:1).

Zhong *et al.* (2011:2972) maintain that these environmental issues associated with tourism not only impact the image of the tourist destinations but the sustainable improvement of the local tourism industry. For example, in 1998 the Wulingyuan Scenic Area, which is a World Heritage Site in Zhangjiajie City of Hunan Province in China, was criticized by the World Heritage committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) due to increased urbanization and weakening environmental quality brought about by uncontrolled tourism development (Zhong *et al.* 2011:2978).

It has been noted that the impacts of tourism on the natural environment are particularly serious in emerging countries as opposed to developed ones, where nature based tourism is increasingly prevalent and represents the country's main source of economic gain (Blackman and Guerrero 2012:256; Blackman *et al.* 2014:41). Research undertaken by Lange (2015:5) on the tourist destination and World Heritage Site of Zanzibar, which is a small, heavily populated island situated off the coast of Tanzania, revealed that international tourism arrivals to the destination has led to much environmental dilapidation, social alteration and disturbances (Lange 2015:6). The rapid development of tourism infrastructure on the coast of Zanzibar, combined with the population growth rate of over 3% per annum, has placed inordinate stress on the coastal area. Also, the coastline and marine environment is extremely degraded due to both man-made and natural causes such as uncontrolled and unplanned tourism development, quick increases in population, overfishing and irresponsible fishing practices, the excessive harvesting of mangroves, the irresponsible discarding of untreated wastewater from urban areas and repeated coral bleaching (Lange 2015:6). Neto (2003:216) cautions that serious harm to coral reefs and other aquatic resources may not only reduce the

possibility of further tourism and compromise the future of local tourist sectors, but also impairs local fisheries.

2.3.2 Negative impacts of tourism on the socio-cultural and economic environments

The tourism industry depends extensively on environmental and cultural resources; not only does it involve contact with the natural environment but also requires direct interaction between tourists and the local community (Kasim 2008:33). According to Rigall-I-Torrent (2008:884) the negative impacts regarding the social well-being of the community are derived from direct and indirect dealings with tourists, and an overall association with the tourism industry. Several authors (King, Pizam and Milman 1993; Shepherd 2002; Andereck and Jurowski 2006; Çevirgen and Kesgin 2007; Lepp 2007; Kasim 2008; Rigall-I-Torrent 2008; Logar 2010; Deery, Jago and Fredline 2012) identify the negative impacts to the social well-being of the community caused by tourism to be:

- **Unfair distribution of income:** According to Lepp (2007:878), many emerging countries frequently depend on western investors to financially support the development of tourism in their country which consequently results in substantial amounts of the tourism profits flowing out of these developing countries and returning to the western investor (known as leakage). Leakage proves especially significant in underdeveloped countries and this happens when tourists have requirements and demands that the host destination cannot provide (Ardahaey 2011:212). Mitchell and Reid (2001:113) confirm that rural societies in particular who are believed to be the forefront in providing services are last to obtain profits from their efforts. Unfortunately, it is projected that as much as 50% of tourism profit outflows from the developing world to the developed (Lepp 2007:878) because even though tourism is known to generate favourable employment, especially in underdeveloped countries, those employed most often hold lower level positions (Ardahaey 2011:211).

A study on the Okavango Delta revealed that foreign currency received in the Delta created by tourism had only a slight effect on the economy of Botswana due to international influence and ownership (Mbaiwa 2005:9). Similarly, a study on Victoria Falls Resort in Zimbabwe which is owned and influenced by international corporations had no effect on the incomes of local residents (Saarinen 2009:26). Due

to this factor, Incera and Fernández (2015:11) maintain that if low-earning households lack involvement with tourism then tourism activities will promote further social injustices and increase the gap among those who generate money and those who are barely surviving.

- **Unfavourable employment conditions:** According to Budeanu (2005:91) and Casado-Díaz and Simón (2016:97), tourism employment is often categorized by extended working hours, low or unfair remuneration, undesirable working environments, discrimination of gender roles and restricted job tasks as well as low skilled labour and the absence of training opportunities. Dodds and Joppe (2005:11) and Luu (2011:4) note issues of employees not being authorized to join trade unions and not given the opportunity to work internationally. Additionally Guimarães and Silva (2016:445) suggest that in Brazil, females in tourism occupations tend to receive lower earnings compared to males, in spite of having the same level of credentials and performing identical tasks. Therefore, Tsartas (2003:117) believes that these factors suggest that an altered social structure is currently being moulded which is directly, but not entirely, encouraged by the social and economic relations enforced by tourism.

Another negative economic impact found in the industry is the seasonal nature of tourism which sometimes leads to unstable income and employment for locals and local community dependence on tourism for economic stability (Budeanu 2005:91; Rigall-I-Torrent 2008:884; Logar 2010:127). For example, the economy of Crikvenica is extremely reliant on the tourism industry and the country is categorized by high seasonal demand, resulting in inactivity of all financial undertakings throughout the period of the year outside the tourism season (Logar 2010:127). The study by Logar (2010:127) also revealed that local young people in Crikvenica showed a lack of interest in furthering their studies in the field of tourism due to low employment prospects, therefore, resulting in a lack of a trained labour force in the sector.

- **Loss of cultural and traditional values and identity:** The influx of tourists to a destination encourages alteration in value systems and behaviour of local indigenous people. Obtaining the economic benefits that the industry offers often takes precedence over traditional lifestyles and ceremonies, therefore, effecting community

structure and family relations of local people (Shepherd 2002:183; Andereck and Jurowski 2006:140; Kasim 2008:33; Rigall-I-Torrent 2008:884).

- **Commodification:** Many rural communities change and alter their ethnicity to cater to tourist demands thereby endangering the protection and preservation of local communities. The over-commercialization of arts and crafts further results in a loss of authenticity (Shepherd 2002:183,185).
- **Abandonment and neglect of traditional economies:** Many locals leave working in traditional jobs like fishing, which are often sectors that sustain the country's economy and livelihood of local people, to work in the tourism industry (Logar 2010:129).
- **Overcrowding:** The overcrowding of tourists in a specific area causes many problems to the local community in terms of traffic congestion and issues of parking space which results in conflict between locals and tourists (Andereck and Jurowski 2006:140; Çevirgen and Kesgin 2007:310; Rigall-I-Torrent 2008:883; Logar 2010:129; Deery, Jago and Fredline 2012:68).
- **Other social conflicts:** The issue of crime, alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution and gambling are all negative impacts of tourism towards local residents due to poorly planned tourism development and lack of destination management. These social conflicts change the modest lifestyle of many rural areas (King, Pizam and Milman 1993:657; Shepherd 2002:184; Andereck and Jurowski 2006:140; Lepp 2007:879; Kasim 2008:34; Deery, Jago and Fredline 2012:68).

Many examples were found in the literature that demonstrates the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism. For instance, the study conducted by Mbaiwa (2005:9-18) on the social-cultural impacts of tourism development in the Okavango Delta, Botswana, reveals many negative effects. The Okavango Delta is mostly owned and controlled by foreign safari businesses and investors even though the participation of local residents in the tourism industry is prevalent. Tourism products and services are found to be inaccessible to the public due to it being too expensive; there are unfair working conditions noted and issues like racism presented itself. Employees were also only afforded the opportunity of visiting their families every two to three months due to the fact that the Okavango Delta is situated in the

wilderness away from the villages and settlements. Traditional settlements were also repositioned to accommodate tourism and the management of wildlife. It was also noted that locals changed the way they dressed to emulate the supposed rich tourist. It was further found that the issue of prostitution was very much prevalent in areas of the Delta popular for tourism and high tourist numbers were noted to stimulate the increased activity of violence, robbery and drug trafficking.

Negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism were also evident in Malaysia, where the initial issues of the 'drug culture' were discovered and introduced to locals by the hippie tourists who visited Penang in large groups. Tourists of the destination were often seen imposing their lifestyles and culture on the host destination and disregarding local beliefs and morals by bathing unclothed and having marijuana parties (Kasim 2008:34). Logar (2010:129) found that second home owners of new houses or apartments in the area were usually not locals and come from other parts of the country or world. These new comers were found to have different upbringings and morals which changed the social structure of the coastal town of Cikvenica. Another study on the tourism impacts on Tibetan culture traits (Zhong *et al.* 2011:2976), discovered that Tibetans have been significantly affected by tourism to the degree of altering their preference of diet, spoken language, clothing and housing styles. In Zanzibar, it was found that local villagers have limited and seriously restricted access to the beach area and sea which resulted in loss of livelihoods (local fishermen are restricted from the beaches), and only a small amount of the economic benefits of tourism have filtered down to the local communities (Lange 2015:6).

It is confirmed that the alleviation of these negative socio-cultural impacts is crucial in order to preserve the quality of tourism and hospitality services. Just as a destination fails to offer appeal if there is damage to the natural environment, it will similarly lose its attractiveness if there are prominent social and cultural problems (Kasim 2008:34). Therefore, the moderation of these negative impacts is crucial in order to maintain the value of tourism and hospitality services (Kasim 2008:34) and to ensure sustainable tourism development (Janisch 2007:46).

2.4 Sustainable tourism and responsible tourism

The general term sustainable development was first made public in the 1980s with the World Conservation Strategy followed by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, also identified as the Brundtland Report (Giddings, Hopwood and O'Brien 2002:188; Liu 2003:460; Redclift 2005:212; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock 2010:83; Lee and David 2012:630; Cucculelli and Goffi 2015:2). The report defined sustainable development as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland 1987:43). This report led directly to the term sustainable development transiting into policy discussions and signified a major starting point for the formulation of sustainable procedures (Redclift 2005:212; Cucculelli and Goffi 2015:2). According to Redclift (2005:213), the Brundtland Report unlocked the path for non-governmental organizations (NGO's) to be viewed as a significant component in environment and development concerns; a system that was concluded with the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This summit was held over a period of two weeks (3-14 June 1992) and was led by Maurice Strong to deliberate, discuss and strategize future developments for the world and its people (Little 1995:265; McDonough and Braungart 1998:1). Around 30,000 individuals from around the globe including representatives from 167 countries and many of the world's governmental leaders assured their support towards sustainable development and signed numerous nominally binding contracts pertaining to the environment, climate, biodiversity and sustainable development including: the Rio Declaration of Principles, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biodiversity, Agenda 21 and the Statement of Forest Principles (Cicin-Sain 1996:123; Jordan and Voisey 1998:93; McDonough and Braungart 1998:1).

The Earth Summit highlighted the need to impose the philosophies of sustainable development within broader economic and social procedures, emphasizing the role of sustainability and tourism in attaining such developmental goals (Saarin 2006:1123). Since the summit, sustainable development has become a major issue for global development. One of the main problems on the global agenda was in terms of increased resource usage and more severe environmental impacts (Djeflat 2010:131). Hardy, Beeton and Pearson (2002:168) and Jones, Hillier and Comfort (2014:5), confirm that the concept of sustainability has attracted growing consideration in media, political and investment groups by means of policy documents, strategic policies and is especially evident in academic work

related to tourism. Mihalic (2016:462) further confirms that the infiltration of sustainability into procedures and programmes has initiated a number actions and developments within the industry aimed at reduced energy usage, recycling, reduced discharge of waste and emissions and efforts to better the quality of life for local residents.

The term sustainable tourism derives from the concept of sustainable development that is established on environmental, social and economic grounds (Giddings, Hopwood and O'brien 2002:187; Jansz and Bajdor 2013:524) which are described as detached yet associated elements (Giddings, Hopwood and O'brien 2002:187) as depicted in Figure 2.1. Byrd (2007:6) believes that the motivation for sustainability in the tourism industry is a result of the industry's disposition to generate both favourable and unfavourable impacts on society, the economy and the natural environment. While numerous definitions of sustainable tourism present themselves, Edgell Sr *et al.* (2008:183) simplify the definition by defining sustainable tourism as tourism that requires achieving superior growth in a way that does not diminish the natural and man-made environments and conserves the history, culture and heritage of the local community. The theory of sustainable tourism, therefore, pertains to the elements of environmental, economic and socio-cultural tourism development as illustrated in Figure 2.1 (Kaul and Gupta 2009:13; Janusz and Bajdor 2013:525).

Hunter (1997:855) anticipated tourism to be the largest industry in the global trade and believed that the need for tourism to support sustainable development from national and international platforms is crucial. Consequently, Butler (1999:8) observed that many authors of tourism literature seem to have acknowledged that sustainable development is essentially beneficial and suitable for tourism and that its acceptance will resolve many problems that have been caused by the growth of the industry. Hassan (2000:239) therefore, notes that sustainable tourism development has emerged as a progressively significant strategic objective for world-renowned tourist destinations.

As depicted in Figure 2.1, Hunter (1997:851) and Cucculelli and Goffi (2015:2) confirm that the purpose of sustainable tourism development is to reduce negative environmental impacts, conserve the traditional heritage and provide educational benefits for the local community; this is while boosting economies and uplifting community infrastructure without one particular aspect being more significant than the other. Byrd (2007:9) believes that in order to achieve this objective, a social arrangement must exist, that assists conflict resolution with

the economic system generating constant profits while maintaining protection to the environment at all times. Franzoni (2015:23) believes that it is necessary to approach and examine sustainable implementation and performance of the tourism industry on many levels and dimensions. Sustainable tourism will prove unsuccessful without the appropriate management of tourism demand (Cucculelli and Goffi 2015:2). Therefore, Jansz and Bajdor (2013:524), illustrate a framework that suggests that sustainable tourism activities should be categorized by the environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions and balanced appropriately. Giddings, Hopwood and O'brien (2002:187) maintain that these three dimensions are linked as the economy relies on society and the environment and the mere existence and livelihoods of people are dependent on the environment which they reside in.

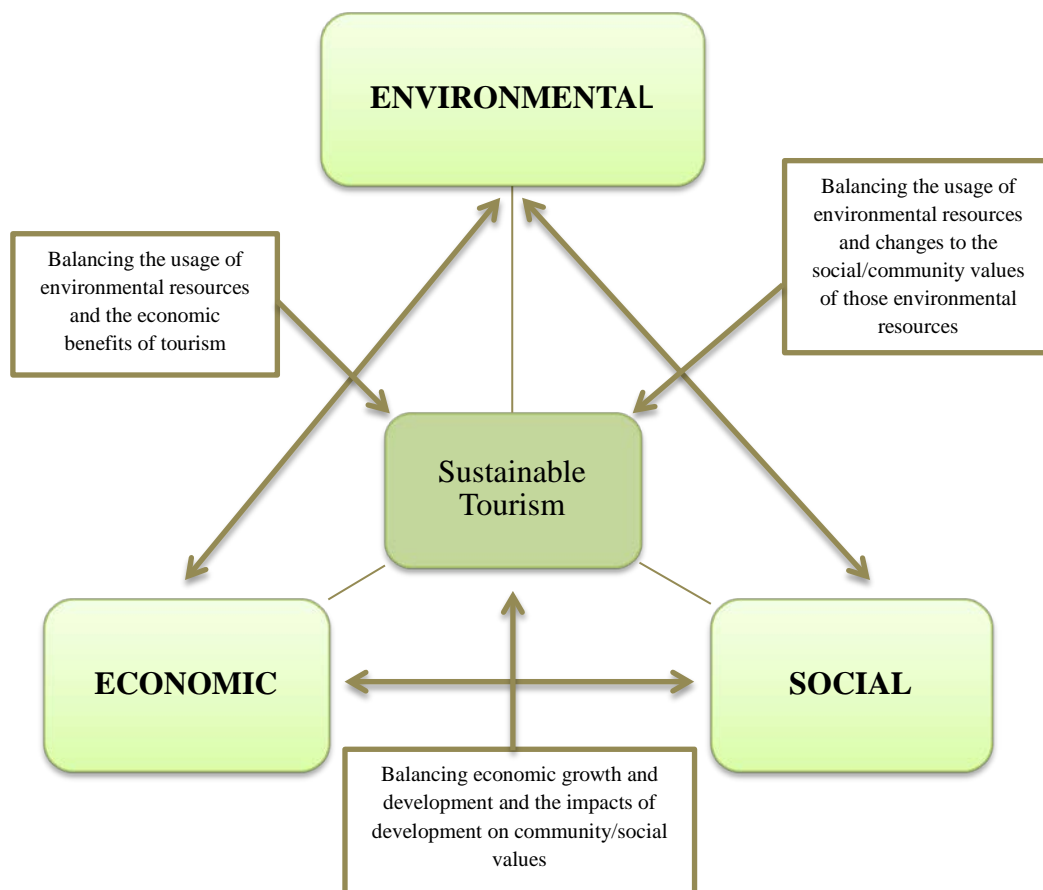


Figure 2.1 Dimensions of sustainable tourism

Source: Janusz and Bajdor (2013:525)

Within the industry, the term responsible tourism has also developed into a recognized area of tourism investigation and practice. Even though this term shares common characteristics with sustainable tourism, eco-friendly tourism, ethical tourism and other associated forms of

socially conscious tourism, responsible tourism is noted as the preferred term in the tourism industry (Caruana *et al.* 2014:115). It is suggested that responsible tourism and sustainable tourism share the same objective of sustainable development which is environmental respect, social fairness and capitalizing local benefits (Cape Town City Document: Department of Tourism 2007). The document further states that the main variance between responsible tourism and sustainable tourism is that in responsible tourism, people, associations and companies are requested to take responsibility for their activities and impacts on the various environments. In 2002, the City of Cape Town, South Africa, hosted the first conference on responsible tourism which led to the 'Cape Town Declaration'. This declaration measured responsible tourism in terms of: reducing environmental impacts, producing economic benefits for the local communities, including locals in all decisions undertaken, preserving natural and cultural traditions, providing significant bonds among the locals and tourists and being accessible and culturally considerate (Frey and George 2010:621; Coles, Fenclova and Dinan 2013:122; Caruana *et al.* 2014:116).

The transition to responsible tourism has occurred due to the fact that little progress has been made with regards to sustainable tourism recognition in the 15 years since the Earth Summit in Rio, predominantly due to the fact that people rely on others to be sustainable and fail to take the necessary 'responsibility' for being 'sustainable' (Cape Town City Document: Department of Tourism 2007). Mihalic (2016:465) maintains that responsible tourism is not merely an alternative word for sustainable tourism, but is more of an expression to label tourism that is sustainable because its performances are sustainable. In simple terminology, sustainable tourism is responsible tourism that is intended to produce employment and earnings, in so doing, decreasing any further environmental or social impacts (Kaul and Gupta 2009:13). Nonetheless authors (Giddings, Hopwood and O'brien 2002:189; Liu 2003:464; Jayawardena *et al.* 2008:258; Janusz and Bajdor 2013:526) affirm that sustainable or responsible tourism aims to find balance among conserving the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments in both developed and developing nations (Figure 2.1). According to Rigall-I-Torrent (2008:885), achieving sustainable tourism and responsible tourism, is an on-going procedure that demands continuous monitoring of impacts as well as implementing the necessary protective and/or corrective measures were applicable.

2.5 Sustainable measures in the tourism industry

A destination's environmental quality is a key factor in the decision making of the tourist. It is observed that tourism managers have been keen on integrating environmental or sustainable measures into their current management policies and methods but only if it resulted in high financial benefits and reduced costs (Mihalič 2000:65). Examples of sustainable environmental management measures include: environmental or sustainable codes of conduct, uncertified environmental or sustainable practice, self-declared labels, certification for good practice/best environmental practice and accreditation schemes i.e. ecolabels (Mihalič 2000:68,70) (Table 2.1). According to Edgell Sr *et al.* (2008:182), these sustainable tourism measures can be a practical instrument in positively influencing the destination and the local community alike.

Environmental and sustainable management measures and practices have been used correspondingly with corporate environmental responsibility, management and commitment and corporate social responsibility (Nyirenda and Ngwakwe 2014:76). The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is viewed as a measure of environmental or sustainable management which involves obligations to both the social and natural environments (Dawkins and Ngunjiri 2008:287); while voluntary measures such as codes of conduct and the implementation of ecolabels have been predominantly known to improve the relationship of the organization with the natural environment (Tepelus and Córdoba 2005:135).

2.5.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR is an approach taken by businesses whereby equal consideration is placed on profit increases and shareholder concerns as well as ethical, social and environmental issues (Henderson 2007:228; Coles, Fenclova and Dinan 2013:122). CSR is also identified as a management practice that decreases the organizations unfavorable impacts of its operations on society and increases its favorable impacts (Kucukusta, Mak and Chan 2013:20). CSR is acknowledged by various other terms including Corporate Citizenship, Social Responsibility (SR) and with regards to the tourism industry, Corporate Sustainability (Holcomb, Upchurch and Okumus 2007:462). According to Tamajón and Aulet (2013:38), CSR can be viewed as the voluntary involvement of organizations towards the improvement of the environment,

society and economy. As a result, the principals of sustainable development and CSR are very much similar and at times used interchangeably (Henderson 2007:231).

According to Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García and Marchante-Lara (2014:77) the community, governments, consumers and other interested parties continuously expect businesses to identify their social and environmental accountabilities, modify corporate practices, alleviate the negative impacts of their operations and positively impact communities where they function in further than what is mandatory by law. Researchers such as Holcomb, Upchurch and Okumus (2007:461); Kucukusta, Mak and Chan (2013:19); Tamajón and Aulet (2013:38); Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García and Marchante-Lara (2014:77) highlight several reasons as to why it would be beneficial for companies to implement CSR. These include the ability to adhere to particular demands of stakeholders, increase the company's performance, improve corporate status and investor relations, create consumer loyalty, prevent lawful sanctions and for the overall betterment of society. CSR can also be used as a measure to form a favourable reputation, improve commitment, efficiency and morale of employees and can additionally generate resources and skills that can provide sustainable competitive profits for the organization. It is also viewed as a possible means of obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage.

Tamajón and Aulet (2013:39), reveal that a large percentage of tourism organizations are integrating the concept of CSR into their corporate models, with the objective of improving the environment and the value of life for the local community and business employees. This could be due to the fact that tourism organizations have distinctive and severe responsibilities with regard to issues concerning the destinations that they are conducting business in (Henderson 2007:231). In addition, Kucukusta, Mak and Chan (2013:20) note that the accommodation sector has put in substantial effort into CSR schemes over the past 20 years. For example Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García and Marchante-Lara (2014:77) note that CSR is vital for management in the hotel industry which encounters many challenges concerning new tourist data, tourists who seek the premium standards in facilities and services, strong competition or the existence of tourist communities whose feelings are broadcast over the internet. Luu (2011:8) confirms that CSR could potentially assist with many concerns facing the tourism industry with regard to encouraging sustainable tourism, however, government participation and support must be visible if the industry wishes to intensify their own participation in CSR.

Black and Crabtree (2007:17), confirm that in the last 10 to 15 years there has been an increase in procedures, mechanisms, quality assurance techniques and other instruments to guarantee improved sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism. Blanco, Lozano and Rey-Maqueira (2009a:104) and Blackman *et al.* (2014:41) believe that the problem of severe environmental and socio-economic impacts caused by tourism can also be addressed through private sector voluntary schemes which are in place to make sure that tourism organizations observe particular environmental procedures or performances. Voluntary tools include strategies such as rewards and awards of distinction, codes of conduct, environmental management systems, best practice strategies, self-commitment schemes and self-declaration and expert certification programs for specific individuals (Black and Crabtree 2007:18). Such tools are reflected in Table 2.1.

2.5.2 Voluntary environmental initiatives in the tourism sector

During the 1900s, the concept of voluntary initiatives was endorsed to encourage self-controlled activities and discourage governmental regulations; which provided a way for organizations to discuss and develop integrated ethical principles with both government and non-government organizations (Kasim 2008:35). Blanco, Lozano and Rey-Maqueira (2009a:104) reveal that the two fundamental features of voluntary initiatives are: advocates of initiatives are not obligated by regulation to launch the scheme and target groups are not obligated to be a part of the scheme.

Since the 1900s, tourism organizations, more especially the hotel sector, have consequently embraced voluntary initiatives to show their commitment to sustainable tourism (Ayuso 2006:208). For instance, in Colombia and Chile, large amounts of high-status voluntary agreements among environmental authorities and the tourism industry have been signed within the past 15 years (Blackman and Guerrero 2012:257). Blanco, Rey-Maqueira and Lozano (2009:115) confirm that numerous studies of voluntary initiatives have only examined the hotel sector of tourism as it is considered the most representative sector of the tourism industry.

The voluntary, sustainable initiatives depicted in Table 2.1, were established to encourage the integration of best environmental practices into tourism industry operations (Ayuso

2006:208). Investigators have recognized roughly 250 voluntary initiatives within the global tourism trade, inclusive of codes of conduct (Barnett 2001:28). According to Black and Crabtree (2007:19) codes of conduct were one of the initial voluntary initiatives created to deal with quality concerns in tourism. They offer information with the purpose of influencing the conduct of tourism and more specifically the tourist, by making available the appropriate guidelines or rules of conduct. Global voluntary initiatives are also inclusive of accolades, best practices, benchmarking and certification programs offering logos or seals of approval (Barnett 2001:28). Certification programs are known as a voluntary measure that arranges, evaluates, monitors and provides printed declarations that an establishment adheres to the particular conditions and endorses best practices as opposed to meeting the minimum sustainability standard (Black and Crabtree 2007:20). Due to the publication of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, individual companies within the tourism industry, were motivated to take the initiative of going above economic responsibility (Sandve, Marnburg and Øgaard 2014:75). Progressively, voluntary guiding principles and best practices were recognized in the industry, followed by the implementation of certification programs and ecolabels (Sandve, Marnburg and Øgaard 2014:76).

Table 2.1: Voluntary environmental tools applied in the tourism industry

Policy Tool	Aim	Examples
Codes of Conduct	To make public the organizations commitment with basic values of an environmentally and sustainably thorough company performance.	Agenda 21 for the tourism industry
Best Environmental Practice	To take action procedures in order to improve the environmental performance of the organisation.	Actions of energy saving, water saving and waste management
Ecolabels	To make certain the environmental performance of the organization with regard to specific criteria and offer the corresponding information to the consumer.	Fair Trade for Tourism; Heritage Environmental Management Company
Environmental Management Systems	To manage environmental performance of the organization and constantly improve it according to a planned policy.	International Standard ISO 14001
Environmental Performance Indicator	To assess and communicate the environmental performance of an organisation.	Total energy and water consumption, waste production (per category)

Source: Ayuso (2006: 207-220).

The implementations of ecolabels are becoming increasingly popular as a favourable means of environmental management on a global scale (Buckley 2002:184; Font 2002:197; Font 2007:388; Rubik *et al.* 2007:176; Blackman *et al.* 2014:41).

2.6 Ecolabels in the tourism industry

Ecolabels, environmental accreditations and accolades, and environmental quality declaration and assessment schemes, are being used as influential mechanisms by the tourism industry as a means of preserving the natural environment and socio-cultural environments on which the industry is dependent on (Buckley 2002:183; Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002:161). They offer a positive statement that recognizes products and services as being less damaging to the environment than products and services in the same category that have not been certified (Rubik *et al.* 2007:177).

An ecolabel is a label that predominantly refers to the state of the natural and social environments or have environmental or performance methods in place (Buckley 2002:184). The requirements for ecolabels are generally environmental proficiency and confirmation by an independent third party, connection to practical information, re-claim via a quantifiable evaluation and criteria advancement in stages (Font 2002; Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002:164). Ecolabels are extensive techniques used in many industry sectors and promotes high quality standards for the destination or businesses partaking in the ecolabel (Eichhorn *et al.* 2008). Buckley (2002:185) further acknowledges that being certified by an ecolabel may possibly also be used as a standard by supervisory agencies to grant permits; assist advertising agencies for inclusion of labels in promotional campaigns; and assist insurance benefactors to issue policies and determine premiums.

The development of ecolabels in the tourism industry was presented as an official tool which developed as a result of Agenda 21. Buckley (2013:203) states that tourism eco-certification programs date back to more than 25 years and have multiplied over the last two decades. Frieder and Frankl (2005:193) add that a great number of existing schemes emerged in the 1990s with the majority of these being local or regional in character. According to Piper and Yeo (2011:280), since the middle of the 1980s, around one hundred ecolabels have been implemented by the tourism industry alongside non-specific, general certification schemes such as the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 14000. Examples of popular tourism

ecolabels include Green Globe (which certifies businesses, conference centres, hotels and resorts, attractions, transportation and the travel industry), Eco-friendly Hotels Worldwide (which certifies accommodation establishments), Ecotel (which certifies accommodation establishments), Audobon International (which certifies golf courses, hotels, lodges, sanctuaries and communities) and The Blue Flag ecolabel (which certifies beaches and marinas) (Buckley 2002:195; Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002:162 Piper and Yeo 2011:280; Audubon International 2016; Green Globe 2016). Buckley (2002:192) confirms that the Green Globe ecolabel was the original and only effort at a particular ecolabel scheme that applies to all sectors within the tourism industry on an international level.

In an era of increasing concern regarding environmental preservation, ecolabels or environmental certification have gained the attention of both multidimensional tourism and multidimensional environmental businesses and is used as a tool for promoting sustainable tourism (Buckley 2002:184; Capacci, Scorcu and Vici 2015:88). Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter (2002:161) state that ecolabel certification schemes are being implemented as a measure by the tourism industry for protecting the natural environment on which it relies on and for forming a sequence of environmentally friendly developments in the tourism industry. More specifically, Font and Buckley (2001:27) indicate that ecolabels and/or certification schemes in the tourism sector aim to emphasize the best practices for goods and services and its purpose is to make certain that various elements of the tourism industry from the demand and the supply spectrums, are steering their business conduct with less harmful impacts on the environment, the social order and the economy alike.

Rubik *et al.* (2007:176) affirms that ecolabels range from voluntary to mandatory approaches. Voluntary ecolabels may be financed and managed by the private sector. ISO distinguishes three voluntary labelling approaches i.e. certification programmes based on criteria, self-declared environmental claims and claims related to calculated product information that is established upon independent confirmation using current manuals (Rubik *et al.* 2007:176,177). Mandatory approaches or labels are government supported and may possibly act as a trade constraint for overseas producers i.e. imports might be prohibited if they are not in compliance (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations 2016). In relation to the tourism industry, Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter (2002:164,165) reported that ecolabels would be granted to qualifying tourism establishments by third-party ecolabel

certification programmes via a systematic process comprising of six steps as depicted in Figure 2.2.

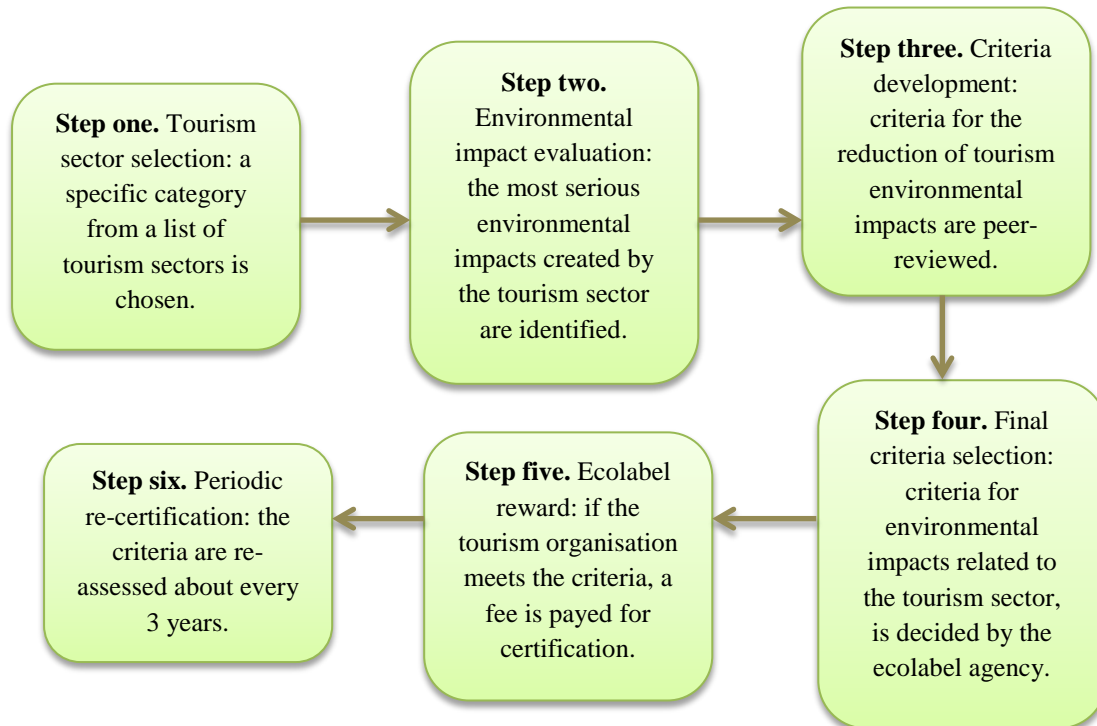


Figure 2.2 The certification process

Source: Sasidharan, Sirakaya, and Kerstetter (2002: 161-174).

Font and Buckley (2001:10) describes the ecolabel certification process as three distinctive stages:

- The first phase involves the arrangement and preparation of the ecolabel; attention to the role and purpose of the ecolabel; the businesses and associations already associated with related initiatives; the target populace of prospective awardees and the influence of the ecolabel on tourism consumption.
- The second phase encompasses the development of the standards, principles and benchmarks (criteria) for this ecolabel by assessing the main environmental effects in the sector of the industry; capturing criteria from a larger scheme and adjusting them to meet the specifics of the sector; ascertaining the main criteria for establishments to adhere to and formulating instructional booklets and samples for them to follow. This

data must complete a procedure of discussion and piloting to warrant that a large number of industry establishments can meet the criteria.

- The final phase entails the managing and promotion of the ecolabel application by making financial arrangements for certification management; negotiating with possible awarding bodies likely to adopt the idea; negotiating for finance; advertising, media and distribution of the ecolabel and transfer of the proposals.

The tourism industry has developed into a sector that competes on an international level and requires labels that are recognised world-wide (Buckley 2002:191; Font 2002:203). Gössling and Buckley (2014:2) confirm that there were over 430 ecolabels documented by the Worldwide Ecolabel Index for 2014 and 128 of those labels apply to the tourism industry. According to the Ecolabel Index (2016), examples of popular international tourism labels include Bio Hotels, Blue Flag, Earth Check, Eco Hotels Certified, Green Globe Certification, Green Key and the International Eco Certification Programme. Ecolabels in the tourism industry can be applied to a range of tourism sectors such as: travel agencies and tour operators, hotels and resorts, beaches and marinas, water, airline and other transportation services. Ecolabels can also be adopted to certify the natural resources and environmental reliability of tourist destinations (Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002:164).

Geerts (2014:88) indicates that ecolabel certification programmes are usually accompanied with a logo and grade rating with the aim of providing consumers with an instantly distinguishable label. He further adds that some schemes offer various tiers of certification such as bronze, silver, gold, or 1 to 3 stars, to further encourage sustainable practices in the tourism industry. Due to the development of these ecolabels over the years, researchers (Buckley 2002; Font 2002; Tepelus and Córdoba 2005; Schumacher 2010; Bastič and Gojčič 2012; Berghoef and Dodds 2013; Blackman *et al.* 2014) have given much attention to the benefits and challenges associated with ecolabels.

2.6.1 Benefits of tourism ecolabels

According to Bowman (2011:273), the application of tourism certification is one method used to promote sustainable tourism and to synchronize the conceptualization of sustainable practice. Similarly, Mihalič (2000:66) points out that the implementation of the appropriate environmental management measures improves the environmental competitiveness of a

destination. A large amount of tourists consider ecolabels as a dependable measure for selecting environmentally friendly products and services (Bastič and Gojčić 2012:1019). Rubik *et al.* (2007:177) points out that tourism can separate ecolabel benefits into direct benefits- which are the environmental advances achieved through the application of ecolabels on products/services; and indirect benefits, which are the positive environmental impacts, encouraged by ecolabel schemes on surrounding procedures, businesses and the social order. Key benefits of ecolabels include: economic, influencing consumer choice, encouraging market development, creating a positive image and brand and enhanced job fulfilment for employees.

- **Economic benefits**

According to Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock (2010:85), certification schemes assist businesses in becoming environmentally conscious by reducing the consumption of resources such as water and energy, and reducing the discharge of waste. This in turn leads to economic benefits due to lower usage of such resources. Chun and Giebelhausen (2012:401) admit that minor alterations like changing to light emitting diode (LED) or compact fluorescent light bulbs can result in significant savings in relation to both expenses and natural resources. In support, research conducted by Kanbar (1998) and Christensen (2010) give much attention to the economic advantages of LED lighting. Similarly, ecolabels aimed at the management of water, waste and energy resulted in considerable financial savings (Font 2007:389). A study conducted in Costa Rica, found an association with higher hotel prices and environmental ratings due to the fact that businesses that obtain ecolabels have the advantage of charging premium prices to environmentally conscious tourists (Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock 2010:85). According to Blackman *et al.* (2014:42,43) ecolabels such as the Blue Flag ecolabel could possibly increase hotels anticipated profits by improving the whole corporate environment in a coastal community. For example, Costa Rica discovered that Blue Flag certification has an analytical and economically substantial influence on new hotel investment, predominantly financing in luxury hotels (Blackman *et al.* 2014:49). Furthermore, Chan (2013:1018) found that ecolabels are known to attract environmentally conscious tourists that obtain higher income and have higher conservational anticipations and are therefore willing to pay higher premiums of up to 5% for service delivery that is eco-friendly.

- **Influencing consumer choice**

Ecolabels provide tourists in many developed countries with information concerning environmental performance and actions of tourism businesses; therefore, assisting them in making informed choices on sustainable products and services (Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002:164). Buckley (2002:185) believes that nationally and internationally the key purpose of ecolabels in tourism is as a marketing tool which is a factor in consumer choice. Certification and environmentally focused conduct and practices can be used as a marketing tool to gain the attention of environmentally conscious tourists (Buckley 2002:185; Bastič and Gojčič 2012:1019). Consequently, tourists are indicating preference for destinations or organizations that protect and preserve their environment, and possess ecolabels (Aliraja and Rughooputh 2004:1; Bastič and Gojčič 2012:1019). Research also reveals that tourists would opt to stay at an eco-friendly hotel over a standard hotel if presented with a choice (Manaktola and Jauhari 2007:356). A study conducted in the National Capital Region of Delhi in India found that tourists require concrete indication of business commitment to an environmental scheme before booking into a hotel (Manaktola and Jauhari 2007:370). Moreover, Aliraja and Rughooputh (2004:2) confirm that a growing amount of tourists are inquiring about Blue Flag beach destinations before deciding on their holiday destination.

- **Encouraging market development**

Ecolabel certification aims to promote reasonable market access, by providing opportunities to encourage respectable practice (Font 2007:387). Frey and George (2010:621) state that these measures are extremely important as the tourism trade depends severely on the continued attractiveness and sociability of the destinations and societies it functions in, while enduring time limits to manage its favourable and unfavourable impacts. Mihalič (2000:65) agrees that marketing the environmental attractiveness of a specific destination can sometimes prove problematic. However, this can be made easier by implementing environmental awards and labels.

- **Positive image and brand**

Font (2007:389) affirms that for many large companies, the primary reason for ecolabel certification is not to attract business, but rather as a method to safeguard their image and brand for public relations purposes against potential unfavourable publicity. The prospective for promotion as a benefit is frequently mentioned as a main incentive for ecolabel certification as benefits consist of an enhanced company image amongst consumers, a chance to gain competitive advantage, and for programmers, the opportunity for better destination promotion opportunities (Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock 2010:85). Additionally, Font (2007:394) claims that businesses implementing a sustainable ecolabel for tourism are in fact co-branding their products or services; this is especially significant for small businesses that lack international market recognition, where the label can be used as a symbol of quality and dependability.

- **Enhanced job fulfilment for employees**

Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García and Marchante-Lara (2014:79) and Wagner (2015:380) confirm that a new trend has emerged as employees are becoming increasingly more environmentally conscious and are therefore expecting employers to conduct business according to high environmental and social standards. In terms of human resources, studies indicate that employees at an organisation committed to sustainability and environmental management schemes may experience greater job satisfaction which may lead to increased productivity and profitability (Chun and Giebelhausen 2012:401; Wagner 2015:380).

Overall the benefits of ecolabels include reduced costs for the organisation through environmental management performance by means of energy and water reductions; enhanced job fulfilment for employees working at an establishment dedicated to sustainability due to their positive environmental contribution and incentives created by certification schemes which enable tour operators to improve their environment while favourably separating themselves from organizations that are not environmentally conscious (Chun and Giebelhausen 2012:401; Buckley 2013:204; Blackman *et al.* 2014:41). In order for ecolabels and certification to prove successful and show environmental development, eco-certified operators must be made aware of the economic benefits ecolabels can bring to their organisation (Blackman *et al.* 2014:41).

Even though the objective of an ecolabel is to increase public consideration and concern about the environmental effects of products and to enlighten consumers about the environment (Schumacher 2010:2203), Font (2002:201) supports the fact that ecolabel standards are subject to discrepancy, and consequently a reason for distress in the tourism industry. Blackman *et al.* (2014:41) concurs by adding that while ecolabels have positive impacts they also come with many challenges.

2.6.2 Challenges facing tourism ecolabels

With increased amounts of sustainable tourism certification schemes existing globally, certification programmes face numerous challenges (Conaghan and Hanrahan 2010:99). The literature reveals a number of challenges associated with ecolabels which include high costs, economic concerns, poor ecolabel management, inconsistencies of ecolabels, challenges regarding the certification and lack of government support.

- **High costs**

Membership in ecolabel certification schemes is usually expensive. According to Hughes, Weaver and Pforr (2015), the increased expenses associated with membership and the implementation of tourism certification schemes and failure to provide reasons for increased expenses are serious problems for tourism organizations. Font (2007:391) affirms that there are direct costs and management problems with regards to participation in environmental programs. Operators suffer significant financial and non-financial costs in order to fulfil ecolabel certification environmental performance criteria, settle application fees and other transactional costs (Blackman *et al.* 2014:41). Added limitations are the high expense of verification and the need for expertise in application of standards, particularly when management structures and paper traces are necessary (Font 2003:2). Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter (2002:171) confirm that the high costs of ecolabels leads to increased prices of tourism products and services made available to the tourist. This could unfortunately discourage tourists from making a sustainable purchase and encourage visitors to contribute towards non-certified establishments and products.

- **Economic concerns**

In the tourism sector, where revenue limits are low and seasonal, it may be challenging to market certified or labelled products or services at a premium price (Font 2007:395). Berghoef and Dodds (2013:264) suggest that the main aim of any establishment is to create and produce profit. Therefore, in instances where environmental developments fail to reduce expenses, it is probable that they will be undertaken with less drive. A study conducted by Jauhari, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007:369) indicated that the majority of tourists from India were not willing pay a high premium for environmental practices despite their support of these practices.

- **Poor ecolabel management**

A major difficulty that occurs among certification schemes is 'greenwashing', which is essentially making fabricated claims about the ecolabel. For example, the original Green Globe label lacked any sort of standard and did not conduct audits. Businesses received a Green Globe plaque to exhibit and the authorization to use the logo by merely buying membership into the Green Globe enterprise. Hence, the legitimacy of the program has established much disapproval previous to its upgrade (Conaghan and Hanrahan 2010:99; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock 2010:84; Chun and Giebelhausen 2012:401). Chun and Giebelhausen (2012:401) believe that organizations are disinclined to endorse their green or environmental achievements due to apprehensions that consumers might be suspicious of greenwashing by the business. Due to many schemes not being genuine or accurate, Conaghan and Hanrahan (2010:100) believe that there is a great demand for an international certification body and that it is vital to control and regulate who will be verifying the certifiers.

- **Inconsistencies of ecolabels**

According to Font (2007:395), a significant challenge experienced by business with tourism certification is that obtaining a label does not automatically equate to a superior quality product or service than a competing business, as many successful businesses are not certified. The brand consequently loses significance and importance as tourists can seek out the same sustainable practice elsewhere. Another point to note is that the tourism industry is globally

competitive in nature and ecolabels that are recognized internationally and obtain criteria that are specific to issues faced within the specific host destination are, therefore, highly necessary for the effectiveness of the ecolabel (Buckley 2002:191,192). Berghoef and Dodds (2013:265) acknowledged that inadequately planned or implemented schemes can produce unfavourable public views and doubt among consumers. There are numerous issues and concerns with regard to certification, but Conaghan and Hanrahan (2010:99) believe that one of the most challenging factors is how to decrease the amount of coinciding and opposing labels and how to increase consumer consciousness and industry awareness. For example, some ecolabels essentially collect a yearly fee from companies for no certification of indicators while others such as Blue Flag and Earth Check have in comparison, more transparent procedures to guarantee the thoroughness of the scheme (Hughes, Weaver and Pforr 2015).

- **The certification body**

According to Eichhorn *et al.* (2008:195), ecolabel certification programmes are at risk of favouring popular environmental or social interests over unpopular ones in their criteria. The large increase of different schemes creates much confusion among customers, consequently hindering the effective functioning of the ecolabel. Furthermore, there is a lack of appropriate standards and synchronization of criteria at an international level which relies on the survival of an accreditation body and the absence of an accreditation body inhibits the establishment of an international label which is, therefore, unsuccessful in reaching the international tourist (Eichhorn *et al.* 2008:195).

- **Lack of government support**

Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock (2010:85) confirm that companies feel that they lack guidance from local government authorities concerning sustainable tourism and ecolabel schemes. For example, in a survey carried out by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) in 2001, 26 domestic tourist boards reported having an interest in implementing certification schemes but recorded at that time that there was no urgency. Countries such as The Dominican Republic, Fiji, Kenya, South Africa and Venezuela, that were keen on implementing certification schemes failed to do so, due to the lack of government support (Font 2007:399).

In general, the challenges of ecolabels are that they are expensive both before and after certification; implementation and maintenance is time consuming; the ecolabel co-ordinator has inadequate marketing influence; there is a lack of effective application and monitoring techniques; the criteria generally focuses on environmental management instead of performance; participation in the certification scheme is voluntary and unless economic returns are experienced by the organisation, few establishments will be keen on partaking in the programme (Font 2002:198; Berghoef and Dodds 2013:264; Blackman *et al.* 2014:41; Geerts 2014:89). The lack of government support in terms of funding; the lack of skilled employees and the low levels of consumer understanding of environmental impacts are additional challenges experienced with regard to ecolabels (Buckley 2002:189,190; Blackman and Guerrero 2012:526). Frey and George (2010:621) report that environmental measures and implementation have significantly increased in recent years, internationally as well as in South Africa. However, in spite of their great dependence on environmental and social resources, the tourism sectors have, for unconfirmed reasons been slow reactors to this development.

2.7 Tourism ecolabels in South Africa

Janisch (2007:15) confirms that ecolabels in the tourism industry are extremely relevant for the African region. This is due to the fact that tourism in the region offers new opportunities and employment and financial benefits for indigenous societies (Saarinen 2009:3). According to Rogerson (2004:273), the South African tourism sector has been singled out as one of the main industry frontrunners for economic growth and transformation in the destination for the next 20 years. Prior to 1994, the South African government viewed international tourism and environmental issues unimportant as these were understood to benefit those that were privileged (Akinboade and Braimoh 2010:150). However, a shift in viewpoint was witnessed in 1996 when the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa was implemented. The focus of the White Paper was on Responsible Tourism. This addressed the role of tourism in South Africa and the importance of various key players in sustaining the sector (South Africa 1996:1-57). Consequently, after the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has advanced its tourism ranking from the 52nd to the 17th most visited destination in 2005 (Saayman and Saayman 2008:81).

According to Stats SA's recent Tourism and Migration Report (August 2016), a total amount of 3.5 million tourists entered South African ports. This resulted in an increase of 14% of tourist arrivals into the country from the previous year and a 22.6% increase in foreign tourist arrivals over the same period (Statistics South Africa 2016). Due to the rapid increase in tourism numbers, Spenceley (2005:142) confirms that the objective of the South African government is to control the country's tourism sector for the sake of sustainable development in a manner that promotes improved living for all citizens of the country. Therefore, in South Africa, tourism certification is considered a beneficial instrument to promote the country and encourage responsible and sustainable tourism development (Mahony 2007:1).

Nonetheless, in addition to the international tourism accreditation structures that some tourism initiatives have embraced (i.e. ISO 14001, Green Globe 21), numerous national accreditation schemes have been established to measure and observe tourism products in South Africa (Mahony 2007:1). There are several operating ecolabels in South Africa that are tourism specific i.e. Audobon International, Blue Flag, Certified Wildlife Friendly, EarthCheck, Fairtrade in Tourism, Green Globe Certification and the Heritage Environmental Management Company ecolabel (Ecolabel Index 2016). This study, however, focuses on four of South Africa's most prominent ecolabels for the tourism sector i.e. The Blue Flag ecolabel, Fair Trade in Tourism, the Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine-certified by Heritage.

2.7.1 The Blue Flag ecolabel

According to Font (2002:198), the first breakthrough in environmental accreditation and certification occurred in 1985, when the first Blue Flag was granted as a means of promoting the compliance to European Commission law on the quality of bathing water. The Foundation of Environmental Education in Europe was extended, to the extent of certifying more than 1800 beaches and 600 marinas in the year 2000. The Foundation also spread out of Europe to include South Africa and The Caribbean. However, preparation of South African beaches to obtain Blue Flag status began in 1998 (Silwana 2015:19). South Africa was the first country outside of European borders to acquire Blue Flag certification for some of its beaches (Janisch 2007:48). According to Capacci, Scorcu and Vici (2015:89), the Blue Flag is granted to beaches and marinas in 48 countries internationally by the Danish Foundation of Environmental Education and is globally identifiable.

The Blue Flag ecolabel is becoming interconnected with favourable coastal zone usage and management and is an important instrument towards sustainable coastal development (Aliraja and Rughooputh 2004:2). Silwana (2015:18) confirms that the Blue Flag initiative was implemented with the intention of informing international tourists of favourable destinations with superior quality beaches. Mihalič (2000:75) revealed that the Blue Flag ecolabel controlled the management of litter and waste and improved water quality in participating tourist destinations. It was also noted in the study that a substantial amount of respondents believed that the overall image of the destination was enhanced with the ecolabel.

A regional assessment report of ecolabels in South Africa compiled by Janisch (2007:49), found that the Blue Flag scheme is demonstrating high levels of success and there has been substantial growth in response from local authorities wanting to be a part of the scheme due to many benefits including escalating tourist statistics, the improved conduct of beach-goers, increased property values of homes near Blue Flag beaches and visitors appreciating a well maintained and managed beach. However, in March 2008, the Blue Flag status was revoked from four of the six Durban beaches that were Blue Flag accredited, resulting in major financial loss to the city (McKenna, Williams and Cooper 2011:576). Nevertheless, the success and accomplishment of the Blue Flag ecolabel is visible and with much confidence more tourism certification schemes will reach similar developments especially if constant progress in the travel and tourism industry is experienced (Conaghan and Hanrahan 2010:95). The South African Blue Flag ecolabel is run by the Wildlife and Environmental Society South Africa (WESSA), who is a member of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) International and is consequently the national manager of Blue Flag beaches. The label is managed in partnership with the Department of Tourism and participating coastal authorities (Janisch 2007:48).

The following criteria are followed by Blue Flag:

- Environmental education and information (legible display)
- Water quality
- Environmental management
- Safety and other services

The potential Blue Flag beach/marina is required to meet all criteria. The local management authority is responsible for ensuring compliance with the criteria and regular inspection regarding water quality data and visibility of site criteria. The ecolabel is a universal yearly

accolade which may be withdrawn if criteria are not adhered to. There are 20 municipalities in South Africa who have obtained Blue Flag status in the three coastal provinces of South Africa i.e. Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (WESSA 2014/2015).

2.7.2 Fair Trade in Tourism

Fair Trade in Tourism (formally referred to as Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa- FTTSA) is a non-profit establishment that endorses tourism companies for functioning in accordance with the philosophies of 'Fair Trade' and responsible tourism. The ecolabel deals with ethics of fair share, democracy, respect, reliability, transparency and sustainability (Fair Trade Tourism 2013). The Fair Trade ecolabel awards a distinct certification trademark (label/logo) to tourism establishments within South Africa that meet specific sustainability criteria established on global Fair Trade principles.

Fair Trade in Tourism was established under the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in South Africa in 2001, as a pilot project to assess the applicability of Fair Trade to the post-apartheid context. Since 2004, Fair Trade in Tourism functions as an independent, non-profit organisation in South Africa and to date has certified approximately 70 establishments across South Africa including hotels, safari lodges, backpacker lodges, guesthouses, cultural tours and eco-adventure activities (Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa 2016). Furthermore, many of these products are small, emerging, and community-based businesses that are wholly or partially owned by rural black communities disenfranchised by apartheid (Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa 2016). For Fair Trade in Tourism certified businesses, the logo offers reliability while at the same time allowing access to niche markets. The aim is to increase private encouragement for respectable environmental and social practices and analyse consumer and industry demand for 'Fair' tourism experiences (Janisch 2007:52).

Table 2.2: Fairtrade in Tourism criteria

CRITERIA
<p>Fair share</p> <p>All participants involved in a tourism activity should get their fair share of the income, in direct proportion to their contribution to the activity.</p>
<p>Fair say</p> <p>All participants involved in a tourism activity should have the right and opportunity to participate in decisions that concern them.</p>
<p>Respect</p> <p>Both host and visitor should have respect for human rights, culture and environment. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe working conditions and practices • Protection of young workers • Promoting gender equality • Understanding and tolerance of socio-cultural norms • Reducing consumption of water and energy, as well as reducing, reusing and recycling waste • Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources • HIV/AIDS awareness
<p>Reliability</p> <p>The services delivered to tourists should be reliable and consistent. Basic safety and security for both host and visitor should be ensured.</p>
<p>Transparency</p> <p>Tourism businesses should establish mechanisms of accountability. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership of tourism businesses must be clearly defined • Employees and other participants having access to information that concerns them • Transparent sharing of profits, benefits and losses
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>The tourism businesses should strive to be sustainable. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge through capacity-building • Improved use of available resources through networking and partnerships • Economic viability through responsible use of resources • Reduction of leakage through local purchasing and employment • Support to historically disadvantaged entrepreneurs

Web source: <http://www.fairtrade.travel/The-six-principles-of-Fair-Trade-Tourism/>

Tourism sectors certified by Fair Trade include:

- Township bicycle tours
- Golf courses
- Boat based whale watching
- Various types of accommodation establishments, as well as
- Tour operators

2.7.3 The Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine- certified by Heritage

The Heritage Environmental Management Company is a scheme developed by a private corporation to observe the ecological performance of enterprises in South and Southern Africa (Janisch 2007:50; Mahony 2007:1). It is specifically designed for the hospitality industry of South Africa and is dedicated to achieving sustainability and persistent ecological enhancement in the service sector through the submission of internationally competitive management schemes, measures and operative exercises (Heritage Environmental Management Company 2016). The GreenLine- certified by the Heritage ecolabel is also afforded by the Heritage Environmental Management Company. The GreenLine- certified by Heritage Programme is viewed as a Responsible Tourism Certification initiative, whereas the Heritage Programme is an all-inclusive Environmental Management System and Certification product (Heritage Environmental Management Company 2016).

Janisch (2007:51) confirms that these rating programmes i.e. the Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine- certified by Heritage are also referred to as global tourism-related environmental rating schemes. These programmes strive to deliver effective guiding principles for the self-regulation of environmental activities carried out within the wider tourism industry and aim to escalate consciousness of environmentally accountable and sustainable operational practices among workers of all categories of activities within tourism.

Table 2.3: The Heritage Environmental Management Company ecolabel criteria

CRITERIA
<p>The following is considered when awarding the Heritage label or recognition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The magnitude to which responsible environment practices are managed • The infrastructural and operational systems introduced to decrease resource consumption and waste • The impact the company, faculty or service has on all facets of its surrounding environment, both natural and social
<p>The Heritage Standard addresses the following key environmental indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing and Procurement • Business Partnerships • Design and Construction • Transport and Vehicle Maintenance • Flora, Fauna and Game • Communication and Marketing • Community involvement • General (in terms of environmental management planning)

Source: Janisch (2007:50)
Web source: www.heritage.co.za

The following criteria are followed by GreenLine- certified by Heritage including a number of criteria within the sections:

- Part 1: sustainable operations and management
- Part 2: social and cultural criteria
- Part 3: economic criteria
- Part 4: environmental criteria

The Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine- certified by Heritage currently only certify accommodation establishments (hotels, lodges, and guesthouses). These ecolabels award certification according to three classes:

- Businesses that are awarded the Heritage SILVER Class have recognised and accepted that they have an environmental impact and have taken practical steps to address them. This will include implementing the Heritage Environment Management Systems and establishing the necessary operational strategies and structures necessary to ensure sustainable business practice. Each Silver Class property must achieve a

minimum of 50% compliance with the Heritage standard, although the full implementation of the environmental management systems is not required (Heritage Environmental Management Company 2016).

- To achieve GOLD Class, a business must have fully implemented the Heritage EMS and demonstrate that they are managing their activities in compliance with the Heritage standard. These businesses have an established Environmental Committee and published compliant standards for all operational activities as far as they impact on the environment. A minimum score of 75% compliance with Heritage standards is required for Gold Class properties, and there must be demonstrable effort to ensure continual environmental performance (Heritage Environmental Management Company 2016).
- PLATINUM Class businesses are those that have achieved full compliance with the Heritage standard, and which have fully integrated environmental management schemes in operation. These businesses operate their activities with the highest consideration of its environmental performance, community involvement and in a socially responsible manner. To achieve Platinum Class, a business must achieve a minimum score of 94% on its annual assessment and clearly demonstrate compliance with the principle of continual improvement (Heritage Environmental Management Company 2016).

2.8 Conclusion

According to Chan and Wong (2006:481) it is undeniable that organizations are responsible for and have a crucial part to play in alleviating environmental destruction, as the organizations themselves are accountable for most of the environmental damage that has occurred due to manufacturing. Consequently, numerous non-governmental establishments and activist have inspired companies to deal with the effects they are imposing on their natural surroundings. Holden (2003:96) confirms that efforts have been made worldwide under the guidance of eco and sustainable tourism to correct development and progression schemes which stabilize the requirements of local communities with resource preservation schemes. Sustainability schemes stimulate numerous impacts such as promoting an increase in consciousness and learning among the public which will inspire more pro-environmental conduct and performance (Miller *et al.* 2010:628). Edgell *et al.* (2008:186) further expresses

that there is also an improved consciousness of sustainable tourism's position in the syllabus in advanced education.

Chan and Wong (2006:484) suggest that obtaining global regulation encourages firms to develop Environmental Management Schemes and for investors, government controlling organizations, insurance corporations and financial establishments to evaluate the organizations obligation towards improving environmental performance. Various leading corporations are using environmental management strategies to advance their operative effectiveness, increase their company appearance, cultivate innovative merchandise and prospects and consequently achieve competitive advantage (Chan and Wong 2006:481). As a mechanism of user selection, ecolabels are a valued and preferred environmental controlling instrument in tourism; however despite sustainable developments made, only a minor percentage of the tourism sector implements best environmental practices and formalises it with the aid of environmental management systems or ecolabels (Buckley 2002:185,202). The next chapter presents the research methods that were employed to achieve the aim and objectives of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

A research method is essentially a methodical process of resolving a problem and aims to illustrate the work plan of research conducted (Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi 2006:5). This study aims to ascertain the benefits and challenges of ecolabels within tourism establishments in South Africa. This chapter reveals the processes used to obtain the empirical data for this study. This included the research design, target population, sampling, data collection instrument and administration and data analysis techniques. Additionally, reliability and validity as well as ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Research design

The research design of a study is the coherent structure of data obtained from the investigation (deVaus, Stouffer and Yin 2004:3). Miller (2003:3) states that the research design is the rational framework of the investigation that allows the researcher to believe that their study process will permit them to obtain valid and effective conclusions. Due to the social nature of the investigation, the study embodies the positivist paradigm and therefore used a quantitative method of accumulating data. Vogt (2005:3) concedes that positivism deals with the empirical examination of phenomena, in particular human phenomena that the researcher can approach both scientifically and/or quantitatively. Tuli (2010:100) further states that the makeup of social phenomena for positivists is that: empirical data can be found independently from personal notions or opinions; they are ruled by laws of the domino effect, forms of social realism are constant and data concerning them is captivating.

Quantitative analysis is investigation concerning data collection via numerical means which assists the researcher to measure variables and correspondingly allows for statistical testing to be conducted (Garwood 2006:3). Garwood (2006:3) states that quantitative research is associated with the realist philosophy and is also known to produce factual evidence concerning the world and behaviour and these are observed to increase the amount of human understanding as it is accepted as a valid method of measurement of variables. Quantitative

research was most suitable for this study as it aimed at determining associations between key variables related to the environmental impacts of ecolabels within the tourism sector of South Africa. Additionally, the researcher found the quantitative approach most suitable for this investigation as numerical analysis was the most appropriate means of interpreting online surveys which was the instrument used for data collection. The researcher found this method of obtaining data more convenient than interviews as the target population comprised of organizations in different areas throughout South Africa. Therefore, this method proved to be the most suitable technique for achieving the study objectives.

3.3 Target population

Common terms such as population of concern or interest, statistical population or merely 'population' are frequently used interchangeably in relation to a target population (Taylor 2008:3). Cox (2008:3) and Taylor (2008:3) agree that the target population for a study is the complete set of units for which the study data are to be utilised to establish conclusions. Hence, the target population demarcates those units for which the results of the study are intended to generalize. The target population for this study was tourism businesses in South Africa that have ecolabel certification. The key ecolabels targeted in the study were Blue Flag, Fair Trade in Tourism, Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine-certified by Heritage. These specific ecolabels were chosen due to their prominence among many of the tourism businesses within South Africa. A total of 104 ecolabel certified organizations made up the total target population for this study.

3.4 Sampling

With reference to a statistical study, Taylor (2008:3) confirms that the researcher is required to define the population being studied via a set of selection units that will assist the researcher in drawing conclusions. Sampling comprised of the technique used for selecting the study sample, the process implemented and the sample size.

3.4.1 Sampling technique

The sampling method chosen for this research study was purposive sampling which is a non-probability technique. The researcher found this selection technique the most suitable for effective collection of the empirical data for the study. Fink (2003:10) believes that non-

probability sampling is a sampling method in which members and participants are included in the study based on the judgement of the researcher regarding characteristics of the target population and the requirements of the study. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008:96) reveal that purposive sampling is an alternative method of convenience sampling whereby the sample is selected from the available populace. According to Brewerton and Millward (2001:7) entities in the purposive sampling method are selected from a populace conferring to a fundamental focus in specific groups. Participants suitable for inclusion in the sample are decided by the researcher established on a variation of standards and criteria which might contain expert knowledge of the research problem, aptitude or enthusiasm to partake in the research study (Oliver 2006:3). Daniel (2012:11) further states that, sampling elements of purposive sampling are not merely selected on the basis of their accessibility, convenience, or self-selection but rather purposefully selected because their features meet the criteria for inclusion in the research. This study required specific tourism organizations that were certified with specific ecolabels (Blue Flag, Fair Trade for Tourism, Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine- certified by Heritage) to partake in the study in order to meet the study objectives and draw effective conclusions.

The following criterion was used for the inclusion of the sample in the study:

- Participants (tourism organizations/municipalities) are established in South Africa.
- Participants (tourism organizations/municipalities) are permitted to participate in study surveys.
- Participants (tourism organizations/municipalities) are certified with either Blue Flag, Fair Trade in Tourism, Heritage Environmental Management Company or GreenLine-certified by Heritage.

The researcher viewed this criterion as most suitable for drawing valid conclusions of the benefits and challenges associated with ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa. Therefore, the use of a purposive selection method was the most suitable selection technique.

3.4.2 Sample selection process

The researcher contacted the directors of the various ecolabels (Blue Flag, Fair Trade for Tourism South Africa, Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine-certified by Heritage) to obtain consent to conduct the research study (Appendix 1,2,3). Once

permission was granted by the directors, the researcher requested a database of members for each ecolabel. The Blue Flag and Fair Trade in Tourism provided a data base with all the relevant contact information directly to the researcher via e-mail and the Heritage Environmental Management Company (inclusive of GreenLine certified by Heritage) instructed the researcher to use their database of members available online on their web-page.

3.4.3 Sample size

Williams (2003:4) believes that the most favourable sample to use when conducting a social survey is actually not a sample but a census whereby participants are not selected for being distinctive of a bigger population, but because their characteristics meet the specific interests of the researcher. A census study aims to accumulate data from all members of the populace being studied as opposed to selecting a sample (Williams 2003:4; Harding 2006:3). Due to the small number of units within the entire target population (Table 3.1), it was not feasible to establish representative groups of participants to form a sample from each ecolabel as it would be difficult to generalize and draw conclusions from. The researcher, therefore, chose to survey all tourism organizations that were certified with the selected ecolabels.

The selected, certified tourism businesses comprised of a mixture of educational centres, charter services, cruise services, tour operators, travel agents, tourism programmes/projects, hotels, guesthouses, bed & breakfasts, self-catering establishments, lodges, camp sites, game reserves, nature reserves, backpackers, parks, government officials of beaches, marinas, restaurants and entertainment sector establishments. Management staff of these establishments were targeted to complete the questionnaire, as they proved most suitable to answer the questions required about the specific enterprise and ecolabel.

Table 3.1: Respondent groups and response rate

Ecolabels	Selected Participants (total population)	Responses received	Response Rate (%)
Blue Flag	25	15	60
Fair Trade in Tourism	49	44	90
Heritage Environmental Management Company	16	9	56
GreenLine - certified by Heritage	14	6	43
Total	104	74	71

Table 3.1 indicates that the largest segment of the sample was from the Fair Trade in Tourism ecolabel (90%), which also had the highest number of selected participants. This was followed by The Blue Flag ecolabel (60%), Heritage Environmental Management Company (56%) and the GreenLine- certified by Heritage ecolabel (43%).

3.5 Data collection instrument

The researcher chose a structured questionnaire as the most effective data collection instrument for meeting the objectives of this study (Appendix 4). According to Mclean (2006:3), a questionnaire is a set of sensibly considered questions distributed via the exact same method to a set of people in order to obtain data about subjects of interest to the researcher. O'Leary and Miller (2003:3) confirm that a structured questionnaire is the data collection method most frequently used in social analyses. According to Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2011:184), structured surveys can be especially useful when respondents need time to gather information or consider their answers, therefore affording the researcher a more accurate response.

Benefits of structured questionnaires include reduced costs and the allowance for larger topographical coverage without experiencing the added expense of time and travel. The target population for this study was spread over a wide geographical area and required management (who generally have demanding work roles) to answer questionnaires. Therefore, the use of structured questionnaires as the measurement instrument for this study saved both time and effort and allowed convenient access to the various organizations. O'Leary and Miller (2003:3) and McLean (2006:4) further state that the utilization of highly structured surveys allows the collection of large amounts of data from a large number of individuals in quantitative form. This can be effortlessly accomplished, depending on the administration technique, in a relatively small time frame. Structured questionnaires consequently proved more feasible for the study as 104 organizations were targeted. Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2011:184) also indicate that implementing self-completion surveys decreases biasing and inaccuracy initiated by the investigator and the inconsistency of interviewing abilities. Also, the absenteeism of an interviewer affords superior anonymity and privacy for the respondent.

3.5.1 Data collection instrument design and administration

The structured questionnaire used for this study was divided into 8 themes. The themes for these questions included: characteristics of the organisation, characteristics of certification, reasons for certification, benefits of certification, challenges of certification, experience with the ecolabel and improvement of the ecolabel. Questions consisted of 116 items which was made up of multiple choice questions, list responses, check boxes, Likert scales, and open-ended questions. These types of question designs, more especially Likert scales, were appropriate in measuring beliefs, opinions and attitudes of the respondents with regards to ecolabels. Likert scale question design is also a universal method of survey collection and it is easy to understand and also easily quantifiable (Pavlov 2013). These styles of questions made the questionnaire very versatile as it was easy to send via e-mail as well as collect responses. It was also easy to convert results into tables and graphs and draw conclusions from these styles of questioning.

Online questionnaires were administered to the managers of the targeted businesses via Google Docs. Google Forms, which provides the user a worksheet document for the purpose of developing online forms and surveys was developed and employed. Where applicable and feasible, respondents were contacted telephonically prior to the administering of the survey. This was to inform them of the purpose of the study, ensure respondents of total anonymity throughout the study and to confirm their e-mail address. Upon administration of the questionnaires, respondents were also presented with a cover letter which further informed respondents of the researcher's details, the purpose and importance of participation in the study, assurance of total confidentiality and anonymity and the voluntary nature of participation in the research.

Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2011:188) indicate that respondents are often prepared to give more truthful responses to a computer or by electronic mail than to a person or print survey. They also confirm that the computer is consistent and always presents questions in the same way to all respondents; therefore, interviewer prejudice is eradicated. It is further noted that e-mail surveys are both highly economical and efficient (Vicente and Reis 2010:4; Phellas, Bloch and Seale 2011:188). E-mail surveying can permit a large number of respondents to be questioned with the issue of location not serving as a barrier. This technique of exploration has become progressively prevalent for two reasons; the growing infiltration of computers

and the augmented capacity of computer literate individuals (Phellas, Bloch and Seale 2011:188). Additionally, the web based survey for this study entailed administering an embedded link to a web page to potential respondents enclosing a survey that was completed online. Respondents were sent a follow-up e-mail as a reminder on a weekly basis for the duration of two months to promote a higher response rate.

3.6 Data analysis

According to McLean (2006:3), data collected can be recorded into a computer either mechanically or physically. One such software package that allows for this is SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). SPSS is a software package employed for statistical examination and presentation and is commonly used in the social and behavioural disciplines (Landau and Everitt 2004). Therefore, this specific software package was employed for the study and SPSS Version 23.0 was used to analyse the data received. The results from the data analysis were presented as descriptive statistics in the form of graphs and tables. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test internal consistency and provided reliability scores for all relevant items that constituted the questionnaire (Likert questions).

3.7 Reliability and Validity

Muijs (2004:64) indicates that among the key concepts in quantitative research, is reliability and validity. In theory, challenges and benefits do exist in tourism ecolabel certification (Buckley 2002; Font 2002; Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter 2002; Bowman 2011; Buckley 2012, 2013) and therefore proves as a beneficial concept to be measured in the South African tourism sector. The two most important aspects of precision are reliability and validity which will be explored in relation to this study.

3.7.1 Reliability

According to Jupp (2006a:3) reliability is the degree to which a measuring instrument provides constant outcomes following either of these general assessment strategies:

1. Test-retest reliability: encompasses administering the same questionnaire or test to the same group of respondents but on different incidents.

2. Alternate-form reliability: encompasses presenting items worded in a different way in order to measure the same variable.
3. Internal consistency reliability: encompasses using clusters of items (in contrast to individual items) to measure unlike features of the same theory. Internal consistency is measured by Cronbach's Alpha, which measures the extent of how favourably the various dissimilar items complement each other in assessing the same theory and produces a single scale.

The researcher opted for an internal consistency reliability method and used Cronbach's Alpha as the measuring instrument for reliability. Furthermore, structured questionnaires were administered and according to O'Leary and Miller (2003:3), this proves high on reliability as each respondent is presented with the questionnaire in the same way, therefore minimizing any biasness from either the respondent or the researcher. Although reliability measurements are necessary, particularly in scaling, Jupp (2006a:4) believes that they are not adequate exclusively and therefore, require validity measurement; which is measuring the degree to which a scale measures what it claims to.

3.7.2 Validity

According to Jupp (2006b:3), validity is the degree to which conclusions derived from research offer a precise account of what transpired or an accurate description of what occurs and why; this can be assessed by addressing the following aspects:

1. Validity of measurement: encompasses questioning whether a research instrument measures what it claims to.
2. Validity of explanations (internal validity): encompasses questioning whether the descriptions and conclusions drawn from research are the appropriate ones for the particular focus areas or contexts that have been studied.
3. Validity of generalization (external validity): encompasses questioning whether the conclusions derived from a specific study can be generalized to other focus groups (population validity) and other environments (ecological validity).

A pilot study was conducted telephonically, with the main purpose of improving the content covered in the questionnaires as well as ensuring all respondents were comfortable with the subjects being addressed in the questionnaire so as to adhere to the objectives of the study.

3.8 Ethical considerations

According to Mcauley (2003:3) ethical consideration and responsibility is crucial at all phases of the research process, from the proposal of the study, to how the respondents are enlisted, to the treatment they receive throughout the duration of these procedures and to the consequences of their involvement. The following ethical issues were considered in this study:

- Participation in this study was voluntary and in no way enforced upon any organisation.
- The aim of the study was made available to the respondents as well as the requirements for their participation.
- Language and instructions used in the questionnaire was simple and no industry terminology or jargon was used.
- Letters of consent received by the ecolabels to conduct this study was also e-mailed to organizations upon request.
- In no way did the questionnaire require respondents to disclose specifics of company names, individual names or contact details (complete anonymity) other than the mailing address used to send the questionnaire (which remained confidential).
- No harm or unconsented inconveniences were caused to any of the respondents involved in this study.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter revealed the methodical process used to conduct the research study in the most systematic way. It illustrated all processes of consideration as well as implementation methods used, covering aspects of research design, target population, sampling methods, measuring instrument used, data analysis, reliability and validity and the ethical considerations of the study. The following chapter will present, interpret and discuss the data obtained.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings obtained from the questionnaires that were administered for this study. The questionnaire was the primary tool that was used to collect data and was distributed to respondents to obtain their perceptions on the environmental impacts of ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa. The data collected from the responses was analysed using SPSS version 24.0. Descriptive statistics in the form of graphs and tables are presented in this chapter. Cross-tabulations of specific variables are also presented in this chapter.

4.2 Reliability test results

Reliability for this study was computed by using several measurements on the same subjects. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as “acceptable” (Peterson 1994:381). Table 4.1 reflects the Cronbach’s Alpha score for all the Likert scale items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 4.1: Cronbach’s Alpha testing

Question	Title	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1.17	Engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities	11 of 11	.799
2.1	Reasons behind certification	19 of 19	.904
3.1	Benefits of certification	14 of 14	.951
4.1	Challenges of certification	13 of 13	.830
5.1	The ecolabel	20 of 20	.888
5.4	Improving the adoption of ecolabels	8 of 8	.770
Overall		85 of 85	.899

Table 4.1 presents the Cronbach’s Alpha testing. The reliability scores for all sections exceeded the recommended Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.70. This indicated a degree of acceptable and consistent scoring for these sections of the research.

The study results are divided into the following subsections which are aligned to the study objectives: characteristics of the business, the reasons behind certification, the benefits of certification and the challenges of certification, the improvement of the ecolabel and the organizations opinions of the ecolabel. These subsections will address all the objectives of the study which aimed to examine the nature and extent of ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa.

4.3 Characteristics of the business

This section summarises the business characteristics and focused on the type of business establishment, length of business operation, number of employees and the target market of the business.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of the business ($n=74$)

	Characteristics of the business	Percentage (%)
The type of tourism establishment	Accommodation	56.8
	Beach/Marina	20.3
	Tourist Attraction	10.8
	Tour Operator	6.8
	Tourism programme/project	2.7
	Tour Agency	2.7
	Total	100
Length of business operation	1-5 years	17.6
	6-10 years	29.7
	More than 10 years	52.7
	Total	100
Number of employees employed in the organization	<20 employees	31.1
	21-40 employees	35.1
	41-60 employees	9.5
	61-80 employees	8.1
	81-100 employees	5.4
	More than 100 employees	10.8
	Total	100

- **Type of business establishment**

Table 4.2 presents the type of business establishments that formed part of the study. In order to better examine the extent of ecolabels in South Africa, respondents were required to identify their type of tourism establishment. The purpose of this was to examine the various

sectors of the tourism industry that ecolabels were prevalent in. The data revealed that more than half of the establishments were from the accommodation sector (56.8%). This was followed by coastal establishments which included beaches and marinas (20.3%), tourist attractions (10.8%), tour operators (6.8%), tour agencies (2.7%) and tourism programmes/projects (2.7%).

The literature confirms that the accommodation sector is considered the most representative and important sector of the tourism industry. This is due to the fact that the sector provides basic accommodation for the tourist. The accommodation sector is also considered to have significant negative impacts on the environment (Bohdanowicz 2003:5; Blanco, Rey-Maquieira and Lozano 2009:115; Sucheran 2015:169). Bohdanowicz (2003:5) confirms that various services offered to guests at accommodation establishments are extremely resource demanding in terms of energy use, water consumption and waste generation. For this reason, various tourism ecolabel schemes and environmental management system principles were developed with the intention of being adopted by tourism organizations, especially accommodation establishments (Ayuso 2006:208). Sucheran (2015:69) confirms that the accommodation sector of tourism have been quick reactors to many environmental management schemes. For this reason more ecolabel certified organizations were from the accommodation sector.

- **Length of business operation**

Table 4.2 presents the length of business operation of the selected organizations. Organizations were required to indicate the duration of their business operation. As Table 4.2 indicates, more than half of all businesses have been in operation for more than 10 years (52.7%) while 29.7% of participants indicated being in business for 6-10 years. This equates to more than 80% of the businesses being in operation for more than 6 years. The lowest percentages (17.6%) were seen in businesses operating for 1-5 years.

This data confirms that more organizations that were well established in their business operation adopted ecolabels compared to newer businesses (those operating for less than 6 years). The adoption of ecolabels by those organizations operating for less than 5 years may be less prevalent due to the weaker financial positioning of the business. Font (2002:198) confirms that being certified by a tourism ecolabel is expensive. Also, a lack of experience,

skills and expertise required for the successful adoption of the ecolabel may be lacking in newly established businesses. Also, businesses operating for less than 5 years are possibly still in the market introduction stage and moving into the growth stage. Therefore, committing to ecolabels may not be a priority for such businesses as other aspects of business operation take precedence over environmentally sustainable concerns during the early stages of a business. Financial viability tends to be more important for new businesses rather than environmental commitment.

- **Number of employees employed in the organisation**

Table 4.2 presents the number of employees employed in the organisation. Obtaining the number of employees employed in the organisation (both full time and part-time) was required to further address the nature and extent of the ecolabel. Table 4.2 illustrates that most establishments had between the range of 21 to 40 employees (35.1%) followed by organizations that had less than 20 employees (31.1%). Lower percentages were seen in organizations with between 41 to 60 employees (9.5%), 61 to 80 employees (8.1%), and more than 100 employees (10.8%) and in companies with between 81-100 employees (5.4%).

It was evident that companies with the character profile of less than 40 employees formed a greater portion of the population in the study. Similarly, a larger percentage of hotels surveyed by Sucheran (2015:172) with regard to environmental management in hotels in KwaZulu-Natal, were accommodation establishments that had between 1-50 rooms. This, therefore, revealed that a larger proportion of those accommodation establishments partaking in sustainable practices were smaller establishments. Hamele (2002:1) confirms that in Europe, 95% of half a million accommodation establishments comprise of small companies with less than 50 employees and such companies tend to be more active in adopting sustainable environmental measures. Additionally, Font (2002:8) argues that it is possible that many large multinational hotels may not recognize the need for ecolabels. For example a study conducted in Ghana on environmental management systems revealed that most managers had the wrong idea about environmental management and reduced it to the aesthetics of plants and flowers being visible (Sucheran 2015:170). Also, large hotel chains that aim to offer a premium product may not want to lessen the comfort levels of their guests by sustainable measures. Sustainable measures may include lower water pressure which affects the quality of baths and showers or requiring guests to reuse linens and towels in an

attempt to conserve water. Therefore, it is likely that smaller establishment will be more inclined to the adoption of sustainable measures i.e. ecolabels.

4.4 Extent of environmental and socio-cultural impacts of organizations

The organisations environmental and socio-cultural impacts and extent and level of corporate social responsibility are disclosed in this section. This section addresses objective one of the study which aimed to examine the nature and extent of ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa.

- **Key environmental impacts of the organization**

This section required respondents to list the top five environmental impacts that they perceive their organizations to have. This assisted the researcher in determining the extent of the organizations environmental impacts.

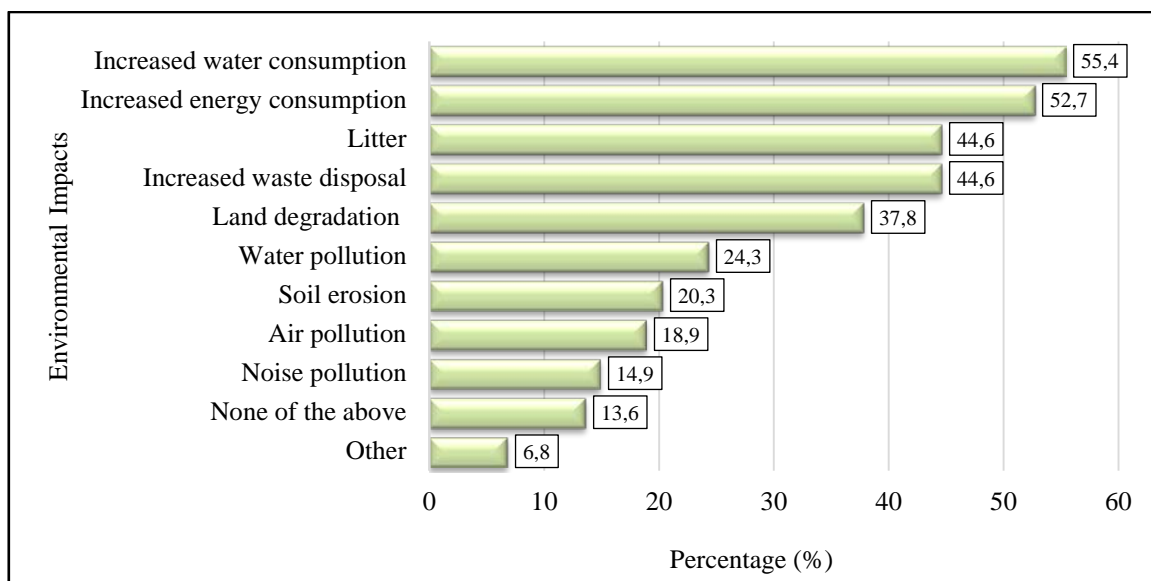


Figure 4.1: Perceived environmental impacts of the organisation (n=74)

Figure 4.1 presents the perceived environmental impacts of the organisation (multiple responses were permitted). The main environmental impacts mentioned were increased water consumption (55.4%), increased energy consumption (52.7%), and increased waste disposal (44.6%), litter (44.6%), and land degradation due to the construction of new developments (37.8%). Water pollution (24.3%), soil erosion (20.3%), air pollution (18.9%), and noise

pollution (14.9%) were impacts that proved less prevalent. Of all respondents, 13.6% indicated that their business practice did not result in any environmental impacts while 6.8% indicated that environmental impacts of their organisation were impacts other than those listed.

Water consumption and increased energy consumption was seen as the key environmental impact and was cited by more than half of the respondents. Similar findings were noted in a study conducted by Sucheran (2015:172) where 91.7% of hotel managers identified increased energy consumption as their organizations main negative environmental impact, followed by increased water consumption (80%) and waste generation (66.1%). Baoying and Yuanqing (2007:123), Zhong *et al.* (2011:2972,2975), Cole (2012:1221,1222) and Gössling *et al.* (2012:1) stated that water is extremely important to the tourism industry and is one of the most demanded natural resources, consequently resulting in severe negative impacts with regard to poor water quality and shortages of water due to tourism. Similar viewpoints are observed by authors such as Katircioglu (2014:181), Kelly and Williams (2007:67) and Zhang and Gao (2016:226) with regard to increased energy consumption as tourism additionally places great demand on energy resources. Litter, increased waste disposal and land degradation were mentioned as an environmental impact by 30% of respondents. It is noted that the nature of the tourism industry in terms of its recreational activities and the development of new infrastructure stimulate these negative environmental impacts (Priskin 2001:639; Neto 2003:217; Geneletti and Dawa 2009:230; Gladstone, Curley and Shokri 2013:375).

Impacts that involved all forms of pollution (water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution), proved less prevalent than direct contamination. This could be due to much environmental legislation implemented in South Africa which may result in fines for the organisation if not abided by (Van der Linde 2006:20-25).

- **Key socio-cultural impacts of the organisation**

This section required respondents to list the top five socio cultural impacts of their organisation. This assisted the researcher in determining the extent of the organizations socio-cultural impacts.

Table 4.3: Perceived socio-cultural impacts of the organisation (n=74)

Socio-cultural impacts	Percentage (%)
Irritation felt by locals due to tourists presence	47.3
Adaption to tourists demand without consideration of the local community	39.2
Cultural clashes of local community and business operations	37.8
Increase in crime due to tourism	35.1
Lack of support initiatives for local development	28.4
Loss of cultural authenticity	23
Locals have limited access to resources	21.6
Income received is not distributed fairly among parties	8.1
Other	1.4
None of the above	16.2

Table 4.3 presents the perceived socio-cultural impacts of the organisation. The main socio-cultural impacts of the organisation were found to be irritation felt by locals due to the presence of tourists (47.3%), adaption to tourist demand without consideration of the local community (39.2%), cultural clashes of the local community and business operations (37.8%) and increased crime due to tourism (35.1%). The unfair distribution of income (8.1%) proved to be a less prevalent socio-cultural impact.

The majority of respondents indicated that they had witnessed irritation that was felt by locals. According to Paul (2012:502), antagonism which is described as irritation felt by the local community towards tourism was the advanced stage in local's attitude regarding tourism. Diedrich and García-Buades (2009:513) believe that if residents view tourism in an unfavourable manner, that influences their attitudes and behaviour towards tourism, it is likely to result in a negative tourist experience. This could result in the tourist not returning to the destination and not recommending it to others due to them feeling unwelcomed or endangered by the resident community. Adaption to tourist demands without consideration of the local community possibly added to the irritation experienced by locals. Additionally, earlier studies (Brunt and Courtney 1999: 494) confirm that tourist destinations and its residents have been greatly inconvenienced in order to cater to the demand and needs of tourists. Cultural clashes of the local community and business operations, was also noted by a substantial number of respondents. Gursoy and Rutherford (2004:6) confirm that tourism can adversely affect traditional family morals, encourage commercialization of culture, and instigate social and cultural problems at the destination as a result of socio-cultural differences, economic security and purchasing gaps among residents and tourist. However,

with the adoption of CSR activities and initiatives that were adopted by many organizations and their compliance with the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Act (South Africa 2014:1-28), it was surprising that these socio-cultural concerns were still prevalent.

Many organizations also indicated increased crime due to tourism as a socio-cultural impact. According to Pelfrey (1998:294), the issue of tourism and crime are inevitably related. A study conducted by Biagi, Brandano and Detotto (2012:13) revealed significant relationships between variables of income and unemployment in association with crime in the tourism industry of Italy. Additionally, the other socio-cultural impacts indicated i.e. cultural clashes of the local community and business operations, lack of support initiatives for local development, and locals having limited access to resources could also be reasons for increased crime. Gursoy, Chi and Dyer (2009:4) believe that if residents perceive the negative impacts of tourism to be greater than the positive impacts they will react unfavourably towards the industry and therefore not advocate for it. Therefore, in terms of unfair treatment of locals, Marcouiller, Kim and Deller (2004:1032) confirm that tourism development is claimed to be less successful than traditional methods of economic development in many tourism destinations due to the high degree of low-wage employment prospects in the industry and because of class differentiation associated with service delivery occupations. Kim, Chen and Jang (2006:926) approve that in South Korea the tourism industry was only developing due to economic growth in other sectors of the country as opposed to tourism development being the reason for economic expansion in the country. These negative socio-cultural impacts could therefore inevitably lead to increased crime rates as locals are not financially stable or satisfied in their employment positions.

- **Extent and level of corporate social responsibility**

Apart from environmental issues it was important for the researcher to determine the level of social responsibility that the organisation engaged in as three out of the four ecolabels being studied had criteria which involved social responsibility practices.

Table 4.4: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices in the organisation (n=74)

Type of CSR activity	Strong participation (%)
Fair wages	94.6
Water management	94.6
Energy management	94.6
Community upliftment through job creation	91.9
Waste management	90.5
Local employment opportunities	87.8
Fair working conditions	82.4
Community upliftment (skills and training)	81.1
Contribution to charities	66.2
Community upliftment (services and facilities)	63.5

Table 4.4 presents the CSR activities of the tourism organizations. Organizations revealed a strong participation in areas of fair wages (94.6%), water management (94.6%), energy management (94.6%), community upliftment through job creation (91.9%) and waste management (90.5%). This was followed by CSR activities aimed at local employment opportunities (87.8%), fair working conditions (82.4%) and community upliftment through skills and training (81.1%). Comparatively lower levels of participation, was evident in areas of contribution to charities (66.2%) and community upliftment through the provision of services and facilities (63.5%). These statistics compliment the perceived environmental impacts of the organisation, which was increased water consumption, increased energy consumption and increased waste disposal. Therefore, organizations have naturally placed more emphasis on eradicating those more severe impacts.

According to Carroll and Shabana (2010:89) there are many arguments that present the benefits of engaging in corporate social responsibility. These include: preserving a healthy environment in which to practice business in the future, eliminating the need for government regulation by the organization supervising itself with self-controlled standards and solving many social problems that non-business entities have proved unsuccessful in. Additionally, many businesses engage in corporate social responsibility as a way of gaining a competitive advantage. Flores-Araoz (2011) reports that, although the South African Companies Act 61 of 1973 does not oblige corporations to participate in CSR developments, South Africa's policy document and the King report on corporate governance highlight the need for organizations to recognize and consider all stakeholders in their business operation.

Furthermore, many corporate social activities in the country are direct outcomes of business compliance with BEE legislation.

4.5 Characteristics of ecolabel certification

Table 4.5 illustrates the characteristics of the ecolabel including the type of ecolabel organizations were certified with and duration of certification and organisation.

Table 4.5: Characteristics of ecolabel certification (n=74)

	Characteristics of Certification	Percentage (%)
Type of ecolabel	Fair Trade in Tourism	59.5
	Blue Flag	20.3
	Heritage Environmental Management Company	12.2
	GreenLine- certified by Heritage	8.1
	Total	100
Duration of certification	1-5 years	78.4
	6-10 years	13.5
	More than 10 years	8.1
	Total	100

- **Certification of organisation**

The highest number of respondents indicated certification with the Fair Trade in Tourism ecolabel (59.5%), followed by the Blue Flag (20.3%), Heritage Environmental Management Company (12.2%) and GreenLine- certified by Heritage (8.1%).

The researcher found this interesting due to the fact that the lowest percentage was indicated for certification with the Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine-certified by Heritage, who have been operating in South Africa since 2001 and the highest indication was seen with organizations certified with Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa who have been operating in South Africa since 2003. The Fair Trade for Tourism ecolabel could possibly attract greater membership as it places strong emphasis on high standards of social responsibility. The ecolabel is also highly committed to empowering previously disadvantaged groups and helping them expand their businesses while contributing positively towards both the natural and socio-cultural environments. The label is also not restricted to a specific type of sector so a variety of tourism businesses could become certified.

Furthermore, the Fair Trade for Tourism ecolabel has criteria that are applicable and feasible to the accommodation sector which form a large portion of the tourism industry and are more inclined to the adoption of environmental management. The ecolabel is also widely known and recognizable and as a result many organizations could have possibly been drawn to the ecolabel in order to gain business exposure. The other ecolabels being studied target specific organizations. For example, the Blue Flag ecolabel targets beaches and marinas and the Heritage Environmental Management Company and GreenLine- certified by Heritage target the accommodation sector of tourism, specifically. This, therefore, limits their penetration and accessibility to the entire tourism sector which ultimately gives ecolabels such as Fair Trade in Tourism a competitive advantage of obtaining greater membership.

- **Duration of certification**

The majority of respondents (78.4%) indicated being certified with the ecolabel for the duration of 1 to 5 years. This was followed by those certified between 6 to 10 years (13.5%). A small proportion of organizations were certified for more than 10 years (8.1%). This could be due to the fact that in recent years consumers and businesses are more aware and concerned of the harm being imposed on the environment by organizations (Smith and Perks 2010:2). Numerous global environmental movements and organizations such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as well as local environmental movements such as WESSA, Earthlife Africa and community based movements like the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) made themselves known in South Africa to promote awareness and participation in environmental conservation (Death 2014:1222,1223). It is evident that greater demand for certified tourism organizations in South Africa was created in the past five years. Many events such as The World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, The Conference on Responsible Tourism held in Cape Town, have created awareness on the issue of sustainability and the need for sustainable practice. Additionally, environmental legislation such as the National Environmental Management Laws Second Amendment Act 2013 (NEMA) (South Africa 2013:1-16) further encouraged sustainable business operation in South Africa in recent years. Graci and Dodds (2008:262) confirm that the world operates by means of implementation of legislation. In support, a high percentage of respondents also indicated that the organisation was certified due to compliance with current environmental regulation (NEMA) (Table 4.6).

4.6 Reasons for ecolabel certification

This section addresses the motivation behind the organizations need for certification by the ecolabel. Table 4.6 presents the reasons for ecolabel certification of tourism businesses that formed part of the study.

Table 4.6: Reasons for ecolabel certification (n=74)

Reasons for certification	Agree (%)
To reduce negative impacts on the natural environment	98.6
To ensure the organizations product/service recognition	90.5
To attract environmentally conscious tourists to the organization	90.5
It forms part of the organizations corporate social responsibility	90.5
To comply with current environmental regulations	87.8
As an incentive for management to maintain and improve environmental performance	87.8
As a marketing and public relations instrument	87.8
To increase customer loyalty	86.5
To gain a competitive advantage over other tourism organizations	83.8
To obtain the economic benefits associated with being certified with an ecolabel	81.1
To attract socio-culturally conscious tourist to the organization	79.7
To follow the current environmental movement or "green" trend	78.4

Table 4.6 presents the reasons for ecolabel certification. With regard to reasons for certification, the majority of respondents (98.6%) agreed that their reason was aimed at reducing negative impacts on the natural environment. This was followed by: ensuring the organizations product/service recognition (90.5%), attracting environmentally conscious tourists to the organisation (90.5%), as a means of forming part of the organizations corporate social responsibility (90.5%), complying with current environmental regulations (87.8%), as an incentive for management to maintain and improve environmental performance (87.8%), as a marketing and public relations instrument (87.8%) and to increase customer loyalty (86.5%).

The literature suggests that tourism certification or ecolabels were developed as an instrument to decrease environmental impacts and achieve a competitive advantage by means of avoiding a decrease in sales and prices, incomes and profits (Mihalič 2000:65; Font and Harris 2004:986). Therefore, in South Africa, tourism certification is considered as a beneficial instrument to promote the country and encourage responsible and sustainable

tourism development (Mahony 2007). For this reason, many businesses have been certified with ecolabels. Most companies indicated that the main reason for obtaining ecolabel certification was to reduce negative impacts on the environment. This is contrary to Font (2002:198) who maintains that the primary reason for the adoption of ecolabels is to gain competitive advantage. However, Figure 4.1 indicated that many organizations perceived their organisation to have major impacts on the environment therefore, aiming to reduce these impacts proved credible.

Graci and Dodds (2008:261) note that a change in expectancy and demands of consumers in terms of environmental concerns was evident over the past two decades. The study conforms to this as a high percentage of respondents indicated that the reason for their certification with the ecolabel was for the intention of attracting environmentally conscious tourists to the organisation. Bergin-Seers and Mair (2009:110) define a green consumer as an individual pursuing guarding themselves and the world through the influence of purchasing choice. Therefore, being certified with an ecolabel assists these consumers in making informed choices. Many organizations also indicated that being certified with an ecolabel was part of their CSR activity. Tamajón and Aulet (2013:39) confirm that this is done with the intention of promoting the quality of the environment, the local community and the business.

It was further observed that respondents also indicated that they were certified for reasons associated with marketing and branding of the business as well as customer loyalty. Graci and Dodds (2008:264) confirm that organizations particularly those analysed by the public, wish to improve and strengthen their positive image in society in order to boost their status as respectable corporate citizens. Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter (2002:163) and Bowman (2011:279) suggest that attainment and marketing of ecolabels would be beneficial to tourism organizations as an international branding tool for developing countries in promoting their services to financially privileged, environmentally aware tourist. A study conducted on four hotels revealed concurring data from all hotels with regards to environmental initiatives promoting cost savings, operational effectiveness and exceptional marketing opportunities (Blanco, Rey-Maqueieira and Lozano 2009b:115). Therefore, statistics from the study indicate that many organizations were also certified to increase customer loyalty, gain competitive advantage and obtain economic benefits. Minoli, Goode and Smith (2015:208) approve that ecolabels can encourage favourable organisational reputation and improve customer loyalty. In support Cucculelli and Goffi (2015:1), Molina-Azorín *et al.* (2009:516) and Monica

(2015:187) confirm that environmental initiatives and performance could be viewed as an instrument which assists organizations in achieving competitive advantage and increasing performance. Additionally, Graci and Dodds (2008:259) confirm that economic savings is a major influence that encouraged the application of environmental initiatives in business operations. In terms of the local community Richards, Hall and Hall (2003:9) confirm that the local community has regularly been excluded from the benefits of the tourism industry and perceives financial growth elsewhere. Therefore, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) suggests that local government should set aside and implement standards and strategies that balance the benefits of tourism organizations, the tourists and the local community.

4.7 Benefits of ecolabel certification

This section addresses the extent to which organizations have experienced benefits of ecolabels. It further addresses objective two of the study which was to ascertain the benefits of ecolabels to tourism businesses in South Africa. Table 4.7 presents the perceived benefits that organizations associated with being certified with the relevant ecolabel.

Table 4.7: Benefits of ecolabel certification (n=74)

Benefits of certification	Agree (%)
Practices associated with the ecolabel reduced negative impacts on the environment	90.5
Encouraged the organisation to operate in an ethically, socially and environmentally friendly manner	85.1
Has improved the company's image	82.4
Attracted environmentally conscious tourists to the organization	78.4
Obtained product/service recognition by consumers	77.0
The organization has gained a competitive advantage	73.0
The ecolabel has improved marketing initiatives	73.0
Has promoted the respect of human rights, culture and the environment	71.6
Has increased customer loyalty	66.2
Has assisted in fair purchasing and operations	59.5
Improved relationship of the organisation with the local community	58.1
Has promoted the equitable distribution of benefits	58.1
The ecolabel has reduced operational costs within the organization	58.1

Table 4.7 presents the benefits of certification. With regard to the benefits associated with ecolabels, the majority of respondents (90.5%) agreed that the ecolabel helped the organization to reduce negative impacts on the environment (90.5%). Other benefits cited by respondents were: the ecolabel encouraged the organization to operate in an ethically, socially and environmentally friendly manner (85.1%), and improved the company's image (82.4%). This was followed by the ecolabel attracted environmentally conscious tourists to the organization (78.4%), the organization obtained product/service recognition by consumers (77.0%), the organization gained competitive advantage (73.0%), the ecolabel improved marketing initiatives (73.0%) and the ecolabel promoted the respect of human rights, culture and the environment (71.6%). Fewer organizations believed that the ecolabel increased customer loyalty (66.2%), assists in fair purchasing and operations (59.5%), improved the relationship of the organisation with the local community (58.1%), promoted the equitable distribution of benefits (58.1%) and reduced operational costs within the organization (58.1%).

The data confirmed that the ecolabel helped reduce negative impacts on the natural environment which supported the primary reason that the organizations opted for ecolabel certification (Table 4.6). It was observed that being certified with the ecolabel also encouraged the organization to continue with sustainability and portrayed a good company image. The role of the ecolabel in attracting environmentally conscious tourists to the organization as well as product and service recognition also revealed favourable responses. Jordan, Wurzel and Zito (2011:3) confirm that the success of any ecolabel relies on the degree of consumer awareness and use of the product or service. Similarly, Han, Hsu and Sheu (2010:325) note that more environmentally conscious consumers are beginning to pursue and purchase eco-friendly products over substitutes and are sometimes willing to pay a higher premium for this. A number of respondents also claimed that a benefit of the ecolabel was assisting the organization in gaining competitive advantage, improving marketing initiatives and increasing customer loyalty. Font (2003:1) confirms that the general aim of certification programs is that the label gains recognition by both consumers and wholesalers and obtains approval in the market to sustain the promotion of establishments that meet criteria. High levels were indicated with regard to respect of human rights, culture and the environment as well as fair purchasing and operations. Additionally, Prud'homme and Raymond (2013:117) maintain that incorporating social and environmental issues and

ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their corporate procedures and policy in association with shareholders forms part of the organization's CSR.

Respondents also mentioned that the benefits of having being certified with the ecolabel is the improved relationship of the organization with the local community and the ecolabel promoted the equitable distribution of benefits and also reduced operational costs within the organization. Ardahaey (2011:231) states that in developing countries the level of earnings is generally low, the distribution of income and revenue is typically uneven, there are large amounts of unemployment and underemployment, business development is under pressure and organizations are frequently owned by foreigners. Statistics revealed in this study are therefore favourable for South Africa as it confirms that these issues are being addressed through the implementation of the ecolabel. In terms of the ecolabel reducing operational costs within organizations Graci and Dodds (2008:259) acknowledge that regardless of the start-up expenses and possible prolonged return on investment that is related with numerous initiatives and schemes, the economic benefits eventually frequently outweigh the costs resulting in economic achievement. It was noted that these cost savings were due to energy and water savings as well as improved waste management in many tourism businesses (Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock 2010:85). However, these issues were not an exclusive consequence of the ecolabel itself but rather required various other operations and activities in addition to the ecolabel to obtain successful outcomes.

4.8 Challenges facing ecolabel certification

This section investigates the extent to which organizations have faced challenges with regard to the ecolabel. Table 4.8 depicts the various challenges that organizations faced with ecolabels.

Table 4.8: Challenges of ecolabel certification (n=74)

Challenges of certification	Agree (%)
Huge financial cost to the organization to maintain certification standards	86.5
The implementation and maintenance of the ecolabel is time consuming	81.1
Certified products/services become more costly to the consumer who cannot afford the additional costs	59.5
There is lack of awareness by the general public with regards to ecolabels	58.1
There is a lack of support from the government with regards to the implementation of ecolabels	54.1
There is a lack of ecolabel promotion	48.6
The economic climate is poor therefore stifling eco-friendly growth and awareness	33.8
There is lack of market demand for the ecolabel and sustainable practice	32.4
There is lack of employee skills and training with regard to eco-friendly business practice	28.4
There are insufficient resources for the maintenance of the ecolabel	25.7
There is lack of economic benefits that are associated with this ecolabel	17.6
There is an absence of a regulatory body from the specific ecolabel	10.8

Table 4.8 presents the challenges of certification. A large proportion of respondents (86.5%) stated that a challenge to ecolabel certification was the huge financial costs needed to maintain certification standards. Other challenges that respondents noted were: the implementation and maintenance of the ecolabel being time consuming (81.1%), the ecolabel certified product/service being costly to the consumer who cannot afford it (59.5%), the lack of awareness by the general public with regard to the ecolabel (58.1%), the lack of support from the government with regards to the implementation of the ecolabel (54.1%) and the lack of ecolabel promotion (48.6%). Less agreement was noted in areas regarding the economic climate being poor therefore stifling eco-friendly growth and awareness (33.8%), the lack of market demand for the ecolabel and sustainable practice (32.4%), the lack of employee skills and training with regard to eco-friendly business practice (28.4%), insufficient resources for the maintenance of the ecolabel (25.7%), the lack of economic benefits associated with the ecolabel (17.6%) and an absence of a regulatory body from the specific ecolabel (10.8).

In general, many companies are reluctant to endure any more financial strain than necessary. Costs associated with adhering to criteria in all the labels being studied appear financially straining. Furthermore, separate fees are required for accreditation, auditing and certification.

For example, the Fair Trade ecolabel fees range between R1 000 to R33 000 and the GreenLine- certified by Heritage fees between R2 750 to R14 000 for certification. Also, re-evaluation occurring annually, which requires an additional fee for renewal of membership poses further costs. Similarly, with the economic climate being weak, tourists are not keen on paying a price premium for certified products or services. Buckley (2001:58) confirms that a gap is apparent due to the fact that tourist's intentions to support green initiatives are not necessarily conveyed into their purchasing choices. This, therefore, contributes to the economic benefits associated with the ecolabel lacking in businesses.

Mahony (2007:18) confirms that implementation of ecolabels is both expensive and time consuming as statistics in this study have revealed. Time needed to make the alterations and amendments to business practice could be an inconvenience as it takes time away from daily business operations which may lead to decreased productivity. Furthermore, organizations may employ staff solely for this purpose, which adds to the costs of the business. Mahony (2008:67) maintains that the accreditation process for Fair Trade is detailed and time consuming, especially, for smaller organizations that lack expertise and access to necessary information.

A substantial amount of respondents also indicated that a significant challenge was the lack of awareness of the general public with regard to the ecolabel. This could be due to the indicated lack of ecolabel promotion which therefore results in lack of market demand for ecolabels and sustainable practice (also indicated by a substantial amount of respondents). Buckley (2001:84) supports that the media should be involved in publishing on the ecolabel which creates public awareness and further promotes the credibility of the label. However, Piper and Yeo (2011:284) confirm that promotion requires additional expenses. The study reveals concerns of additional costs associated with the ecolabel, and so promotional activities could lack the finances required due to companies being reluctant to endure added expenses. Buckley (2001:264) approves that tourism ecolabels have poor market publicity compared to other ecolabels as the result of a significantly lower marketing financial plan.

Organizations also specified that the lack of government support was a challenge experienced. The lack of government support could discourage organizations from participating in ecolabels and does not assist in the promotion of ecolabels in the tourism sector. Rivera (2002:336) states that governments have an extensive variety of tools and

instruments that can be employed to accomplish the aims of environmental strategy. However, there is a lack of such implementations in South Africa.

Most respondents indicated that there was a lack of economic benefits associated with the ecolabel and an absence of a regulatory body. Regulatory bodies assist in the correct implementation of ecolabel criteria. If there is an absence of this body to guide businesses, economic benefits of ecolabel certification are less likely. Similarly, fewer respondents agreed with a lack of skills and expertise with regard to monitoring and successfully implementing the ecolabel criteria and a lack of resources. It was observed that there is adequate support provided by the certification body and staff within the organization with regards to the ecolabel and there was some evidence of good economic returns that was associated with being certified which could promote the label. These statistics revealed that the internal operation of the ecolabels under study proved successful and the issues and challenges connected with these ecolabels are to be found within the organizations that are certified rather than within the ecolabel body.

4.9 Improvement of the ecolabel

This section looks at factors that respondents believe can improve the adoption of the ecolabel. It further addresses objective four of the study which aims to identify factors that can improve ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa.

Table 4.9: Improvement of ecolabel ($n=74$)

Improvement suggestion	Agree (%)
Sharing of best practices	94.6
Increasing public awareness of the ecolabel	91.9
Reducing costs of ecolabels	89.2
Promoting sustainable business practices	87.8
Providing subsidies for implementation of ecolabels	87.8
Providing more training and skills on ecolabel criteria	86.5
Additional financial resources are required	83.8
Improved maintenance measures from the ecolabel	73.0
Additional human resources are required	64.9
Reducing the number of criteria in the ecolabel	56.8

Table 4.9 presents the improvement suggestions for ecolabels. The majority of the respondents (94.6%) suggested the sharing of best practices as a means to improve the ecolabel. Other ways to improve the ecolabel, as cited by the respondents were: increasing public awareness of the ecolabel (91.9%), reducing costs of ecolabel (89.2%), providing subsidies for the implementation of ecolabels (87.8%), promoting sustainable business practices (87.8%), providing more training and skills on ecolabel criteria (86.5%) and additional financial resources required (83.8%). This was followed by improving maintenance measures from the ecolabel (73.0%). The lowest level of agreement was with regard to additional human resources required for implementing and maintaining the ecolabel (64.9%) and reducing the number of criteria required by the ecolabel (56.8%).

Fewer respondents stated that additional human resource will improve the ecolabel. This may be due to the fact that employing new employees will require additional costs to the business. Also, the researcher believed that reducing the number of criteria of the ecolabel will reduce the company's competitive advantage as it will make it easier for other organizations to be certified. It will also reduce the number of positive impacts the ecolabel has on the natural and socio-cultural environments. The ecolabels being studied have a number of criteria in place that address the natural and socio-economic environments. These contribute to the quality of the label and so reducing criteria will lead to reduced quality and thoroughness of the ecolabel. Reducing the criteria in the ecolabel will not allow for businesses to maximise on the benefits associated with being certified. However, too many criteria may also discourage organizations from adopting ecolabels as fulfilling all criteria may be tedious, time consuming and costly.

4.10 Organization opinions on ecolabels

These question required respondents to indicate their preference and their opinion (open ended question). Open ended questions were grouped into themes. This question therefore addressed objective four of the study which aimed to identify factors that can improve certification in the tourism sectors of South Africa.

Table 4.10 Opinions on the ecolabel (n=74)

	Opinions on voluntary vs. mandatory labels	Percentage (%)
Should ecolabels be Mandatory or Voluntary?	Mandatory	27
	Voluntary	73
	Total	100
Reasons: Mandatory	Being certified is the organizations environmental obligation	40
	Allows for standardization of the industry and distribution of benefits	40
	Mandatory labels will be a way of monitoring and controlling environmental and social benefits	10
	It is the only option for environmental protection to enforce regulation	10
	Total	100
Reasons: Voluntary	Organizations do not want to be forced into certification	29.6
	There are high costs associated with certification	29.6
	Volunteering portrays willingness and a high degree of environmental consciousness.	24.1
	Organizations believe that mandatory labels could lead to corruption and “greenwashing”	5.6
	No opinion	11.1
	Total	100

Table 4.10 presents the organizations opinions on ecolabels. When asked whether ecolabels should be mandatory or voluntary, 73% of respondents indicated that ecolabels should remain voluntary while 27% felt it should be a mandatory requirement of any business.

Of the total number of respondents who indicated that they would prefer ecolabels to be mandatory, 40% indicated that this was due to the fact that it was the organizations environmental duty and 40% also indicated that it would standardize the industry and evenly distribute the benefits of being certified to all organizations. Ten percent of respondents indicated that ecolabels should be mandatory because it will be a way of controlling and monitoring environmental and social benefits and 10% of the respondents additionally indicated that the only option left for environmental protection was to enforce regulation.

Of the total number of respondents who indicated that they would prefer ecolabels to be mandatory, 29.6% indicated that organizations did not want to be forced into being certified, 29.6% also indicated that there were high costs associated with being certified and the organization lacked resources and 29.6% felt that a label should not be imposed on the organization. Twenty-four percent of respondents believed that organizations tend to have a better attitude towards maintaining and implementing the ecolabel if they volunteer for it and 5.6% of respondents believed that if ecolabels were mandatory it could lead to corruption and “greenwashing”. Eleven percent of respondents indicated that they would prefer ecolabels remaining voluntary but failed to give a reason for their response.

More than half of the respondents indicated that they would prefer the voluntary nature of ecolabels in South Africa to remain. This could also be due to the high level of pressure and demand being imposed on organizations by many organizational legislation and laws and so added pressure will not be received well. Furthermore, the poor economic climate of South Africa makes the voluntary nature of ecolabels more feasible. With ecolabel certification being voluntary it affords the consumer freedom of choice. The tourist is allowed to choose between the labelled product/service and the product/service that do not have ecolabels according to their spending capacity. If ecolabels were to be mandatory, tourists may not be able to afford the high costs which will ultimately result in the decline of the tourism sector in South Africa.

4.11 Cross-tabulation

The following statistics revealed significant results between the variables. That is, one variable had a significant impact on the other. The patterns from these statistics are described and analysed.

Table 4.11: Duration of business operation by type of ecolabel (n=74)

Ecolabels	Duration of business operation (%)			
	1-5 years	6-10 years	< 10years	Total
Blue Flag	0.0	6.7	93.3	100
Fair Trade in Tourism	22.7	29.5	47.7	100
Heritage Environmental Management Company	33.3	33.3	33.3	100
GreenLine- certified by Heritage	0.0	83.3	16.7	100
Total	17.6	29.7	53.7	100

Table 4.11 presents the duration of business operation by type of ecolabel. The majority of those certified with the Blue Flag were in operation for more than 10 years (93.3%). These statistics refer to the municipality of which the beach belongs to. Similarly, the largest proportion of Fair Trade in Tourism businesses were certified for more than 10 years (47.7%) and the largest proportion of GreenLine- certified by Heritage ecolabel respondents, were in operation for between 6 to 10 years (83.3%). These statistics indicated that being certified by an ecolabel appealed more to those organizations that were already established and in operation for more than 5 years throughout 3 of the 4 ecolabels of concern for this study. This could be a result of the high certification fees that are required to obtain the ecolabel which therefore require businesses to be in a stable financial situation.

Table 4.12: Benefits of ecolabels by type of ecolabel

Benefits	Blue Flag (%)	Fair Trade in Tourism (%)	Heritage Environmental Management Company (%)	GreenLine - certified by Heritage (%)
Product/service recognition	8.6	7.5	6.5	7.3
Reduced negative impacts on environment	8.6	8.9	10.4	9.1
Attracted environmentally conscious tourist to the organization	8.6	7.7	5.2	9.1
Gained competitive advantage	8	7.1	7.8	5.5
Improved relationship of organization with local community	6.9	5.7	5.2	3.6
Improved marketing initiatives	7.5	7.3	6.5	7.3
Assisted in fair purchasing and operation	5.7	5.9	6.5	5.5
Promoted equitable distribution of benefits	5.2	6.2	5.2	5.5
Promoted respect of human rights, culture and the environment	6.3	7.5	6.5	7.3
Encouraged the organization to operate in an ethically, socially and environmentally friendly manner	7.5	8.7	9.1	9.1
Improved company image	8	8.2	9.1	7.3
Reduced operational costs	4.6	5.9	6.5	7.3
Increased customer loyalty	7.5	5.9	6.5	9.1

Table 4.12 presents the benefits of ecolabels by the type of ecolabel. **The Blue flag ecolabel scored highest in the following areas:**

- Product/service recognition (8.6%): this could be due the fact that Blue Flag is required by criteria to make visible specific information regarding the ecolabel. This therefore increases awareness of the ecolabel.
- Attracting environmentally conscious tourist (8.6%): with the visibility of ecolabel criteria and increased awareness more tourists see the advantages of visiting a beach with a Blue Flag status. Tourists (more so international tourists) are choosing a beach to visit depending on whether or not it is certified and will continue to choose a Blue Flag accredited beach.
- Gained competitive advantage (8%): tourists are more attracted to destination with Blue flag status. Therefore the Blue Flag of a beach creates many economic

opportunities for businesses in coastal towns. This benefits both the specific municipality and the countries overall economic intake.

- Improved relationship with local community (6.9%): a booming economic sector (caused by the attraction of the ecolabel) caused positive attitudes from the local community as the economic benefits of tourism were experienced. This enhances the total tourist experience in the destination.
- Improved marketing initiatives (7.5%): hotels and other tourism services within the coastal area are promoted by travel agents and tour operators as they make accessibility to the Blue flag beach more convenient. This therefore gives the coastal region a competitive advantage.

Fair Trade in Tourism had the highest scores in terms of:

- Promoting equitable distribution of benefits (6.2%): one of the labels key criteria involves the transparency of sharing of profits, benefits and losses. Therefore all business operations and purchasing are required to be conducted in an ethical manner.
- Promotion of respect for human rights, culture and its environment (7.5%): The overall theme of this ecolabel is fairness and equality regarding all tourism environments. This is specifically addressed in this ecolabels criterion.

The Heritage Environmental Management Company scored the highest in terms of:

- The ecolabel reducing negative impacts on the environment (10.4%): one of the specific criteria of this ecolabel is assessing the impact the organization has on its surrounding environment both natural and social. The ecolabel is also awarded in classes (silver, gold and platinum) and so this could create incentive for organizations to better their efforts.
- Assisting in fair purchasing and operations (6.5%): one of the key environmental indicators for the ecolabel is purchasing and procurement. Businesses have to address this specific issue as part of their certification.
- Encouraging the organization to operate in a more sustainable manner (9.1%): with areas of criteria addressing both the natural and social communities, it is likely that the business and its employees are made aware of the negative impacts of irresponsible business practices on these environments.
- Improved company image (9.1%): close interaction with the community (community involvement), as part of the criteria ensures that the organization is viewed in a

favourable manner. This is in terms of their community upliftment and positive contribution to society.

GreenLine-certified by Heritage showed the highest indication in terms of:

- The ecolabel encourages businesses to be more sustainable (9.1%): this ecolabel consists of specifically addressing sustainable operations and awareness. This encourages the organization to partake in sustainable business practice as this ecolabel is also certified in classes (silver, gold, platinum).
- Reduced operation cost (7.3%): the ecolabel is obliged by criteria to implement the appropriate management in terms of water, energy and waste. Reports of the organizations water, energy and waste consumption are required by the ecolabel. The successful management of these resources lead to cost savings.
- Increased customer loyalty (9.1%): organizations certified with the ecolabel are required by criteria to provide guests with environmental information encouraging them to reduce their impact on the natural environment.

Table 4.13: Challenges of ecolabels by type of ecolabel (n=74)

Challenges	Blue Flag (%)	Fair Trade in Tourism (%)	Heritage Environmental Management Company (%)	GreenLine-certified by Heritage (%)
Large financial costs	18.6	14.8	14.9	14.7
Time consuming	18.6	12.9	17	14.7
Ecolabel products are costly to the consumer	10	10.3	12.8	11.8
Lack of government support	7.1	10.3	10.6	8.8
Absence of regulatory body from ecolabel	1.4	2.3	2.1	0.0
Lack of skills and expertise	2.9	4.2	4.3	5.9
Lack of market demand	4.3	5.7	6.4	8.8
Lack of economic benefits	2.9	2.7	4.3	5.9
Insufficient resources for maintenance of ecolabel	4.3	4.6	4.3	5.9
Poor economic climate stifling growth an awareness of ecolabel	5.7	6.8	2.9	4.3
Lack of employee skills and training	2.9	5.7	4.3	5.9
Lack of ecolabel promotion	10	9.1	6.4	5.9
Lack of ecolabel awareness from public	11.4	10.6	8.5	8.8

Table 4.13 presents the challenges of ecolabels by type of ecolabel. **The highest indication of challenges for the Blue Flag ecolabel included:**

- The large financial cost required (18.6%) as well the fact that the label is time consuming to implement (18.6%). The money and time required for the appropriate display of signage, water quality testing, and maintenance of facilities (provision of bins, maintenance of toilets and sewage systems etc.) and safety and other services (emergency service) prove challenging for municipalities that have Blue Flag beaches. Also, the ecolabel still observes a lack of Blue Flag promotion (10%) and awareness (11.4%) regardless of the fact that these issues are addressed in the labels criteria.

The highest indication of challenges for the Fair Trade ecolabel included:

- The challenge of a poor economic climate stifling growth and awareness of the ecolabel (6.8%). Large certification costs required for this ecolabel means that organizations are inclined to charge a premium price. This premium price may cause a lack of demand for the tourism business.

The highest indication of challenges for the Heritage Environmental Management Company included:

- High costs of ecolabel products to the consumer (12.8%) and lack of governmental support (10.6%). Certification costs are revealed to be a major challenge for most organizations as well as lack of government support.

The highest indication of challenges for the GreenLine- certified by Heritage included:

- Lack of skills, expertise and training (5.9%), market demand (8.8%), economic benefits (5.9%) and insufficient resources for maintenance of the ecolabel (5.9%). Even though this ecolabel had indicated that operational costs were reduced (Table 4.12), organizations don't experience the economic benefits of ecolabels, as savings do not make up for costs. The ecolabel criterion is also very extensive and so organizations require the appropriate skills and training as this was also indicated as a challenge by respondents of this ecolabel (5.9%). Government support will also assist with financial strains in terms of public awareness.

Table 4.14: Improvement of ecolabel by type of ecolabel (n=74)

Improvement suggestions	Blue Flag (%)	Fair Trade in Tourism (%)	Heritage Environmental Management Company (%)	GreenLine-certified by Heritage (%)
Provide subsidies for implementation of ecolabel	12.8	13.7	11.5	11.1
Cost reduction	13.8	12.7	14.8	13.9
More skills and training on ecolabel criteria	13.8	12.7	14.8	16.7
Reducing the number of criteria	8.3	8.2	9.8	11.1
Increasing public awareness	13.8	13.7	13.1	13.9
Sharing of best practice	13.8	14.4	13.1	13.9
Improved maintenance measures	11	11	11.5	8.3

Table 4.14 presents improvement of ecolabel by type of ecolabel. The provision of subsidies, sharing of best practice was supported the most by Fair Trade in Tourism. Cost reduction and improved maintenance measures was supported most by the Heritage Environmental Management Company. More skills and training, reducing the amount of criteria and increasing public awareness was supported most by GreenLine- Certified by Heritage.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented and interpreted the results of the study using SPSS version 23.0. Descriptive data was presented in the form of graphs and tables and cross-tabulations were presented. Reliability testing was also presented in this chapter. This chapter assisted the researcher draw the appropriate conclusions and recommendations. The outcome of the data fulfilled this studies aim and objectives accordingly. The next chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations based on the empirical statistics.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to identify the environmental benefits and challenges of ecolabels within the tourism sector of South Africa. This was achieved through surveying various tourism establishments that were certified with Blue Flag, Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa, the Heritage Environmental Company and GreenLine (certified by Heritage) ecolabels. This chapter will present the conclusions derived from the analysis of the data, and will provide recommendations in relation to the study objectives. The structure of this chapter is presented according to the study's four key objectives, which were:

- To examine the nature and extent of ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa;
- To ascertain the benefits of ecolabels to tourism businesses in South Africa;
- To determine the challenges facing certified tourism business in South Africa; and
- To identify factors that can improve ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa.

5.2 Conclusion and recommendations from empirical data

The overall results of the study indicated that tourism businesses in South Africa have experienced many environmental, marketing and social benefits from being certified with an ecolabel. However, a number of tourism organizations did indicate that they experienced challenges with the ecolabel especially in terms of the high costs associated with the ecolabel as well as from the public in terms of recognition and support of the ecolabel. The majority of organizations believed that ecolabels should remain voluntary. Tourism organizations also stated that ecolabels were worth the hassle; however, organizations did agree that their current ecolabel required improvement in certain aspects.

5.2.1 Objective one: the extent of tourism ecolabels in South Africa

The majority of businesses included in the study were accommodation establishments and most of these businesses were in operation for more than 10 years. Most of the organizations had between 21-40 employees. The study, therefore, observes that tourism ecolabels within South Africa are not evenly distributed in terms of type of establishment or size of organizations within the sector. It is recommended that certifying bodies need to implement better measures of encouraging the adoption of ecolabels within the sector by means of highlighting the importance of certification and emphasising the natural, socio-cultural and economic benefits of ecolabels. These measures should also be frequently marketed equally across all sectors of the industry as part of marketing and branding, consequently, encouraging participation in the schemes.

In terms of environmental impacts, organizations perceived their greatest environmental impact to be increased water consumption, increased energy consumption, litter, increased waste disposal and land degradation due to construction of new developments. It is recommended that all ecolabels entail a monthly report on consumption levels of water and energy. This will help deduce if ecolabels are contributing towards reduced resource consumption. Also, ecolabel criteria should emphasize such impacts and the use of energy saving lights and low pressure taps should be mandatory for all ecolabel certified businesses. Waste disposal should also be appropriately addressed by constant monitoring and assessments and construction of any new development should adhere to environmental standards.

Organizations believe their main socio-cultural impacts to be irritation imposed on locals due to the presence of tourists, adapting to tourist demand without considering the local community, cultural clashes of the local community and business operations, an increase in crime due to tourism and the lack of support initiatives for local development. It is recommended that organizations acknowledge the importance of the social community on business operations. The social community should be considered in all business decisions and in ecolabel criteria. The upliftment and empowerment of the community benefits both the socio-cultural and economic environments. Employment opportunities should be afforded to the community as it will distribute benefits and reduce the challenges imposed on the locals.

Cultural authenticity of locals should also be promoted and encouraged by marketing departments of organizations so as to avoid cultural clashes.

All organizations indicated a high participation in CSR practices. The majority of the organizations surveyed were certified with Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa and most of the organizations indicated being certified for between 1 to 5 years. Reasons for organizations engaging in ecolabel certification include reducing the negative impacts on the natural environment, marketing and branding of the organisation, as a way of complying with current environmental regulations, reducing the negative socio-cultural impacts as well as obtaining the economic benefits that are associated with being certified.

5.2.2 Objective two: the benefits of tourism ecolabels in South Africa

Organizations believe that there are many benefits associated with the implementation of ecolabels. The majority of respondents indicated that the ecolabel reduces negative impacts to the environment, encourages the organisation to operate in an ethically, socially and environmentally friendly manner and improves the company image. The benefits cover the environmental, socio-cultural and economic environments of tourism in some way. These benefits should be experienced by all businesses within the tourism sector. Organisational reports providing statistics of these benefits should be made public as it will encourage more organizations to be certified. Organizations should be afforded the opportunity to attend workshops that assist in the successful implementation of the ecolabel. These workshops should be part of the certification process so that issues related to the ecolabel within the organization are avoided. If the proper implementation of the ecolabel is conducted it ensures that all certified organizations maximise the benefits of being certified. Also, more awareness on the benefits of ecolabels needs to be created to encourage more businesses to participate in ecolabel certification.

5.2.3 Objective three: the challenges of tourism ecolabels in South Africa

The greatest challenges faced by South African tourism organizations in terms of the ecolabel is the large amount of financial costs needed to maintain certification standards and the time required to implement and maintain the ecolabel. Organizations also felt, to an extent, that consumers cannot afford the high premium of the product/service associated with the

ecolabel and lacked a general awareness concerning ecolabels. Lack of government support was also noted by many organizations.

To avoid these issues it is recommended that organizations give serious attention to, and include sustainable measures and practices into its yearly budget so as to eradicate the strain of added financial costs of implementing and maintaining an ecolabel. It is recommended that government and municipalities should create an incentive for more organizations to be certified. This can be done by providing subsidies to those certified organizations which will decrease the financial costs to the organization and promote its membership. The inconvenience of the time taken away from daily business operations will also be less of a problem as finances to the organisation will be less straining and so time away from the business operation would be feasible. Also, government funded training with regard to sustainable tourism practices and measures that can be implemented should be available to all tourism businesses. Government also needs to play a role in creating added public awareness in terms of certified establishments. Greater marketing measures need to be employed and greater use of technological advancements is an appropriate means of reaching a wider public. Having government involvement offers a credible source of information and so consumers are more inclined to take heed to the issue. This will also encourage consumers in being more willing to pay a higher premium for certified products/services if they are aware of the benefits of their purchase.

5.2.4 Objective four: improvement of South African ecolabels

Most companies agree that improvement is required with regard to the ecolabel. Organizations believe that improvement is needed with regard to public awareness, cost reduction, government support and more skills and training. Some organizations feel that additional human resources are required to implement and maintain the ecolabel and reducing the number of criteria in the ecolabel would also assist the establishment.

It is recommended that if the government and organizations work together to provide better skills and training to employees and locals, create increased awareness regarding sustainable issues and better promote ecolabels, the challenges experienced by the tourism sector of South Africa with regards to ecolabels will be significantly reduced. It will also not require organizations to employ specific persons who are knowledgeable and trained with regards to

sustainable implementation (as existing employees would obtain training), resulting in cost savings for the establishment. With the provision of skills and training the organization and its employees will also appreciate the benefits and importance of a thorough and detailed criterion and, therefore, be willing and eager to abide by all criteria.

5.3 Conclusion and recommendations from cross-tabulations

All ecolabels reveal a majority of members certified for more than 10 years. This indicates a level of satisfaction and compliance with the ecolabel as membership is continually renewed. Even though most organizations are certified for more than 10-years, statistics reveal that a large amount of new membership was experienced by all the ecolabels studied within the last 5 years regardless of the duration of business operation. It is recommended that ecolabels should be promoted to obtain greater membership.

Most of the benefits of tourism are experienced by the Blue Flag ecolabel and most challenges experienced by GreenLine- certified by Heritage. Also, there is greater support for improvement methods from the Heritage Environmental Management Company. It is recommended that the appropriate certification schemes take heed of the results of this study to implement improved strategies and continue with good operations in areas that are successful. This will ensure positive outcomes of ecolabel adoption and encourage new membership.

5.5 Implications for future research

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that future research in relation to tourism ecolabels in South Africa focus on the following:

- Challenges experienced by the certification body itself in terms of compliance with criteria issues, revoking of ecolabels, repeat membership etc. of tourism organizations in South Africa.
- Economic savings from implementation of ecolabels in terms of resource consumption assessments of ecolabel certified businesses in South Africa.
- The impacts of ecolabels on consumer buying behaviour in terms of consumer willingness to spend a high premium for ecolabel products in the tourism sector of South Africa.

5.6 Concluding remarks

This study identified the benefits and challenges of ecolabels in the tourism sector of South Africa. It also identified strategies to improve the implementation and continued adoption of ecolabels in the country. It is anticipated that this study will contribute to the South African literature on the tourism industry where there is a current dearth of literature with regards to ecolabels and tourism organizations. Additionally, it is hoped that this study promotes more research of this nature in the country as further exploration will benefit numerous stakeholders i.e. the government, tourism establishments, certification bodies and tourism academics. In conclusion, ecolabel certified tourism businesses in South Africa experience the benefits and the challenges of ecolabels. Organizations require increased public awareness of ecolabels, reduced costs of ecolabels, government support and more skills and training in order to improve the challenges experienced with ecolabel certification.

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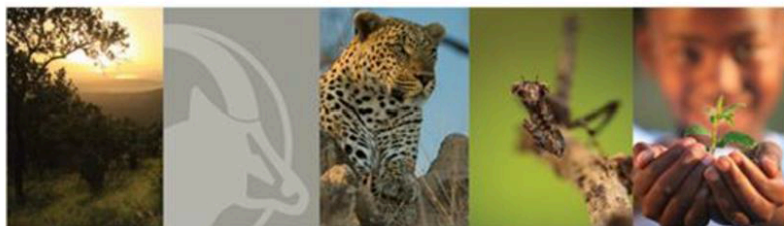
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APPENDIX 1



CAPE TOWN OFFICE

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Email admin@wessa.co.za www.wessa.org.za

49 Minthill Place, Hillgrove,
Newlands West,
Durban 4037



Environmental Impacts of Eco-labels in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector of KwaZulu-Natal.

Dear Miss Arulappan

The Wildlife Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) would welcome your research on the Blue Flag South Africa programme. We would please ask that you note the following points:

- Any WESSA branding used in the publication of the research to please be cleared by WESSA, through the Blue Flag Programme Leader.
- Recognition and acknowledgment of WESSA as the managing body/agent for Blue Flag South Africa in the research paper.

Please feel free to contact me for any assistance with this work. We look forward to using the results of your research constructively.

Sincerely,



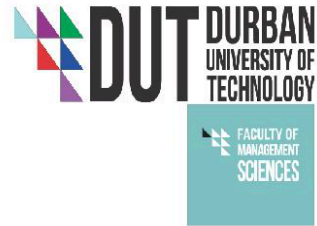
Vince Shacks
Blue Flag South Africa – Programme Leader

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA Reg No. 1933/004658/08 (Non-Profit Company)
Registration Number in Terms of the Non-Profit Organisations Act 1997: 000-716/NPO Tax Exemption Number: 18/11/13/1903

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PATRONS: Kevin Duncan, Simon Gear, Jason Hartman, Prof Brian Huntley, Michael Judin, Keith Kirsten, Bream Malherbe, Sango Ntsaluba, Andile Sangqu



APPENDIX 2

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a student from the Durban University of Technology and I am currently completing a Master's Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management. My thesis is based on the tourism eco-labels in the country and the environmental impacts associated with it.

I am therefore requesting permission to embark on the study of your eco-label. I ensure that data collected will only be used for research purposes.

Your co-operation will be highly beneficial to the country as well as your organization. Should you require proof of studies or wish to discuss matters further please feel free to contact me or my research supervisor.

Kind Regards

Miss Lucinda Arulappan

Cell: 072 074 6398

Research supervisor: Dr
Reshma. Sucheran
Senior Lecturer

PhD (Geography and
Environmental Science)

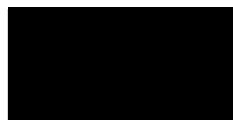
Tell: 031 373 5508

Cell: 083 658 7426

I Jennifer Seif grant permission that student: Lucinda Arulappan, conduct research on the (*name of eco-label*) Fair Trade Tourism eco-label.

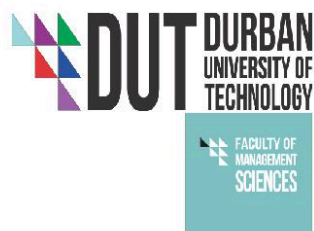
Date: 27 May 2015

Signature:



Position Held: Executive Director

APPENDIX 3



Dear Sir/Madam

I am a student from the Durban University of Technology and I am currently completing a Master's Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management. My thesis is based on the tourism eco-labels in the country and the environmental impacts associated with it.

I am therefore requesting permission to embark on the study of your eco-label. I ensure that data collected will only be used for research purposes.

Your co-operation will be highly beneficial to the country as well as your organization. Should you require proof of studies or wish to discuss matters further please feel free to contact me or my research supervisor.

Kind Regards

Miss Lucinda Arulappan

Cell: 072 074 6398

Research supervisor: Dr
Reshma. Sucheran
Senior Lecturer

PhD (Geography and
Environmental Science)

Tell: 031 373 5508

Cell: 083 658 7426

I G M McManus grant permission that student: Lucinda Arulappan, conduct research on the (*name of eco-label*) Heritage Environmental Programme eco-label.

Date: 16 March 2015

Signature:

Position Held: Managing Director

APPENDIX 4

Questionnaire- TOURISM ECOLABELS

My name is Lucinda Arulappan, currently researching for my Masters Dissertation in Tourism Hospitality Management. This questionnaire forms a portion of a study into the Environmental Impacts of Eco-labels in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector. The sample of the study will comprise of management of companies who are certified with the specific tourism and hospitality eco-labels. Your co-operation and participation in the completion of this short questionnaire will be highly appreciated. All personnel information is confidential and in no way made public.

*Please make sure all questions are answered truthfully to the best of your knowledge

*Simply click on the appropriate answer box or otherwise stated

*Upon completion click the send button which will submit your response to the researcher

* Required

1. FEATURES OF THE BUSINESS *

1.1 What type of Tourism/Hospitality establishment is your organisation?

- Educational Centre
- Charter Service
- Cruise Service
- Tour Operator
- Travel Agent
- Tourism programme/project
- Hotel
- Guesthouse
- Bed & Breakfast
- Self-catering establishment
- Lodge
- Camp site
- Game Reserve
- Nature Reserve
- Backpackers
- Park
- Beach
- Marina
- Restaurant

- Entertainment Sector
- Other:

*

1.2 How long has your business been in operation?

*

1.3 What is the type of ownership of your business?

- Sole Proprietor
- Private Company – (PTY) Ltd
- Personal Liability Company – Inc.
- Public Company (Ltd.)
- State Owned Company – SOC
- Non-profit organisation
- Other:

*

1.4 How many staff members are employed by this specific branch/franchise of your company?

*

1.5 How many of the staff members are Male?

*

1.6 How many of the staff members are Female?

*

1.7 How many of the staff members are Black in race?

*

1.8 How many of the staff members are Coloured in race?

*

1.9 How many of the staff members are Indian in race?

*

1.10 How many of the staff members are White in race?

*

1.11 How many of the staff members are from the local community?

*

1.12 How many of the staff members are from outside the local community?

*

1.13 How many international staff members are employed at this organisation?

*

1.14 What is the target market of this business?

- Leisure
- Business
- Leisure and Business

*

1.15 What are the five key environmental impacts of your organisation? (List the top five major impacts-multiple responses are permitted)

- Water pollution
- Air pollution
- Noise pollution
- Increased water consumption

- Increased energy consumption
- Increased waste disposal
- Litter
- Soil erosion
- Trampling of vegetation
- Deforestation
- Land degradation (construction of new developments)
- Other:

*

1.16 What are the five key socio- cultural impacts of your organisation? (List the top five major impacts-multiple responses are permitted)

- Commercialization of culture
- Loss of cultural authenticity
- Adaption to tourist demands without consideration of the local community
- Cultural clashes of the local community and business operations
- Irritation felt by locals due to tourists presence
- Job level friction
- Little respect is shown to the host community
- Locals have limited access to resources
- Increase in crime due to tourism
- Negative impacts on the children of the community e.g. child labour
- Prostitution and sex tourism
- Changes in value systems and behaviour of locals
- Changes in community structure e.g. family relationships; collective traditional lifestyle; ceremonies and morality
- Lack of support initiatives for local development
- Tourists are not given the opportunity to purchase local products and services
- Income received is not distributed fairly among parties involved
- Other:

1.17 To what extent does this organisation engage in the following Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities *

1.17.1 Water Management

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.2 Waste Management

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.3 Energy Management

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.4 Contribution to Charities

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.5 Fair Wages

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.6 Fair Working Conditions

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.7 Community upliftment through job creation

1 2 3 4 5

 Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.8 Community empowerment through skills training and education

1 2 3 4 5

 Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.9 Community upliftment through the provision of services and facilities

1 2 3 4 5

 Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.10 Local employment opportunities

1 2 3 4 5

 Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

*

1.17.11 Cultural preservation

1 2 3 4 5

 Poor Participation ● ● ● ● ● Strong Participation

OTHER CSR Activities

*

1.18 Is this organisation certified with an eco-label?

- Yes
- No

*

1.19 Which of the following eco-labels is your organisation certified with?

- FAIR TRADE IN TOURISM
- BLUE FLAG
- HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY
- GREENLINE CERTIFIED BY HERITAGE
- Other:

*

1.20 How long has your organisation been certified with the above eco-label?

*

1.21 Your participation in this scheme was:

- MANDATORY
- VOLUNTARY

*

1.22 In your opinion do you believe that eco-labels should it be:

- MANDATORY
- VOLUNTARY

*

1.23 Explain your answer

2. REASONS BEHIND CERTIFICATION *

2.1 What was the motivation behind the organisations call for certification by the eco-label?
(Please rate the motivations accordingly).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.1.1 To ensure the organisations product/service recognition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.2 To reduce negative impacts on the natural environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.3 To reduce negative impacts on the socio-cultural environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.4 To attract environmentally conscious tourists to the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.5 To attract socio-culturally conscious tourist to the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.6 To increase customer loyalty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.7 To comply with current environmental regulations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.1.8 As an incentive for management to maintain and improve environmental performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.9 As incentive for management to maintain and improve socio-cultural performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1.10 To follow the current environmental movement or "green" trend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.11 To gain a competitive advantage over other tourism organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1.12 As a means of alleviating the problem of weak regulation of sustainable tourism practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.13 To obtain the economic benefits associated with being certified with an eco-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
label.					
2.1.14 As a means of reducing the operational costs to the organisation by adhering to the eco-labels sustainable practice.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.1.15 To improve the relationship of the organisation with the local community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1.16 To improve the company image.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.1.17 As a marketing and public relations instrument.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1.18 To obtain government recognition for sustainable practices.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.1.19 It forms part of the organisations corporate social responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Identify other reasons behind eco- certification.					



3.BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION *

3.1 Identify the extent to which your organisation has experienced the following benefits of eco-labels. (Please rate the statements accordingly).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3.1.1 The organisation obtained product/service recognition by consumers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.1.2 Practices associated with the eco-label reduced negative impacts to the environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.1.3 The eco-label attracted environmentally conscious tourists to the organisation.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.1.4 The organisation has gained a competitive advantage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.1.5 The problem of weak regulation of sustainable tourism	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
practices is alleviated.					
3.1.6 Improved relationship of the organisation with the local community.	●	●	●	●	●
3.1.7 The eco-label has improved marketing initiatives.	●	●	●	●	●
3.1.8 Has assisted in fair purchasing and operations.	●	●	●	●	●
3.1.9 Has promoted the equitable distribution of benefits.	●	●	●	●	●
3.1.10 Has promoted the respect of human rights, culture and the environment.	●	●	●	●	●
3.1.11 Encouraged the organisation to operate in an ethically, socially and environmentally friendly manner.	●	●	●	●	●
3.1.12 Has improved the company's	●	●	●	●	●

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

image.

3.1.13 The eco-label has reduced operational costs within the organisation.

3.1.14 Has increased customer loyalty.

3.2 What are some of the other benefits experience by your organisation? (Please specify):

4. CHALLENGES OF CERTIFICATION *

4.1 Tourism literature identifies many challenges associated with the implementation of eco-labels. Indicate the extent to which your organisation has faced the following challenges with regards to eco-labels. (Please rate the statements accordingly).

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4.1.1 There is a large amount of financial cost to the organisation needed to maintain certification standards.

4.1.2 The implementation and maintenance of the eco-label

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
is time consuming.					
4.1.3 Eco-labelled products/services become more costly to the consumer who cannot afford the additional costs.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.1.4 There is a lack of support from the government with regards to the implementation of eco-labels.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.1.5 There is an absence of a regulatory body from the specific eco-label.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.1.6 There is a lack a skills and expertise with regards to monitoring and successfully implementing the eco-label criteria.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.1.7 There is lack of market demand for the eco-label and sustainable practice.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.1.8 There is lack of economic benefits that are	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
associated with this eco-label.					
4.1.9 There are insufficient resources for the maintenance of the eco-label.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.10 The economic climate is poor therefore stifling eco-friendly growth and awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.11 There is lack of employee skills and training with regard to eco-friendly business practice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.12 There is a lack of eco-label promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1.13 There is lack of awareness by the general public with regards to eco-labels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4.2 If any, what are some of the other challenges associated with the eco-label? (please specify):



5. THE ECO-LABEL *

5.1 Please rate the following statements accordingly with regard to your organisations eco-label.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.1.1 This organisation has successfully implemented the eco-label criteria in all aspects of business practice.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.1.2 This organisation receives adequate assistance, monitoring and attention by the management of the eco-label.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.3 Tourism and hospitality organisations could lose out a great deal if not certified by an eco-label.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.1.4 This organisation has experienced a considerable change in terms of sustainable practices after being certified.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.5 Being certified with this eco-label was worth the effort of the	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
company.					
5.1.6 Benefits of this organisations eco-label outweigh the challenges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.7 This eco-label is well managed by the certification body.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1.8 This eco-label is well managed by this organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.9 Maintenance costs and fees are reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1.10 The consumer and public at large recognize the eco-label of this organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.11 Guests are made aware of the sustainable measures being implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1.12 Employees of the organisation are provided with the necessary skills and training for the successful implementation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
and maintenance of the eco-label.					
5.1.13 The eco-label encouraged this organisation to be involved with other sustainable schemes.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.1.14 There is lack of skills and expertise to implement and maintain the eco-labels..	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.15 The eco-label is costly to implement and maintain.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.1.16 Additional human resources is required for implementing and maintaining the eco-label.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.17 Additional financial resources are required.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.1.18 This organisation will continue to be accredited by the eco-label.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1.19 This organisation is satisfied with the benefits of this	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

eco-label.

5.1.20 The eco-label has improved tourism.



*

5.2 Would this company consider being certified by another eco-label in addition to the current eco-label certification? (If so, please specify which eco-label).

*

5.3 Are the staff of this organisation directly involved in the sustainable measures of this eco-label? (If so, please specify).

5.4 To what extent can the following factors improve the adoption of eco-labels? (please rate accordingly). *

5.4.1 Providing subsidies for implementation of eco-labels.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.2 Reducing cost of eco-labels.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.3 Providing more training and skills on eco-label criteria.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.4 Reducing the number of criteria in the eco-label.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.5 Increasing public awareness of the eco-label.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.6 Sharing of best practices.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.7 Promoting sustainable business practices.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

*

5.4.8 Improved maintenance measures from the eco-label.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ● ● ● ● ● Strongly Agree

6. Do you feel that being certified with an eco-label is "worth" the hassle? Explain your answer. *

7. Do you feel that the tourism and hospitality sector of South Africa require more diverse, organisation specific eco-labels? Explain your answer. *

8. Any other comments with regard to the eco-label.

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