Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council

Establishing a global accreditation body for sustainable tourism and ecotourism certification programs.

www.stscouncil.org

For the information of delegates to the Biodiversity Conservation & Tourism Development in the GMS Bangkok Workshop, 17 to 18 September 2008

Presented by Steve Noakes, Pacific Asia Tourism Pty Ltd with acknowledgement to Ronald Sabrina, Rainforest Alliance.
The Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council is part of the Marrakech Process, a United Nations-led initiative to promote a shift towards global sustainable production and consumption.

It is also part of the emerging initiatives program of the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance.

Sustainable Tourism Certification
Challenges in Certification

International Credibility

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

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

Communication
- Isolated efforts
- Fragmentation
- Duplication of efforts
Demand for Information

How do we...

- Set up a credible certification program?
- Connect with others also working on certification to share experiences?

How can I...

- Get more information about what an ecologo means?
- Give priority to selling certified products if I do not know how credible and trustworthy a certification program is?
Demand for Information

How can we increase...
  - Market benefits of selling certified and getting certified?
  - Access of small operations to certification processes?

Where...
  - Should I stay during my vacation to make sure I am contributing to local development?
What is Accreditation?

- a process of qualifying, endorsing or ‘licensing’ entities that perform certification of businesses, products, processes or services.
Certification and Accreditation

Tourism Operation ( Applicant )

Certification

Awarding Body ( Certification Program )

Accreditation

Accreditation Body

Tourism Market

Assessment

Verifying Body

Funding Body
Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) Mission

To enhance the sustainability of tourism operations by encouraging better performance in terms of environmental and social issues and improved economic benefits to ethical businesses and local communities worldwide.

It will achieve this through the establishment of a global stakeholder partnership responsible for the initiation and development of a trustworthy international standards setting and accreditation system that guarantees independently verified, internationally recognized certainty and transparency for all tourism sector certification programs.

Simultaneously offering training, support and marketing services to certification bodies and other stakeholders in order to increase the number and quality of certified sustainable tourism enterprises.
Perceived Benefits

- Protect the environment, residents and consumer rights by reducing “greenwash” and false claims. Ensure credibility of sustainable tourism certification and should be a symbol of quality for consumers.
- Give exposure to certification programs and their certified products as globally recognised sound operations.
- Lobby for political and financial support for accredited certification programs. Tool for marketing, national sustainability strategies and environmental education.
- Provide globally accepted standards, guidelines and support networks for product development.
- Promote a powerful global brand with marketing value to complement current marketing strategies.
Milestones

- 2001/2003 – STSC Feasibility study
- 2003- Launch network of certification programs in the Americas.
- 2005 – Initial organizing of work for network in Asia Pacific.
- 2005- STSC Steering Committee was appointed at the II World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development
- 2006 - Business plan development ,supervised by the Steering Committee
- 2007 – Sustainable Tourism Task Force met in Paris in February to discuss labels, standards and certification processes. At the meeting, the Rainforest Alliance committed to developing a comparative analysis of different certification standards from around the world to identify common certification criteria that can serve as input for the STSC standard.
- 2007 - Temporary Executive Board confirmed
Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council
Temporary Executive Board
www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism.cfm?id=council

1 Chris Thompson, Business Chamber – Europe
2 Kelly Bricker, Business Chamber – Intl.
3 Amos Bien, Business Chamber - Latin America
4 Steve Noakes, Business Chamber - Asia Pacific
5 Neel Inamdar, Environmental Chamber – Intl.
6 Oliver Hillel, Environmental Chamber – Intl.
7 Martina Kohl, Environmental Chamber – Europe
8 Naut Kusters, Environmental Chamber – Europe
9 Erika Harms, Social-Cultural Chamber – Intl.
10 Tricia Barnett, Social-Cultural Chamber - Intl.
11 Luis Sarmento, Social-Cultural Chamber - Africa
12 Anna Spenceley, Social-Cultural Chamber-US
13 Herbert Hamele, Independent Chamber – Europe
14 Michael Conroy, Independent Chamber – US
15 Cathy Parsons, Independent Chamber – Asia Pacific
16 Guy Chester, Independent Chamber – Asia Pacific
17 Fabian Roman, Independent Chamber – Latin America
Next Steps

- Consolidate the voluntary expertise of the Temporary Executive Board of STSC.
  - Fundraising for the STSC launch and implementation.
  - Defining the permanent governance structure that will follow.
  - Fostering cross regional alliances that can provide support to sustainable tourism certification programs to prepare for accreditation.
  - Designing a communication strategy and recruiting members for the launch of the STSC.
  - Providing oversight for the 2 anticipated STSC staff (a coordinator and a fundraising officer).
  - Organizing the launch of the STSC in early 2009.
  - Overseeing the registration of the STSC as a legal non-profit entity, and supervising the development its operational plan.
  - Organizing a meeting of existing sustainable tourism certification programs prior to the launch of the STSC.
  - Other tasks outlined in the STSC business plan.
Questions & Answers

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Visit the Eco Index Sustainable Tourism at www.eco-index.org/tourism

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