

The QualityTourism Business Club
Marketing & Communication Plan



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Executive Summary

The Coastal & Marine Union (hereafter the EUCC), is a large international NGO dedicated to the promotion and conservation of healthy seas and sustainable coasts. At the beginning of this year, the EUCC introduced a new program: the QualityTourism program. The QualityTourism program aims to establish a valuable network of top quality private businesses in the tourism branch that are dedicated to quality and sustainability. Private businesses (in this plan only hotels have been taken into account) in the coastal community can become member of the QualityTourism business club and apply for the QualityTourism Business Award. The program is not an eco-label, but it focuses on the direct promotion of the sustainable efforts of the business partners to make tourism more sustainable.

After the first unofficial introduction of the QualityTourism program to explore the market opportunities, the program now needs to be officially introduced into the market. Next to a business & implementation plan, it therefore also needs a marketing & communication plan. The aim of this marketing & communication plan is to develop an integrated marketing & communication strategy to officially introduce the program into the chosen target market and to enlarge the QualityTourism business club. The central question is: *What marketing & communication tools would be most adequate to introduce the QualityTourism program into the target market and how should these tools be implemented?*

The sub questions deriving from the central question are the following:

- *What does the internal and external analysis look like?*
- *What will be the exact target market to focus on?*
- *Which marketing & communication tools would be most adequate to introduce the QualityTourism program into the target market?*
- *What financial, societal and marketing objectives should be achieved by the marketing & communication tools?*
- *What will be the available budget?*
- *How will the marketing & communication tools be implemented and controlled? (Follow-up).*

First, the current market situation has been researched by making use of both desk research (internet, magazines, brochures, marketing & communication books) and field research (an interview with EUCC's General Director Sustainable Development Albert Salman, a questionnaire by phone and on Facebook among potential business partners and the general public, a personal

visit to some of the contacted hotels). After conducting the internal and external analysis, a SWOT and a confrontation matrix have been created and a marketing strategy has been formulated. The results of the market research have been processed in a tactical communication advice for 2013 that serves as the recommendation.

The internal analysis showed that the small QualityCoast team working on the QualityTourism program might face capacity problems once the program grows. The external analysis and field research showed that the program will be launched in a very competitive environment, therefore the program should be clearly differentiated from competitor programs and the concept sustainability should be made more appealing to gain enough business partners as well as public interest. The most suitable target group in the starting phase appeared to be the smaller hotels at the Dutch coast.

The research showed that the most suitable marketing & communication tools will be the internet and social media channels, because of the limited budget available. If possible, a Smartphone application could be created. The main objectives of the tactical communication advice are to enlarge the QualityTourism business club, complete the QualityTourism website, renew the QualityTourism brochure, and to create four big social media campaigns in 2013. The implementation of the tactical communication advice is the responsibility of the QualityCoast team, while the creation of the Smartphone app has to be done by an external organization. As follow-up, weekly meetings should be organized with the QualityCoast team and the General Director Sustainable Development, Albert Salman.

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction into the problem

As large European NGO, “the Coastal & Marine Union aims to conserve and maintain healthy seas and sustainable and attractive coasts for both people and nature” (EUCC, 2011, p. 32). The EUCC stands for the integrity and identity of our valuable coasts, their landscapes, biodiversity and social and cultural values. The EUCC therefore has a broad awareness raising program and helps preparing and implementing EU coastal policies. Networking with other organizations is possible via the joint platform of coastal networks and organizations. The EUCC is the largest and oldest European coastal & marine network in membership, number of projects and project volume, so therefore the EUCC offers great possibilities for involvement in the development of coastal policies (EUCC, 2011, “Coastal & Marine management in the EU”, p. 32).

In short, the EUCC seeks to:

- “Promote integrated marine and coastal management, combining development with the protection of biodiversity, social and cultural values,
- Work to limit the impact of climate change,
- Provide advice, information, communication and policy instruments,
- Take part in coastal and marine research projects,
- Raise awareness of environmental issues,
- Develop partnerships with stakeholders” (EUCC, 2011, p. 32).

The EUCC offers memberships for:

- Friends of the Coast (€24 per year)
 - Students and private members (€48 per year, €80 for three years)
 - Professionals (€65 per year, €120 for three years)
 - Small organizations (NGO membership) (€65 per year, €120 for three years)
 - Large organizations (Member organization) (€300 per year, €500 for three years)
 - Companies and supporting organizations (Communication partner) (€1000 per year)
 - Companies and supporting organizations (Program partner) (€2000 per year)
- (EUCC, n.d., “Join the EUCC today!” section).

The higher the membership fee, the higher the influence in the development of coastal and marine policies.

At the beginning of this year, the EUCC launched the QualityTourism program. This program is unique in the sense that it is not an eco-label, but it focuses on the direct promotion of the sustainable activities of its business partners. The QualityTourism program is an extra addition to the QualityCoast program, and is exclusively developed for the private sector of the tourism branch. The QualityCoast program is directed at the coastal community as a whole. The QualityTourism program is directed at the private sector businesses operating within the coastal community.

According to General Director Sustainable Development, Albert Salman, *“with the QualityCoast program, the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) aims to establish a worldwide network of coastal communities that share similar values on sustainable development, nature and biodiversity, cultural heritage and identity and social responsibility, at the same time maintaining high standards in the quality of their tourism. QualityCoast has been developed under the EU INTERREG IIC program Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet) by 21 partners from 11 countries under the lead of the EUCC”* (2011, p.1). The EU INTERREG IIC is an EU-funded program that helps Europe’s regions form partnerships to work together on common programs (INTERREG IVC, n.d.). Tourism destinations making progress in sustainability can apply for a QualityCoast Award. The application will take a procedure of several months. Performance throughout the destination’s territory is evaluated by an independent jury, appointed by the EUCC. The progress of the Quality Coast Award destinations is of course regularly monitored (*“The QualityCoast Award”*, n.d.).

Of course not only the public sector, but also the private sector plays a very important role in the tourism branch. Therefore, the EUCC decided to introduce the QualityTourism program. The target group of this new program consists of hotels (3 stars and higher only), restaurants and beach taverns, camp sites, companies making local products and/or products that contribute to the environment or sustainability (QualityCoast team, n.d., *“QualityTourism Awards 2012”*, *“Who can join us?”* section, para.1). The private businesses can become business partner of the QualityTourism business club. In this marketing & communication plan, only hotels have been taken into account as potential business partners.

The QualityTourism program has already been introduced into the market, but only on a small scale to explore the market opportunities. The EUCC first wanted to know whether the program would be a success before spending a lot of money on an introduction of a program that will not succeed anyway.

The program has therefore been introduced by approaching several potential business partners by phone and email and on holiday fairs as well as by making use of the QualityTourism brochure.

The program therefore does not have a separate webpage yet, but a section dedicated to the QualityTourism program is included in the QualityCoast webpage. A Facebook account has also been created for the QualityTourism program. The QualityCoast YouTube account has been used to post a video about the QualityTourism program.

The QualityTourism program has been introduced without any concrete documents such as a business & implementation plan, a marketing & communication plan, nor a mission, vision or clear objectives. The EUCC decided to produce these documents after the first unofficial introduction of the program. Because of the limit in the use of marketing & communication tools during the first introduction of the program, the QualityTourism business club could not grow enough yet and did not gain a lot of brand recognition either. Most potential business partners do not understand the program enough to be interested in becoming a business partner. This should thus change to make the program a success. And that is the main aim of this plan.

1.2 Research question and sub questions

As the QualityTourism program is a new program that needs to be officially launched into the target market (after the first small introduction to explore the market), in addition to a business & implementation plan, it also needs a marketing & communication plan. And the last one will be the content of this Final Project assignment.

Central question: *What marketing & communication tools would be most adequate to introduce the QualityTourism program into the target market and how should these tools be implemented?*

The sub questions answered in this plan are:

- *What does the internal and external analysis look like?*
- *What will be the exact target market to focus on?*
- *Which marketing & communication tools would be most adequate to introduce the QualityTourism program into the target market?*
- *What financial, societal and marketing objectives should be achieved by the marketing & communication tools?*
- *What will be the available budget?*
- *How will the marketing & communication tools be implemented and controlled? (Follow-up).*

First of all, it should be stressed that this whole marketing & communication plan is based on own ideas and recommendations, because the QualityTourism program is so new that there are

absolutely no documents available yet. There is still nothing concrete available to build upon. This plan has therefore been developed for the EUCC to gain new ideas on the program and to start developing it further from there on. This plan will thus not be a definitive plan, but it will be used to gain new ideas.

1.3 Research method

In the first part of the plan (the marketing part), the current market situation has been analyzed and the target market has been described. This is based on both desk (websites, marketing & communication books, internal databases, brochures, magazines) and field research. As part of the field research, the General Director Sustainable Development Albert Salman has first been interviewed to learn more about the organizational as well as departmental structure and about the QualityTourism program. Secondly, a questionnaire by phone has been held among ten potential business partners (hotels) in QualityCoast destinations at the Dutch coast.

A personal visit to four of the contacted hotels in Noordwijk has been conducted as follow up after conducting the questionnaire by phone. Next to that, a questionnaire on Facebook has been held among the general public (tourists) to investigate whether they actually care about the fact that their hotel belongs to the QualityTourism business club and whether they actually know the meaning of sustainable tourism. It could be that tourists choose for a hotel in a QualityCoast destination that belongs to the QualityTourism business club, but that they do not really care whether their hotel has some sort of certificate that relates to quality and sustainability. This probably also depends on the higher price they have to pay for this. Once the results of the questionnaires and the personal visit had been processed, the tactical communication advice could be written. This part includes the strategies and tactics to create, communicate and deliver value to the target market and the selection of the marketing & communication tools. In this selection, the financial and operational requirements of course had to be taken into account. Just like the implementation and control of the plan.

In the tactical communication advice, conclusions and recommendations have been given. These are based on both the desk and the field research. However, most of the recommendations are based on the field research.

In chapter 1, an overview of the organization will be given, the concept sustainability will be defined and explained. Above that, the internal analysis will be given. In chapter 2, the problem description and analysis will be given and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council will be introduced. In chapter 3, the current market situation will be described by making use of Porter's

five forces model. The results of the field research, the SWOT analysis, the confrontation matrix and the marketing strategy will be presented. In chapter 4, a tactical communication advice will be given on how the EUCC could reintroduce the QualityTourism program into the target market and chapter 5 contains the conclusion of the marketing & communication plan.

Chapter 1: EUCC: An overview of the organization

The EUCC (European Union for Coastal Conservation) is founded in 1989 and is an international NGO (association) in European coastal business and management, with 2700 members and member organizations in 40 countries (EUCC, n.d., ‘The Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)’ section, para. 1). The new name for the European Union for Coastal Conservation is now the Coastal & Marine Union, but the old abbreviation is still used by the organization. The members of the organization consist out of experts and practitioners in research, field management, planning and policy making and out of environmental NGO’s (A. Salman, presentation at the Hague University of Applied Sciences, 20 March, 2012). ‘The EUCC aims to promote coastal conservation and to conserve healthy seas and attractive coasts for both people and nature’ through the cooperation between scientists, environmentalists, site managers, planners and policy makers (EUCC, n.d., ‘The Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)’ section, para. 2).

1.1 General Director Sustainable Development, Albert Salman speaking

‘The EUCC is an association owned by their members, who can have influence on the activities whenever they want to. Tasks and programs are divided among EUCC’s national branches in the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Baltic States, Poland, France, Portugal, Italy and Malta. The EUCC International Office brings all the work together and covers the contact with Brussels. All offices are complementary to each other. The Sustainable Development Department is responsible for EUCC’s institutional cooperation with the European Commission, the QualityCoast and QualityTourism program and the elaboration of EUCC’s mission for sustainability into the programs. The working area of the EUCC is in Europe, the Mediterranean and Black Sea and other neighboring countries. However, in the near future, the EUCC would like to make a global rollout to South East Asia and Latin America with the QualityCoast and QualityTourism program. This does mean a change in policies, because then the issue of human rights comes into place’ (A. Salman, personal interview, 14 March 2012). See Appendix 1 to read the complete interview.

1.4 Internal analysis

For the internal analysis, the 6 P model has been used.

The first P stands for *personnel*. The employees working on the QualityTourism program belong to the Sustainable Development Program, with Albert Salman as General Director. The QualityTourism team consists of two paid employees and six trainees (two post graduates and four still studying).

The second P stands for *presentation*. The QualityTourism program is presented as a program for top-level businesses in the tourism sector to improve their CSR Policy and to create a network of sustainability and quality oriented top-level businesses that will be promoted in such a way that the consumer will associate the business as being part of an ‘exclusive business club’ that stands for high quality and sustainability (A. Salman, personal telephone conversation, 3 April, 2012).

The third P stands for *place*. The place where the QualityTourism program is offered (made available) is mainly by the internet and social media, the Coastal & Marine Union magazines and brochures, by conferences, workshops and (international) events (A. Salman, personal telephone conversation, 3 April, 2012).

The fourth P stands for *product*. The QualityTourism club is a new business club that brings together the ‘top-level businesses’ that show special efforts in sustainability and quality practices in the tourism sector. The businesses can gain knowledge by interacting with each other and gain more customers by participating in the QualityTourism marketing campaign. Businesses that meet the QualityTourism criteria will be awarded (A. Salman, personal telephone conversation, 3 April, 2012).

The fifth P stands for *promotion*. The potential business partners are approached via events (holiday fairs), conferences, workshops, by phone and email (A. Salman, personal telephone conversation, 3 April, 2012).

The sixth P stands for *price*. Of course the business partners will have to pay an annual contribution. For non-QualityCoast Destinations, the annual contribution for the one star service package is 300€, for the two star service package 1500 € and for the three star service package 3000€. Above that, you can get a 20% discount once your municipality has become a QualityCoast destination (QualityCoast team, n.d., ‘What do we offer to you as a Business Partner?’ section).

If the organization decides to make use of the possibility to create their own Business Service Options package according to their needs and available resources, the membership fee of course depends.

1.5 Sustainable tourism

According to the United Nations Environment Program (n.d.) sustainable tourism should:

“1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation” (“The Sustainable Tourism Gateway”, n.d., “What is Sustainable Tourism?” section, para. 6, 7, 8).

1.3.1 Why is it so important?

Ten or twenty years from now, we still want to enjoy the beautiful holiday destinations we enjoy today. And without focusing on sustainable tourism practices, this will not be possible.

As Chief Executive of the Travel Foundation, Mrs. Hurdle states, “sustainable tourism is seen as very technical by the general public, but actually it is not. The key of sustainable tourism is creating a balance so that the businesses create profits for themselves, so that the customer has a great time and so that the people and the environment in the destination can continue to thrive” (TravelFoundation, 2011). According to the Founder Director of Forum for the Future, Mr. Porritt, “the starting point of any sustainability journey is maximizing efficiency through the supply chain, through the direct operations of the company, relationships with customers and so on. That is the absolute foundation of what sustainability is all about. A lot of companies do not really get this” (TravelFoundation, 2011).

As the Managing Director of Sunvil, Mr. Josephides, states, “if you ask a client if they book for Sunvil because of our environmental practices, they will probably say no. But if you say, if you book for Sunvil we will take you to a destination which is well looked after, which is sustainable, that you will enjoy, they will say yes” (TravelFoundation, 2011).

The tourists will thus not book a hotel because it has various eco-labels and sustainability certifications, they will book a hotel because they know the hotel employs local people, uses local products and makes use of an effective water and waste management system.

The presentation of the concrete sustainable activities is important to attract clients and not the eco-label or certification itself, because this does not mean anything to the tourists.

Most certification programs are busy accomplishing sustainability certifications for the accommodations while the QualityCoast program focuses on the whole destination and the QualityTourism program on all private businesses within the destination. The private business sector plays of course a huge role within the holiday destination.

The advantage of the QualityTourism program is that the program shows the concrete actions hotels undertake regarding sustainability. The QualityTourism program aims to make the tourists enthusiastic about the concrete sustainable activities of the hotels and not about the certification itself (A. Salman, personal telephone conversation, 30 August 2012).

Chapter 2: Problem description and analysis

2.1 About the QualityTourism program

The QualityTourism program can be seen as an extra addition to the QualityCoast program. The best holiday destinations are awarded with a platinum, gold, silver or bronze award and will gain publicity for their sustainability efforts. A very important part of the tourism branch is of course the private (business) sector of each tourism destination. To the private sector belong for example: hotels, beach taverns, campsites, restaurants and companies that make local products. Tourists are constantly in touch with the private sector, probably much more than they are with the public sector. This is the reason why the QualityTourism program has been brought into life. The main aim of this program is to further encourage and suggest the business partners that are member of the QualityTourism business club about improvements of their sustainability and CSR policies. The vision of the program as stated by the QualityCoast team (n.d.) is, *‘creating a network of sustainability oriented, exclusive businesses at a premium level will increase the awareness of the business brand in consumers’ minds and can help promoting it as the most attractive one, connected with sustainability and high quality services; and it can bring top class businesses together, so as to create the feeling among tourists that QualityTourism partners are part of an exclusive business club’* (‘The QualityTourism Awards 2012’, n.d., ‘Our Vision’ section, para. 1).

Any company in and outside QualityCoast destinations can apply for a QualityTourism Business Award, as long as they are member of the QualityTourism business club. This is because QualityTourism business partners already have to pass a checklist on their sustainability performance. Being member of the QualityTourism business club has many advantages. Business partners benefit from international promotion in several ways, sharing ideas with other members and improving their performance and marketing goals. It is important to note that the QualityTourism Awards certification is not an eco-label. The QualityTourism program does not focus on the certification itself, but on the public promotion of special efforts in improving the quality and sustainability of tourism (A. Salman, presentation at the Hague University of Applied Sciences, 20 March ,2012). However, as obvious, the certification also generates promotion for the business partners.

“As top-level business in a tourism destination, working for top quality and for a cleaner and greener environment, the QualityTourism program is a unique complement of any green effort or eco label” (A. Salman, presentation at the Hague University of Applied Sciences, 20 March, 2012). Just like the QualityCoast Awards, the QualityTourism Awards also consist of a Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze Award.

Other advantages that differentiate the QualityTourism Awards from similar programs are:

1. The evaluation time it takes to apply for the QualityTourism business club membership and the QualityTourism Business Award is made as low as possible, as well as the size of the documents that need to be completed (*See Appendix 4 for the Business Sustainability checklist*).
2. From the moment you become a member of the QualityTourism business club, the EUCC starts promoting your business at holiday fairs, in publications and websites and through the social media campaign (QualityCoast team, n.d., “Our Advantages” section, para. 1, 2).

In exchange of this, the EUCC asks you as a member of the QualityTourism business club to:

1. Complete the checklist with criteria (part of them are GSTC criteria), to assess the sustainability and quality levels of the company.
2. Plant the “QualityTourism Tree” as a symbol of the business club membership. This is also an opportunity to create a media event and thus gain publicity.
3. Work actively on your quality and sustainability values by exchanging practices with the other QualityTourism business partners.
4. Actively inform and promote the QualityCoast Policy Award program to the municipality where the business is located.
5. For hotels: willingness to consider participation in Travelife or Green Key eco-label certification in the future (QualityCoast team, n.d., “We ask from you as a QualityTourism Business Partner” section).

Of course, the business partners need to make a financial contribution to the QualityTourism program, which depends on the service package they choose. Since recently, business partners can also create their own Business Service Options package and can thus adjust the membership fee to their available resources (*see Appendix 5*).

As already mentioned, for non-QualityCoast destinations, the annual contribution for the one star service package is 300€, for the two star service package 1500 € and for the three star service package 3000€.

Above that, you can get a 20% discount once your municipality has become a QualityCoast destination (QualityCoast team, n.d., ‘What do we offer to you as a Business Partner’ section).

2.2 The actual problem

The QualityTourism program is still very new and without a successful introduction into the target market, the program could fail.

There are almost no documents or databases available yet and the QualityTourism business club still has to be created. Until now, there is only one paying three star business partner that is member of the QualityTourism business club. This is *the Porto Carras Grand Resort in Sithonia, Greece*. *The Club Calimera Sunshine Kreta Hotel* in Greece is also a three star business partner for a year, but non-paying. This is because this hotel hosted and helped in the coordination of the EUCC’s national event which took place in Ierapetra last October (A. Stoura, personal e-mail, 9 May, 2012).

There are also various one star business partners that have a six month non-paying business partnership because of their contributions to the Holiday Fair in Essen (A. Stoura, personal e-mail, 9 May, 2012). These are:

- *Paradise Hotel (Patitiri) in Alonissos, Greece.*
- *Almyra Hotel & Village in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *Astron Hotel in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *Eden Rock Hotel in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *Koutsounari Tradit. Hotels in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *Petra Mare Hotel in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *Porto Belissario Hotel in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *South Creta Tours in Ierapetra, Greece.*
- *Samothraki Village Hotel in Samothraki, Greece.*
- *Tsilivi Beach Hotel in Zakynthos, Greece.*
- *Beachclub de Zeemeeuw in Noordwijk, the Netherlands*

Further in this plan, market research has been conducted and according to the results recommendations have been given on how to enhance the QualityTourism business club and this way make the official launch of the QualityTourism program a success.

2.3 The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

The EUCC advises the members of the QualityTourism business club to participate in an eco-label program of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The EUCC is willing to help its business partners to get involved in the program.

The GSTC is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world which is active in all UNWTO regions and represents a diverse and global membership , which includes for example UN agencies, tour operators and hotels (GSTC, 2012, ‘‘Welcome to sustainable tourism’’ section, para. 4). According to the GSTC (2012), ‘‘the GSTC serves as the international body for fostering increased knowledge and understanding of sustainable tourism practices, promoting the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles and building demand for sustainable travel’’ (‘‘Welcome to Sustainable Tourism’’ section, para. 2).

Therefore the GSTC developed the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, ‘‘guiding principles and minimum requirements that any tourism business or destination should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world’s natural and cultural resources, while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation’’ (GSTC, 2012, ‘‘Welcome to sustainable tourism’’ section, para. 3). Most of the QualityCoast and QualityTourism criteria are GSTC criteria.

Chapter 3: The current market situation

Although the QualityTourism program is quite unique in the sense that it is not an eco-label but a program that promotes the special efforts related to quality and sustainability of each business partner. However, the competition is present.

There are quite a lot of programs that can be seen as a threat for the QualityTourism program. As mentioned before, the main focus will be on hotels interested in improving their sustainability and CSR policies in QualityCoast destinations in Europe, and to start with in the Netherlands, as potential business partners. The focus will thus not be on the other private business sectors (such as restaurants, local shops, beach taverns and camp sites) in the tourism branch.

3.1 External analysis

3.1.1 Porter's five forces model

For the external analysis Porter's five forces model has been used. This is an adequate model to demonstrate the competitive position of the QualityTourism business club. The five forces model does not describe the general economic, demographic, social, technological, economic, political and juridical changes (like the DESTEP/J model) but just the concrete focus points.

The five forces are:

1. Generic concurrence
2. Threat from substitutes and complementary goods
3. Threat from new market enterers
4. The power of suppliers
5. The power of buyers (Baaij & Broefhoff, 2006, p.41)

The last four forces one by one influence the generic concurrence. And then of course there is the environment that influences the generic concurrence. The generic concurrence consists out of organizations operating in the same branch or sector and thus offer a similar product to a similar target audience. In this case, the generic concurrence consists out of similar business clubs that have hotels showing efforts in quality and sustainability as their business partners (Baaij & Broekhoff, 2006, p. 42).

In this report, Porter's five forces model has been used to describe the power of buyers (potential business partners as direct buyers and the general public or tourists as indirect buyers), the generic concurrence (similar business clubs), the power of suppliers (similar organizations compared to the EUCC), the threat of substitutes and complementary goods (also the generic concurrence), the threat from new market enterers (the generic concurrence).

As shown, the five forces often intertwine. It can be hard to separate them from each other. The last two forces have therefore been discussed under 'generic concurrence', as they are the same in this case.

In the following section, the *generic concurrence* (which includes the similar business clubs, the threat of substitutes and complementary goods and the threat from new market enterers), *the power of suppliers* and the *power of buyers* will be described. Since the five forces overlap, only three of the five have been used in this case.

3.2 Force one: The generic concurrence

3.2.1 Competitor analysis

1. *The "Green" Hotels Association.* This is a worldwide association (business club) for green, sustainable hotels. The main goal of the association is to help the member hotels to become as green as possible. This is done by providing the member hotels with as much information as possible on green hotel policies (for example by providing the members with the newsletter and the more than 150 pages long *Membership Conservation Guidelines & Ideas*). Next to that, the member hotels are promoted by press releases and through the website. However, the member hotels are encouraged to actively promote themselves as well. Another important characteristic of the association is that it also sells green products for hotels, such as towel rack hangers and sheet changing cards which ask guests to consider using their linen more than once ("Green" Hotels Association, 2012, "What are "Green" Hotels?" section, "GHA's Goals" section).

Compared to the QualityTourism Business Club, the "Green" Hotels Association is first of all much broader. Since it is a new program, the QualityTourism Business Club will in the beginning only focus on green hotels in Europe and to start with in the Netherlands, while the "Green" Hotels Association focuses on green hotels worldwide. Another very important difference between the two business clubs is that the "Green" Hotels Association is fiercely against certifications. According to the "Green" Hotels Association, certification costs too much time and money (you have to fill in a lot of documents, it is not for free and you have to renew the certification every

year or every other year) that can better be invested in the improvement of quality of the stay for the guests and in the education of the management and staff on green policies.

According to the association, there exist over 800 green certifications so it has no use to acquire one while the guests probably do not even know what it means and therefore do not care (“Green” Hotels Association, 2012, “Certification?” section).

The QualityTourism program focuses more on the promotion of the business partners, whereas the “Green” Hotels Association focuses on the transformation of the hotel itself and encourages the hotels to do the active promotion themselves.

Another difference between the two business clubs is the membership fee. Hotels can become a so-called partner member of the “Green” Hotels Association for 200\$ (242€) a year plus 1\$ (0,85€) for each guestroom. There are also other types of memberships for the suppliers of green products, for students and public organizations, environmental organizations and individuals (“Green” Hotels Association, 2012). In this report however, the focus will only be on the partner membership for green hotels. The membership fee includes the promotion via the internet, ads and referral of all members during meetings and conferences with tour guides and environmental organizations, the networking between the member hotels, the reception of the flag and logo (“Green” Hotels Association, 2012, “Membership” section).

Similarities between the “Green” Hotels Association and the QualityTourism Business Club are the network possibilities between the different members and part of the promotional tools.

2. *RUES Hotel Selection (RHS)*. In 1994 the RHS created the first worldwide environmental friendly referral group system ‘EcoFriendly Hotels Worldwide’ (Rues, n.d., ‘Welcome to the Rues Hotel Selection EcoFriendly Hotels Worldwide’ section, para. 1). The mission of the RHS is to (together with the EcoFriendly hotels) ‘*pursue the triangular system of the conservation of natural, cultural and heritage values and resources, provide education to the hotel staff and this way raise environmental consciousness and to take part in the sustainable tourism development through involving the private and public sectors within the regions where the member hotels are located*’ (Rues, n.d., ‘About RHS’, ‘Mission’ section, para. 1-4). To be able to accomplish these goals, the RHS follows the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) guidelines. The membership fee is 40\$ (33€) per 20 years for developing countries and 80\$ (66€) for industrialized countries. Then there is also a Marketing Consulting Fee per guest room per year for 20\$ (17€) in developing countries and 40\$ (33€) in industrialized countries. The prices do not include taxes (Rues, n.d., ‘About RHS’, ‘III RUES Hotel Selection Membership Fee’ section). Hotels can become member by sending the RHS an e-mail or by filling in the membership form.

The membership includes the environmental and management consulting services, the basic marketing strategies and the internet market fee (Rues, n.d., ‘About RHS’, ‘I. RHS Eco-Hotel Management and Marketing Consulting*’ section).

New members are rated between two and five stars according to international standards and can receive two symbols (of each 50 points) for their environmental and sustainable practices: *a tree* for the implementation of the triangular CESD system and *a green suitcase* for the quality / service performance (Rues, n.d., ‘About RHS’, ‘III Basic Characteristics, Benefits and Goals for RHS EcoFriendly Member and Partner Hotels’ section, para. 2). Furthermore, the membership includes joint internet promotion and networking with other member organizations.

The RHS business club is thus operating globally already while the Quality Tourism business club is still very small. The membership fee is another difference. The RHS distinguishes between developed and developing countries. The RHS also has a Quality Admission Committee to evaluate the member hotels and to rate them according to the environmental criteria (Rues, n.d., ‘About RHS’, ‘III Basic Characteristics, Benefits and Goals for RHS EcoFriendly Member and Partner Hotels’ section, para. 6). The RHS member hotels can thus not apply for a Award, but they do receive a symbol for their environmental and sustainable practices if they meet the required environmental criteria. Other advantages of the membership are the feel good among the employees and customers, the joint promotion, the network possibilities with other member hotels and the availability of advice and education, such as workshops (Rues, n.d., ‘V. Characteristics, Goals and Benefits of RHS EcoFriendly Partner Hotels’ section).

3. *It's a green world*. This is a global business club that brings together green, eco-friendly and sustainable hospitality destinations. On the website you can register your accommodation for free by filling in a questionnaire that consists out of three parts: the company registration, the accommodation part and the eco-credentials part (Green World Partnership Ltd, 2012, ‘Accommodation Registration 1 2 3’ section). There is thus no membership fee. The advantages of the membership are the possibility to network with the other member hotels, online promotion on the website, reception of the newsletter and the usage of the *it's a green world* logo on the hotel website (Green World Partnership Ltd, 2012, ‘Our Eco Community’, ‘Partnership Logos’ section). It is not a certification program, it is just a platform for hotels and other environmental organizations in the tourism branch to exchange information on sustainability and the environment.

4. *iStayGreen*. This is a global network organization of green and sustainable hotels who's main goal is to provide the internet public with the greenest accommodations (iStayGreen, 2012, ‘About iStayGreen’, ‘Our Goal’ section).

New members can register by filling in an online form so they will appear on the website. New member hotels also need to fill in an online *Environmental Self-Audit*. As a member, the hotel needs to display the Green Eco-Leaf Rating Badge on its main website. No membership fee is required. Therefore no further promotion is made for the member hotels, these are encouraged to do this themselves (iStayGreen, 2012).

5. *Travelocity*. This is a global organization that works with second- and third party certification programs like Greenkey, GreenTourism and EarthCheck and has therefore no self-certified green hotels as partners (Travelocity, 2010, ‘‘The Travelocity Green Guarantee’’ section). Individuals that have booked an accommodation via www.travelocity.com can fill in an online form to add green certified hotels to the organization (Travelocity 2010, ‘‘Terms and conditions’’ section). The organization will then verify whether these hotels indeed deserve a ‘‘Green Guarantee’’. The member hotels will be indicated on the website with the title ‘‘Eco-friendly hotel’’ or with the *green leaf*.

The organizations *It’s a green world*, *iStayGreen* and *Travelocity* are good alternatives for small hotels that do want to have some recognition for their sustainable efforts but do not have the means to participate in a sustainability program where they have to pay a significant membership fee.

6. *Biohotels*. This is an association of hotels in Germany, Austria, Italy and France that is entirely focused on organic food and beverage and has therefore an agreement with different partner suppliers (like Bioland) of these organic products. The association helps the member hotels in their transformation from conventional to organic hotel chain. There is also a Certification/Control Agency in each country to make sure the hotels subject the rules. Once the hotel has become a BIO-Hotel, it can use the trademark and will be included in all marketing activities and advertisements (Biohotels, n.d., ‘‘About us’’, ‘‘Becoming a member’’ section). The member hotels do have to pay a membership fee, but the amount depends on the size of the hotel and the organization is not willing to provide the membership fee details as long as you are not an applying hotel (Biohotels, n.d., personal telephone conversation, 7 May, 2012).

3.2.2 Best practice competitor

7. *The Green Tourism Business Scheme*. ‘‘The GTBS is the national sustainable tourism certification scheme for the UK. Originally developed in partnership with Visit Scotland, it is now the only certification scheme validated by Visit Britain, through the International Centre for

Responsible Tourism (ICRT)’’ (Green Tourism Business Scheme, n.d., ‘‘Welcome to the Green Tourism Business Scheme!’’, section, para. 2).

Businesses that want to join the Scheme are assessed by a qualified grading advisor against a set of criteria that cover a wide range of environmental and sustainability topics. The businesses that meet the necessary requirements, receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award (Green Tourism Business Scheme, n.d., ‘‘Welcome to the Green Tourism Business Scheme!’’ section, para. 3, 4).

The GTBS is just like the QualityTourism business club for top quality businesses that care for quality and sustainability in the tourism sector. Next to certification, the GTBS Scheme offers business partners a plaque, digital logo, marketing opportunities, advice and recommendations, access to the website, the reception of the newsletters, discounts and special offers (Green Tourism Business Scheme, n.d., ‘‘Join us’’, ‘‘Benefits of joining GTBS’’ section). The GTBS Scheme is run by Green Business UK Ltd, a non-profit organization. The organization therefore wants to keep the costs as low as possible and profits are reinvested in the organization.

Regarding the membership fees, new business partners will have to pay a one-off joining fee and an annual fee based on the size of the business. The membership fee also differs between the different private business sectors in the tourism branch. In this case, only the fees for hotels have been taken into account. New business partners can become member of the GTBS England, London, Scotland or Wales.

At the beginning of 2012, the membership fee rates for hotels were as follows:

According to the number of bathrooms the cost per bathroom varies between 2 and 4 £ (between 2,55 and 5,10 €). Herewith a base rate from between 175 £ (224€) and 600 £ (766€) should be added. Above that, the joining fee of £70.80 (incl. VAT) (90,40€) and the VAT should be added to obtain the total membership fee (The Green Tourism Business Scheme, 2012, ‘‘Hotel Fees (Scotland, England & Wales)’’ section).

As shown, the GTBS is a very similar business club in comparison to the QualityTourism business club and can be seen as an example for the starting phase of the implementation of the QualityTourism program.

3.2.3 Special competitors

8. *Travelife*. This is an ecolabel / sustainability certification. Different suppliers in the tourism sector can become a member of the program to make tourism more sustainable worldwide (Travelife, n.d., “Welcome to Travelife” section). Organizations can become member for free by filling in the online registration form (Travelife, n.d., “You can register by filling in the application form” section). These organizations will then receive a guide and above that will have to complete the Travelife checklist to measure their sustainability level. Hotels that are member of Travelife can achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award for their sustainability efforts (Travelife, n.d., “Travelife Awards” section).

This program is not a direct competitor from the QualityTourism business club because the EUCC also encourages their QualityTourism business partners to obtain the Travelife ecolabel. However, the Travelife program forms a threat for the QualityTourism program because potential business partners can also opt to only become member of the Travelife program.

9. *The Green Key Eco – Rating Program*. This is a global eco-rating system that awards hoteliers for their fiscal and environmental (sustainable) performance. According to their performance, the applicants can obtain a 1-5 Green Key rating (Green Key Global, n.d., “About the Green Key Eco Rating program” section, para. 1, 2). New members can sign up by filling in the online form. The membership fees are as follows: for hotels in Canada it is \$400 (CDN) (322€) per year plus harmonized sales tax. In the U.S. and the rest of the world it is \$600 (USD) (488€) per year (Green Key Global, n.d., “Program registration” section). The advantages of being a Green Key hotel are sales, marketing & PR opportunities, the feel good among the employees and clients, the offer of employee training, the possibility to get advice and recommendations (Green Key Global, n.d., “Member benefits” section).

Just like the Travelife program, the EUCC encourages QualityTourism business partners to obtain the Green Key eco-label, but at the same time it is a competitor. Because the potential business partners can also opt to only join the Green Key Eco-Rating Program and not both programs.

	<p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company management is oriented towards sustainability, - Hotels with 3 stars and higher only, - Highly customer and service oriented. - Payment of the membership fee, - Completion of the Business Sustainability checklist, - Planting the ‘‘QualityTourism tree’’, - Stand for quality and sustainability, - Considering participation in the Travelife or Green Key program. - Promotion starts right away, - Application time is made as low as possible through the 2-step evaluation procedure, - Possibility to create your own promotional service package according to the organizational needs - Networking possibilities, - Feel good among the employees and customers. - No brand recognition yet.
<p><i>The ‘‘Green Hotels Association’’</i></p>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 242€ plus 0,85€ for each guestroom. - Promotion via the internet, - Ads and referral of all members during meetings and conferences with tour guides and environmental organizations, - Reception of the newsletter

	<p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<p>and the membership guide,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The networking between the member hotels, - The reception of the flag and logo. - Being a green hotel committed to quality and sustainability. - Payment of the membership fee. - Commitment to the program standards. - Feel good among employees and customers, - The reception of information on becoming green, - Promotion, - The possibility to buy green products for the hotel guests, - Networking possibilities. - No recognition in the form of a certificate. - Member hotels will have to do most of the promotion themselves.
<p><i>RHS</i></p>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 33€ for developing countries (per 20 years), 66€ for industrialized countries (per 20 years) plus an additional marketing fee per guestroom per year of 17€ in developing countries and 33€ in industrialized countries. - Environmental and management consulting services, - Basic marketing strategies,

	<p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internet market fee, - Reception of a <i>tree</i> or <i>green suitcase</i> as rating for the green and sustainable practices of the member hotel, - Joint internet promotion. - Being a green hotel committed to quality and sustainability. - Payment of the membership fee. - Commitment to the triangular system of the <i>RHS</i> to pursue sustainable tourism. - Feel good among employees and clients, - Joint promotion, - The availability of advice and education, - Networking possibilities. - The different membership fees might be a bit confusing for potential business partners.
<p><i>It's a green world</i></p>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None. - Online promotion on the website as well as Twitter and Facebook, - Reception of the newsletter, - usage of the logo on the hotel website. - Being a green hotel committed to quality and sustainability. - Fill in the online questionnaire. - Networking possibilities, - No membership fee. - It is just an internet platform

		<p>to exchange information between organizations,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No recognition in the form of a certification.
<i>iStayGreen</i>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None. - Appearance of the member hotel on the website. - Being a green hotel committed to quality and sustainability. - Completion of the online Environmental Self-Audit, - Show the Green Eco-Leaf Badge on the main website of the hotel. - No membership fee. - The registered hotels will only be shown on the website, no further promotion is made, - No recognition in the form of a certificate.
<i>Travelocity</i>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None. - Indication of the hotel as ‘Green Guarantee’ on the website with the title ‘Eco-friendly hotel’ or with the <i>green leaf</i>. - Being a green and officially certified hotel. - None. - Only officially certified green hotels will be displayed on the website (it can be seen as an ‘exclusive business club’), - No membership fee.

	<i>Drawbacks:</i>	- The registered hotels will only be shown on the website, no further promotion is made.
<i>Biohotels</i>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<p>- The organization has not been willing to elaborate on the membership fees. Prices will only be given to hotels that actually consider to become a member.</p> <p>- Guidance and assistance in becoming an organic (BIO) hotel, - Usage of the trademark,</p> <p>- Inclusion in all marketing activities and advertisements.</p> <p>- Being a green hotel committed to quality and sustainability, that has the means to transform the hotel from conventional to organic.</p> <p>- Subjection to the rules of the organization during the transformation (controlled by a Certification/Control Agency in each country).</p> <p>- Feel good among employees and clients, - Guidance and assistance where necessary.</p> <p>- Only in Germany, Austria, France and Italy, - Takes a lot of time and resources, - Will probably only attract eco-tourists.</p>
<i>The Green Tourism Business Scheme</i>	<i>Membership fee per year:</i>	- Base rate between 224€ and 766€ according to the size of the hotel, plus between 2,55€

	<p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<p>and 5,10€ per bathroom per year, plus the joining fee of 90,40€ and the VAT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certification, , - Plaque, - Digital logo, -Marketing opportunities, - Advice and recommendations, - Access to the website, - Reception of the newsletters, - Discounts and special offers. - Being a top quality business that cares for quality and sustainability in the tourism branch. - Payment of the membership fee, - Commitment to the program standards. - Feel good among employees and clients, - Hotels that meet the necessary requirements will be awarded a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award, - Networking possibilities. - The GTBS only operates within the UK.
<p><i>Travelife</i></p>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None. - Guidance and training in becoming more sustainable, and in gaining the eco-label. - Suppliers in the tourism sector (so not only hotels), that are willing to participate in the program to make tourism more sustainable worldwide. - Complete the Travelife

	<p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <p><i>Drawbacks:</i></p>	<p>checklist to measure the sustainability level of the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No membership fee, - Guidance and training, - Certification in the form of an eco-label, - Networking possibilities, - Very well known in the tourism branch worldwide. - Takes quite some time to gain the eco-label.
<p><i>The Green Key</i></p>	<p><i>Membership fee per year:</i></p> <p><i>Consists of:</i></p> <p><i>Requirements:</i></p> <p><i>Obligations:</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Canada 322€ per year plus harmonized sales tax, in the rest of the world 488€ per year. - Guidance and training in becoming more sustainable, and in gaining the eco-label. - Being a green hotel committed to quality and sustainability. - Payment of the membership fee, - Completion of the required checklists, - Commitment to the program standards. - Sales, marketing & PR opportunities, - The feel good among employees and customers, - The offer of employee training, - The possibility to get advice and recommendations, - Networking possibilities, - Very well known in the

	<i>Drawbacks:</i>	tourism branch worldwide. - Only possible for big hotels with enough resources, - Takes quite some time to gain the eco-label.
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As shown in the table above, all programs form a threat for the QualityTourism program in some way. Some might have the advantage of a lower membership fee per year, or not a membership fee at all.

This also means more or less promotional activities included in the membership fee and a recognition in the form of a certification included in the membership fee or not. Most of the organizations are already operating worldwide while others keep their activities close to home.

The organizations with a membership fee are more suitable for the bigger hotels that have enough resources to invest in such a program and the organizations without a membership fee are more suitable for the smaller hotels that do not have a lot of resources to spend on such sustainable programs. Since the EUCC will first focus on the smaller hotels in the QualityCoast destinations, the organizations without a membership fee form the biggest threat at the moment.

3.3 Force two: The power of buyers

The buyers can actually be divided in two groups: *the direct buyers* and *the indirect buyers*. The *direct buyers* are the business partners that are member of the QualityTourism business club and thus pay for the QualityTourism services and the *indirect buyers* are the tourists that stay at the green and sustainable hotels that are member of the QualityTourism business club. If appears that the tourists do not care whether a hotel has a QualityTourism Award or whether it belongs to the QualityTourism business club or not, it does not have any added value for such a hotel to become member of the QualityTourism business club. If there is no demand for such sustainable recognition among the clients (the tourists), it cannot be seen as a competitive advantage and will therefore not produce more profit for the hotels.

3.3.1 Potential business partners (direct buyers)

As potential business partners, ten random hotels in QualityCoast destinations at the Dutch coast have been selected to investigate whether they could be interested in becoming a member of the QualityTourism business club. These are the following:

1. *Hotel Hogerhuys **** in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. (Mrs. A. van Dillen)*
2. *Palace Hotel **** in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. (Mrs. A. Brauntjes)*
3. *Hotel Zeespiegel *** in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. (Enrico)*
4. *Hotel Savoy *** in Katwijk, the Netherlands. (Mr. M. Cornet)*
5. *Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin ***** in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. (Mr. R.J. Meinardi)*
6. *Hotel Clarenwijk *** in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. (Mrs. M. Duivenvoorden)*
7. *Hotel Hoogland *** in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. (Mr. Faber)*
8. *Hotel Doppenberg *** in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. (Mrs. C. Mantje)*
9. *Badhotel Renesse *** in Schouwen-Duiveland, the Netherlands. (Mr. Davidsen)*
10. *Hampshire Arc Hotel Zeeland *** in Schouwen-Duiveland, the Netherlands. (Mrs. D. van Eck)*

These ten hotels have been approached by phone (the names between the brackets are the names of the contact persons) and have been asked five short questions on sustainable practices and promotion.

The following questions have been asked:

1. *Did you know your destination has received a European award for sustainable tourism: the QualityCoast Award?*
2. *Are you interested in sustainability? If yes, through an eco-label or preferably in another way?*
3. *What will you give priority in the next years: printed media and personal contact at Tourism Fairs (like ITB), or internet and social media? Why?*
4. *Would you be interested in a local initiative to develop an eco-friendly vacation program for your destination, especially targeting spring and autumn?*
5. *Would you mind to be approached about this initiative by the association ‘‘Kust&Zee’’, that coordinates the QualityCoast program?*

When we look at the first question, it appeared that three out of the ten hotels did not know their municipality was a QualityCoast destination.

However, all hotels did seem to be interested in sustainability issues. Some less than others, because they had for example less money to spend or other priorities that needed to be solved first.

This was the case at the smaller hotels (*Hotel Clarenwijck* *** and *Hotel Hogerhuys* ****). Most of the approached hotels are currently working on the achievement of the Green Key certificate, and the Palace Hotel **** in Noordwijk is already in the possession of the Green Key certificate. The rest of the hotels are more interested in sustainability regarding the products they use and in terms of promotion (less paper usage, more promotion and payments via the internet and more promotion via social media channels). Nowadays the social media is a booming promotion tool in the hotel branch and the hotels thus have to follow this trend to satisfy their (potential) customer's needs and of course also to save money. This is the case among all approached hotels.

Badhotel Renesse *** in Schouwen-Duiveland mentioned to be of opinion that the Green Key certification program is far too commercial, so they prefer not to participate in this program. They are interested in sustainability, but more in terms of product usage and other smaller contributions. The QualityTourism program might therefore be an interesting alternative for this hotel.

All hotels would thus like to contribute to more sustainable tourism and most hotels would like to receive some certification for their sustainable efforts, like the Green Key certificate. However, often there are just not enough resources available to realize this.

3.3.2 Business partners (*) in Greece**

The same five questions were asked to the two main three star business partners in Greece (*the Porto Carras Grand Resort in Sithonia* and *the Club Calimera Sunshine Kreta Hotel*), unfortunately they were not willing to answer the questions nor by email neither by phone (*see Appendix 2.2*) during the period of writing.

3.3.3 Personal visit to the potential business partners in Noordwijk, the Netherlands

As follow-up on the questionnaire by phone, I went to Noordwijk on the 28th of June to visit the contacted hotels, since I contacted four out of the ten hotels there. The visit resulted very successful because I got to talk to the four contact persons that also responded the questionnaire by phone. The reason why I went to Noordwijk is to ask the persons I talked to on the phone personally what their first impression was after seeing the current brochure of the QualityTourism program (*see Appendix 3*), if they knew the program, what they would do if they would receive this brochure, what they would change about the brochure, what they liked, what image they had about the program after having seen the brochure, whether they actually knew the meaning of sustainable

tourism and whether they had suggestions regarding the use of new or additional marketing & communication tools to attract new QualityTourism business partners and thus make the program more successful.

Mrs. Annefiet Brauntjes, from *the Palace Hotel *****, commented that she was not attracted by the brochure because in her opinion too much text has been used and too little personal experiences of existing business partners have been shared. According to Mrs. Brauntjes, the ideas of the organization are not credible for the audience. Personal experiences from existing business partners are much more credible for the audience and above that, she stated that the benefits of the potential clients/business partners should also be stressed.

Mr. Arthur Goemaat (because of the absence of *Mrs. A. van Dillen*) from *Hotel Hugerhuys *****, commented that his first impression of the brochure was that it looked like a travel brochure and not like a program connected to sustainable tourism. According to Mr. Goemaat, too much text has been used. Above that, he mentioned that because the hotel receives many brochures, he would not pick this one out and pay extra attention to it because it is not an eye catcher and it gives you the wrong first impression. According to Mr. Goemaat, the idea of the program is good and of course every hotel would like to participate in such a program but first of all, all hotels think about the extra profit they gain from being a business partner, because that is why they exist in the first place. The EUCC should therefore carefully rethink and streamline the idea to make it credible and convincing for the potential business partners. It is not attractive enough yet.

Mrs. Marleen Duivenvoorden from *Hotel Clarenwijk ****, had a whole different opinion. According to her, the brochure looked very attractive and she would definitely read it if she would receive it. This could be because Hotel Clarenwijk is a pretty small hotel, and brochures therefore work better because they receive less brochures and have more time to read them. She also commented that she preferred much text because she likes to have all the information at first glance.

The first thing that marked the attention of *Mr. Robbert-Jan Meinardi* from *Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin ******, were the colors yellow (gold) and blue. According to Mr. Meinardi, these are cheap colors that make you think of cheap stores like Zeeman and Lidl. Above that, far too much text has been used according to Mr. Meinardi. It is better to make use of bullet points and a short catchy text.

Because of the different fonts, it becomes an inconsistent story that will not convince the receiver. Because the program is still very new, it could therefore be wise to start attracting business partners in the Netherlands, and therefore also create a cover with a nice image of the Dutch coast

for the brochure. Brochures change frequently, so as the program grows, the brochure should be changed. Mr. Meinardi commented that, if he would not know the story behind the brochure, he would throw it away immediately because according to him, it looks too American.

It for example looks like a promotion for *Time Sharing* at Aruba. According to Mr. Meinardi, this program has no added value for the hotel guests, whereas the Green Key for example does. Therefore he thinks that the plan should be discussed again thoroughly among the accommodations in the coastal cities.

None of the respondents knew the QualityTourism program before showing the brochure. All four hotels recommended to do most of the promotion via the internet and social media channels and to start targeting smaller hotels in QualityCoast destinations in the Netherlands. Once the program gains more recognition, the bigger hotels could be approached.

Conclusion visit Noordwijk

It appears that none of the approached hotels is very enthusiastic about the QualityTourism program and thus neither about becoming a member of the QualityTourism business club. It seems that at this moment the program will have most success with smaller hotels as target group (like Hotel Clarenwijk ***). The bigger hotels are more interested in well-known programs like the Green Key. The image of the QualityTourism program should thus change and be presented in a successful way if the EUCC wants to reach the bigger hotels. It might be wise to start focusing on the smaller hotels, and once the program gains more recognition, approach the bigger hotels.

3.3.4 Other possible business partners

- *TUI*. Since the EUCC already has an agreement with TUI, the organization might as well would like to become member of the QualityTourism business club. The QualityCoast program focuses on various TUI destinations and TUI creates brand awareness for the program by mentioning the QualityCoast destinations in their travel brochures (TUI Nederland, n.d., ‘‘Activiteiten’’, ‘‘Samenwerken’’ section, para. 3).

The EUCC could create a joint venture with travel agencies like TUI by bringing them into the QualityTourism business club. This way, the EUCC will be better able to reach the target group.

- *Destinet*. This is a network organization (portal) which brings together all kinds of organizations that strive to make tourism more sustainable. Destinet is owned by the European non-profit network organization ECOTRANS in partnership with the European Environment Agency, the United Nations Environment Program and the UN World Tourist Organization.

Officially, Destinet is registered as a UN ‘‘Partnership for Sustainable Development’’ (ECOTRANS, 2012, ‘‘About’’, ‘‘Destinet – Connecting sustainable tourism’’ section). Organizations can create a ‘‘MyDestinet’’ to promote their activities and create a valuable partner network.

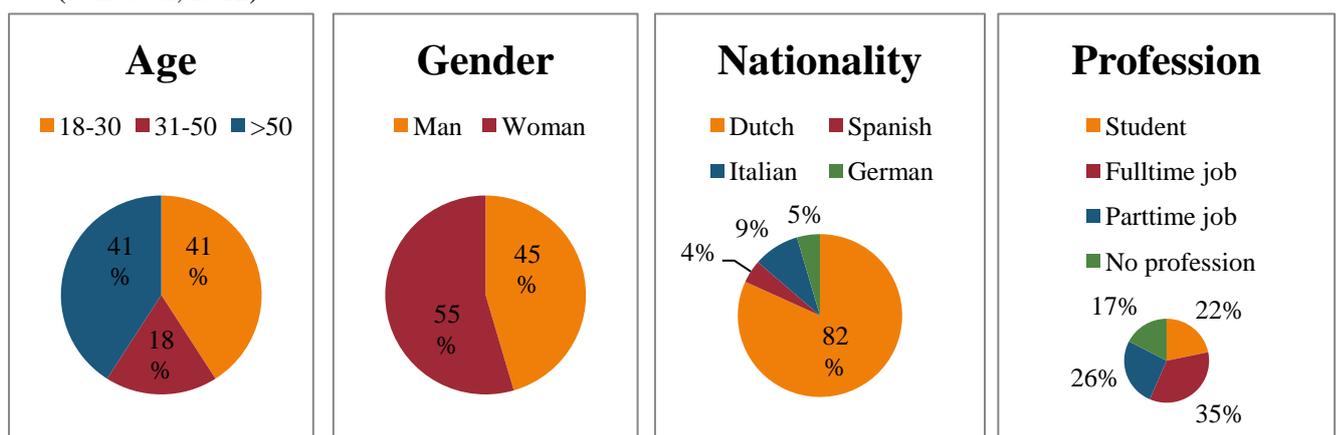
Since the EUCC is already member of ECOTRANS (EUCC, n.d., ‘‘EUCC Partnerships’’ section), this organization could mean a lot for the EUCC in terms of networking with organizations in the public and private sectors in the tourism branch on European level as well as worldwide.

3.3.5 The tourists (indirect buyers) : questionnaire results

Among the indirect buyers, the customers (tourists), a questionnaire on Facebook has been executed among a small panel of 22 persons (mainly young adults) from different countries (although mainly Dutch) to investigate whether the general public actually cares about the fact whether hotels participate in programs like the QualityTourism program or not. 453 persons were able to fill in the questionnaire, but only 22 did. The questionnaire is meant to get an idea on how the general public feels about sustainable tourism in general, where they normally go on holiday, what kind of holiday they prefer, by what transport means they normally go on holiday, whether they know the QualityTourism program and whether they think about the environment while selecting their holiday destination and the transport means to get there.

These are the general data of the respondents:

(Schouten, 2012)



Do tourists actually care whether their hotel is committed to sustainability or is the price more important? And would their decision on going to a certain destination be influenced when an eco-friendly destination would be cheaper, the same price or more expensive as any other destination?

100% of the respondents indicated to go to Europe on holiday once (50%), twice (18%) or three times a year (18%). Only 14% of the respondents indicated to go more than three times on holiday.

Most respondents indicated to go on holiday by car (58 %) and the rest of the respondents indicated to go on holiday by plane. 70% of the respondents preferred a hotel, resort or camping (tent or caravan) as accommodation.

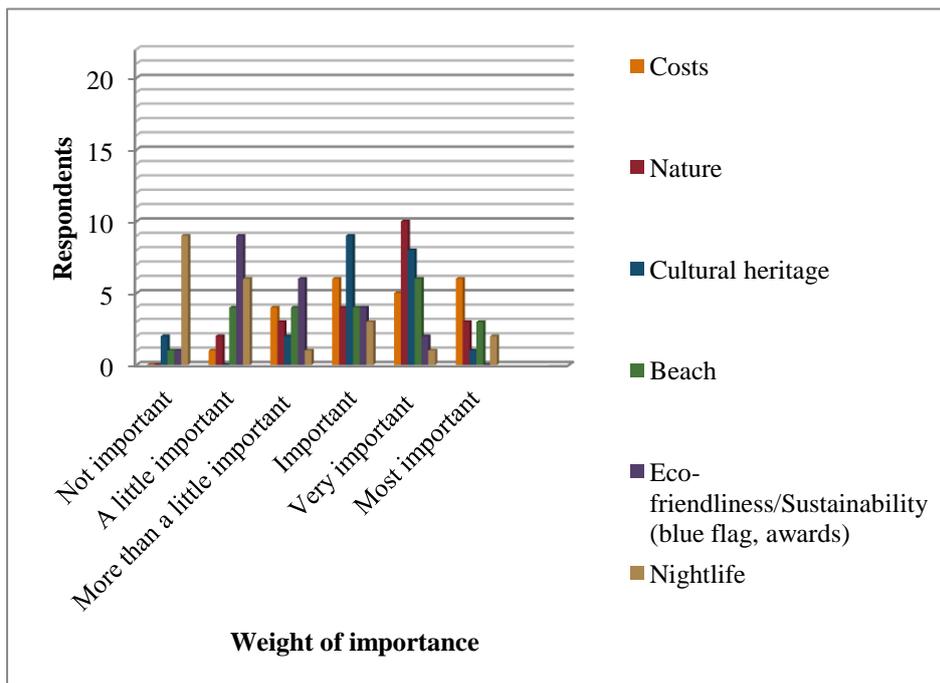
41% of the respondents would pay an extra eco tax to compensate the extra carbon emission when they would travel by plane, 41% would do this when it would only be a very small amount and 18% would not do this at all.

Another important result was that more than half of the respondents would still go to an eco-friendly destination even though this destination would be slightly more expensive. The respondents would thus be prepared to pay a bit more for celebrating a more sustainable holiday.

If an eco-friendly destination would be cheaper than any other destination, almost half of the respondents (46%) would automatically go there and almost half of the respondents (46%) would only go there if the destination fits the rest of their criteria.

As you can see in the table below, the questionnaire showed that even among young adults, nature and cultural heritage is rated as more important than nightclubs, beach or costs regarding their holiday destination. This is very striking, because you would assume that young adults would not spend a lot of money on their holiday and would like to have nightclubs around.

(Schouten, 2012)



Conclusion

From the questionnaire results, it appears that the tourists do care about sustainable tourism even though the price might be a bit higher. It did become clear that almost none of them knew the QualityTourism program. It could also be questioned whether they really know what sustainability means and stands for. After talking to some of the respondents in person, it became clear that almost everyone has their own definition of sustainable tourism, which they think is the right one, but this is often not the case.

However, probably with the right promotion and active involvement of tourists, the respondents and other tourists could get more enthusiastic about sustainability and then automatically also about programs like the QualityTourism program.

Sustainability is something most tourists think is a good thing, while they are actually not aware of the real meaning of the concept. So before they get to know more about sustainability they will not be very triggered by programs like the QualityTourism program. *See Appendix 2.1 for the complete questionnaire.*

3.4 Force three: The power of suppliers

In the case of the QualityTourism program, the suppliers would be similar organizations like the EUCC that offer a program similar to the QualityTourism program. If we take a look at the competitors in the external analysis earlier in the report, it can be concluded that these organizations are very different from the EUCC in the sense that they only represent hotels while the EUCC is a large international NGO with a much broader scope than the competitor organizations offering programs like the QualityTourism program. For the EUCC, the QualityTourism program is just a program among lots of other programs in different areas. This means that the importance of the program is not as great for the EUCC as the similar programs are for the competitor organizations. As far as the research conducted and after talking to the QualityCoast team, it can be concluded that there are no similar organizations (NGOs) compared to the EUCC that offer a similar program compared to the QualityTourism program.

This does not mean that the competitor organizations do not form a threat for the EUCC, but they cannot be seen as similar organizations.

3.5 The competitive environment

Nowadays, lots of different certification programs and eco-labels are presented to suppliers in the tourism branch. As for the suppliers as for the customers (the tourists) all of these programs seem the same because they all offer similar services. Of course the membership fees differ (some organizations do not ask for a membership fee at all), but at first sight, the programs all seem the same. For the EUCC it is thus very important to make a clear distinction between the QualityTourism program and other similar programs. In this market, it is very important to present a clear competitive advantage that shows the potential business partners why they should become member of the QualityTourism business club and not join some other certification program. Above that, it shows the customers (the tourists) why they should book a hotel that is business partner of the QualityTourism business club, or even better, with a QualityTourism Award in possession.

3.6 SWOT analysis

By combining the internal and external analysis, a SWOT analysis could be created to demonstrate the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding the introduction of the QualityTourism program into the chosen target market.

The strengths and weaknesses of the organization derive from the internal analysis and the opportunities and threats of the organization derive from the external analysis.

Strengths

- S1. The business partners can create their own Business Service Options package.
- S2. The program is not an eco-label, but it focuses on the specific strengths regarding quality and sustainability of the business partners.
- S3. Short application procedure because of the 2-step evaluation approach.
- S4. Because the QualityTourism program starts small because of the little resources available, the EUCC has more personal attention for their business partners and is better able to streamline the program in the beginning.

Weaknesses

W1. Little resources available so therefore most of the marketing & communication has to be done via the internet and social media channels and there are no resources for big and expensive marketing campaigns via other promotion channels.

W2. The QualityCoast team is very small, which may cause problems once the program grows. Above that, in the starting phase it is important to invest in the program and to make effective use of the resources and personnel available to make the launch of the program a real success.

Opportunities

O1. The QualityTourism business club will consist out of an exclusive club of top quality businesses in the tourism branch that will transform the dull and often unknown definition “sustainability” into something that is worth knowing more of for the general public. The QualityTourism business club should thus make the general public enthusiastic about sustainability.

O2. A breakthrough in social media. Since the EUCC is limited to the internet and social media channels in the communication and promotion of the QualityTourism program, by using the right people and channels in the right way, there lies the opportunity for the EUCC to build a strong image and reputation and to create brand awareness in no time.

Threats

T1. Strong competition. There are a lot of similar programs operating in the market and it is therefore very important to distinguish the QualityTourism program from the competitor programs and to demonstrate the competitive advantages of the program.

T2. No brand awareness so still no reputation to build upon.

T3. Weak first entrance into the target market, so for the organizations that do know the QualityTourism program it might be difficult to change the current image they have about the program.

3.7 Confrontation matrix

(Schouten, 2012)

		<i>External analysis</i>	
		<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<i>Internal analysis</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	S2O1 <i>Exploit and grow</i>	S1T1 S3T1 S4T3 <i>Defend and compete with strengths</i>
	<i>Weaknesses</i>	W1O2 <i>Improve and change to strong points</i>	W2T1 W2T2 W2T3 <i>Avoid and look for cooperation</i>

1. *Exploit and grow: (S2O1)*: The promotion of the strengths regarding quality and sustainability of the partner hotels, can be done in such a way that the general public will get enthusiastic and interested about sustainability practices and will therefore automatically become more interested in the QualityTourism program too.

2. *Defend and compete with strengths (S1T1)*: The Business Service Options package is a competitive advantage that the QualityTourism program has above the competition. This could be a reason why the potential business partners choose to join the QualityTourism business club, because they can choose the services they receive and adapt the membership fee to their available resources.

(S3T1): The short application procedure because of the 2-step evaluation approach is a competitive advantage, because often the evaluation procedure takes months to complete.

(S4T3): Because the QualityTourism business club is still small and will probably stay this way for a while, the EUCC can pay extra personal attention to satisfy the needs of the business partners and to try to change the image the potential business partners have about the program.

3. Improve and change to strong points: (W1O2): Because of the lack of resources, the EUCC is forced to do most of the marketing and communication via the internet and social media channels. This can be seen as a restriction for the organization, but it can also be seen as an opportunity. This way the EUCC is able to become specialized in the marketing and communication via social media channels. If this works out, it will save the EUCC a lot of money and this way the EUCC will be able to reach a very large audience via different channels, sending different messages, in no time.

4. Avoid and look for cooperation: (W2T1): In this strong competitive environment, it is necessary to create a strong marketing & communication mix to launch the program into the market. The organization needs to be present all over the place, sending the right message to the right person at the right time. And especially in the starting phase, the EUCC needs to invest the most in the QualityTourism program to make it a success. And with such a small team working on the program, this might become a problem.

(W2T2): In the starting phase it is very hard to create brand awareness and a strong reputation with such a small team working on the program. In the launch phase, it is of utmost importance to invest in the program and to give it the possibility to grow.

(W2T3): Since the first introduction of the QualityTourism program into the market was not as successful as expected, a lot more effort needs to be done this time to restore the damage in the reputation of the program. The launch of the program cannot fail again. Therefore it is necessary to have a strong and diverse team working on the program. And at the moment, the team might be too small to be able to accomplish this.

3.8 Marketing strategy

After conducting the internal and external analysis and presenting the SWOT and confrontation matrix, a marketing strategy that can be used for the launch of the QualityTourism program can be formulated.

According to Armstrong & Kotler (2009), the goal of the marketing strategy is to ‘‘create value for customers and build profitable customer relationships’’ (p. 79). They define the marketing strategy as ‘‘the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create this customer value and achieve these profitable relationships’’ (p.79). To be able to accomplish this, the EUCC should of course define the target market and decide on how to satisfy the chosen target market. Above that, the general public should be satisfied by the marketing strategy as well.

“Within the next five years, the EUCC will target smaller hotels in QualityCoast destinations in Europe and to start with, in the Netherlands. Every year, the QualityTourism business club should be doubled, starting with ten business partners at the end of this year. The business partners and the general public should be informed and attracted mainly by the internet, social media channels and a Smartphone app (if possible), since these are the most popular and thus effective marketing & communication channels nowadays and above that they suit the available budget. As the program grows, the QualityCoast team should grow as well. Every year, two extra trainees should be hired if the current team cannot satisfy the (potential) business partners and the general public the way they should anymore. If it appears a success at the end of this year, the EUCC should quit the one, two and three star business packages and only continue with the Business Service Options package to give the business partners freedom in the choice of the services they prefer and influence on the membership fee they pay. The Business Service Options package, together with the two-step evaluation approach is the unique selling position of the QualityTourism program and should therefore be valued.”

Chapter 4: Tactical communication advice

According to the already presented internal (organizational characteristics) and external analysis (competitive environment), the SWOT, the confrontation matrix and the marketing strategy earlier in this report, the tactical communication advice can now be presented. The advice will be of use from September 2012 till September 2013. The advice is therefore called a tactical advice and not a strategic advice, because the advice will take a narrower and short-term look at how to meet the goals. Every year the advice should be adapted according to the changes in the market and in the organization.

Important to always keep in mind during the creation of the marketing & communication mix is that ‘the EUCC is a low profile organization. Therefore the EUCC is not running for media attention’ (A. Salman, personal interview, 14 March 2012).

4.1 Strategic direction

4.1.1 Goals

The main goal of this communication advice is to help the EUCC to successfully introduce the QualityTourism program into the target market and to attract potential business partners for the QualityTourism business club.

An integrated marketing & communication strategy should be created that reaches the direct buyers (the potential business partners) and the indirect buyers (customers) at the same time. Therefore, a mix of social media channels needs to be developed with which the EUCC can:

- Get the attention of thousands of hotels and other relevant organizations (such as TUI) as a medium for them to reach thousands of potential clients (tourists).
- Get the attention from thousands of indirect buyers (potential clients / tourists) via the internet / social media with a combination of (audiovisual attractive and appealing) holiday related items / messages in which the link is made with the QualityCoast destinations and then of course with the hotels (QualityTourism business partners).

4.1.2 Budget

The EUCC does not have a concrete indication for a budget, but there is some information available on what will be possible regarding the use of marketing & communication tools and what not. The organization always employs two communication interns, that are being led by the QualityTourism coordinator (who belongs to the QualityCoast team).

According to the General Director Sustainable Development Albert Salman, there will be enough budget available to realize the marketing & communication tools indicated in the Business Service Options checklist (*see Appendix 5*). However, there will not be enough budget available for big commercial campaigns and advertisements, so the organization will have to stay limited to marketing and communication via holiday fairs, brochures, internet and social media for the marketing and communication (A. Salman, personal telephone conversation, 29 June 2012).

4.1.3 Target market

Top quality hotels (***) and higher) committed to quality and sustainability in QualityCoast destinations in Europe (to start with in the Netherlands). This year, smaller hotels will be targeted. Once the program gains some recognition and brand awareness, bigger hotels can be approached.

4.1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the communication advice can be divided in three parts: the Financial, the Marketing and the Societal objectives.

- *Financial objectives:*

1. Before the end of 2012, the QualityTourism business club should consist out of at least ten paying three star business partners within Europe. Every year, the organization should try to double the amount of business partners.

- *Marketing objectives:*

At the beginning of July 2012, the QualityCoast team has started to approach potential business partners in QualityCoast Award winning destinations of 2011 and in destinations nominated for the QualityCoast Awards 2012 by e-mail and by phone. For the phone calls, the same script has been used as for the questionnaire by phone to the ten potential business partners in QualityCoast destinations shown earlier in this report.

For the emails, please turn to *Appendix 6* for the scripts. In the first email, explanation is given on the QualityTourism program and the hotels are asked to fill in the attached Business Sustainable checklist within the next two weeks. To the hotels that sent back the Business Sustainable checklist, a follow-up email will be send, with the Business Service Options document as attachment. This way the hotels can create their own service package, while the EUCC can try to adapt the offer to their needs.

1. At least 20 potential business partners should be contacted every week.
2. The streamlining of the separate QualityTourism website (<http://www.qualitycoast.info/business-partners/index.htm>) should be completed by the end of October 2012.
3. According to the reactions about the QualityTourism brochure during the visit in Noordwijk, the brochure should be adapted before the end of October 2012.

- *Societal objectives:*

1. In 2013, at least four big social media marketing campaigns should be held to create awareness regarding sustainable tourism in Europe and the rest of the world and of course to gain brand awareness for the QualityTourism program (one every three months).

4.1.5 Core message

There will be created a club of top quality businesses (the QualityTourism business club) that will together strive for more sustainable tourism in the world and that will make the definition ‘sustainable tourism’ a modern definition that will not be seen as dull anymore by the general public.

4.2 Channels

At the moment, the QualityTourism program is promoted via the internet, social media channels (Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn), holiday fairs and the brochure.

After the research conducted, it appeared that the potential business partners do almost everything regarding the marketing and communication via the internet and social media. Most of the approached business partners do not even have brochures anymore. None of the approached hotels were active on holiday fairs. Not only the hotels, but also the general public does almost everything via the internet nowadays and is addicted to social media channels. Nowadays, only a handful of persons goes to a travel agency to book a hotel. According to professor e-marketing Cor Molenaar at the Erasmus University (van Geest, 2012), within the near future 90% of the tourists will book

via the internet, so travel agencies will become a rarity.

According to Telecompaper (Wijkman, 2012), at the end of 2011 more than 50% of the Dutch society had a Smartphone. This means a growth of more than 50% in comparison with 2010.

Among the Dutch citizens under the 30 years, the Smartphone usage is the highest. Among the Dutch consumers between 60 and 64 years old, 22% makes use of the Smartphone.

Mrs. Johnson (2012), states that the smartphone penetration is the highest in the US and the EU5 (UK, Spain, Italy, Germany, France), with a respective average usage of 41.8% and 44%. The highest smartphone reach in both regions is among the users between 25-34 and 35-44 years old. In the US there is a higher penetration among the users from 18-24 years old while in the EU5 region, there is a higher penetration among the 65+ users.

Why are these percentages important? To demonstrate that the internet and social media channels are very effective marketing & communication tools to reach the target group of the QualityTourism program as well as the general public.

4.2.1 Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are the cheapest and most effective marketing & communication tools to use for the development of this integrated communication strategy, because a lot of potential business partners as well as a lot of tourists are already active on these social media channels. And since we are talking about mass communication, the internet and social media channels are the best options.

Since the EUCC has a YouTube account under the name ‘‘qualitycoast’’ as well as various Facebook accounts, it should be possible to develop an integrated marketing & communication mix to attract potential business partners and at the same time reach the general public. The Facebook pages that should be used are the ‘‘Coastal & Marine Union’’ page, the ‘‘QualityCoast’’ page and the ‘‘QualityTourism’’ page. The LinkedIn account of the EUCC (named ‘‘Coastal & Marine Union’’) could also be used. It could also be interesting for the EUCC to create a Twitter account to include in the marketing & communication mix.

4.2.2 The ‘‘Coastal News App’’

As part of the marketing & communication mix, the EUCC could create a ‘‘Coastal News App’’ that contains all the information on the QualityTourism program, the QualityCoast destinations and the QualityTourism business partners (hotels) within these destinations.

If TUI would like to be involved in the program, the EUCC could also include TUI holiday offers that involve the QualityTourism business partners in the QualityCoast destinations.

4.3 Activities

4.3.1 Short promotional videos

Within each QualityCoast destination, the QualityTourism business partners (hotels) the EUCC has so far should be asked whether they would like to join forces with the other partner hotels to create several promotional videos for the general public to promote the QualityTourism program and the hotels at the same time. For this reason the hotels will be asked to take care of the financial aspect and the EUCC will arrange the rest.

Since the EUCC has an agreement with TUI, TUI could give financial support in exchange of promotion (inclusion in the videos). The videos should be short (about one minute) and should each take care of a different theme. Every month two videos should be produced.

The videos will be posted on the ‘‘qualitycoast’’ YouTube channel and if the partner hotels also have a YouTube account, the videos should also be posted there to reach a bigger audience. Above that, the videos will be posted on the ‘‘Coastal & Marine Union’’, the ‘‘QualityCoast’’ and the ‘‘QualityTourism’’ Facebook accounts and on the Facebook accounts of the partner hotels.

How is it possible that YouTubers get so many followers?

According to ‘‘YouTuber’’ DeStorm Powers (Sniderman, 2010), the real success in gaining more and more followers on YouTube is easy to describe but not that easy to realize. A high quality YouTube video worth following requires investment in both time and money. Above that, in order to have success on YouTube, you need to be present on social media networks like Twitter and Facebook, if you want your target audience to find you. Once they get to know you through these social media channels, you will have a better chance to break through via YouTube as well. You do have to make sure to present one consolidate identity, however it is important to keep surprising the audience with the uniqueness of your videos.

The audience needs to be triggered by the videos and needs to be curious for the next one to see. Actually, the viewer should remain with questions at the end of the video and therefore be curious for the next one. So each video for each destination should first of all treat a different theme (cultural heritage, nature, food, hotspots, sustainable practices, blue flag beaches) and secondly, should stay a bit mysterious at the end. The audience should be encouraged to search for more.

4.3.2 Facebook

Next to the promotional videos, the ‘‘QualityTourism’’ and the ‘‘QualityCoast’’ Facebook accounts should be used for weekly updates about the program activities and the business partners in the QualityCoast destinations. Every week, one QualityCoast destination should be chosen, the QualityTourism business partners in this destination should then be highlighted as well as the sustainable holiday hotspots and activities in the respective destinations. Above that, every week a theme should be chosen related to sustainability and this should then be linked to the chosen destination and partner hotels.

Every day, content (for example a question, a quote, a photo, a fact, a ‘‘did you know?’’) should be updated related to the chosen theme and destination.

The ‘‘Coastal & Marine Union’’ Facebook account can be used to post important updates on the destinations and programs. This Facebook account should remain more ‘‘business-like’’. The other two Facebook accounts can be used in a more playful and fun way to entertain the audience.

4.3.3 Twitter

The EUCC should create a Twitter account, since it costs nothing and can reach a big audience. It might be most effective to name the Twitter account ‘‘Coastal & Marine Union’’ (so that the audience is able to find the organization) and to use it to post short updates and fun facts on the QualityCoast destinations and the QualityTourism program and business partners. On Twitter, the same weekly QualityCoast destination and sustainable theme can be used to post fun facts, photos, quotes and questions every day.

4.3.4 The ‘‘Coastal News App’’

As final part in the marketing & communication strategy, the ‘‘Coastal News App’’ should be created. Since the percentages of Smartphone users in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe is so high, this should become a real success. The application should contain information on the EUCC itself, the QualityCoast and QualityTourism program activities, news about the destinations, business partners and for example TUI holiday offers. The application should contain a search engine.

4.3.5 Additional channels

Of course, the EUCC can keep promoting the QualityTourism program during conferences, workshops and (international) events they take part in anyway. This is only an extra opportunity that can be used to promote the program.

4.4 Implementation and follow-up

The implementation of the advice should be realized by the QualityCoast team and especially by the communication interns and the QualityTourism coordinator (who belongs to the QualityCoast team). These are the people that possess the knowledge on how to use the internet and social media channels. The creation of the ‘Coastal News App’ has to be done by an external organization. If possible, the EUCC should hire an extra Communication / ICT intern who is capable of developing the content and design of the application.

With this proposal, the EUCC could approach an external organization that is capable of developing an application for iPhone and Android smartphones and tablets.

Mr. Wilbrink from the organization Indicia Interactiv recommended to start with a simple application as promotional support to provide information for the audience on the EUCC itself, the QualityCoast destinations, the QualityTourism program and the business partners. Just a basic application with a search engine to start with. The costs will considerably raise when it would be possible for the users to login with their Facebook account so the EUCC can see the user profiles. The EUCC should therefore start with an application that just contains up to date information to promote the program and to inform the users. The costs to create an application with this intention would be 15.000€ for the first device, iPhone and another 10.000€ for the second device, Android (personal telephone conversation, 7 August 2012).

Mr. Dirksen from the organization Maxmobi agreed with Mr. Wilbrink regarding the price and the fact that in the beginning, the application should remain simple. According to Mr. Dirksen, the development of the ‘Coastal News App’ would include four programs: design, backend (a system that manages and renews all the information) iPhone and Android. Altogether it would take the organization about four weeks to complete the whole ‘Coastal News App’ and the total costs would also amount to about 25.000€ (personal telephone conversation, 8 August 2012).

If the EUCC decides to keep the brochure, the brochure should be developed by the QualityCoast team, just like has been the case with the current brochure.

As follow-up, weekly meetings should be organized with the QualityCoast team and the General Director Sustainable Development, Albert Salman. During these meetings the progress of the integrated marketing & communication strategy should be discussed and the progress and effectiveness of the strategy needs to be evaluated and changed if necessary.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this marketing & communication plan for the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC), research has been conducted to find out *what marketing & communication tools would be most adequate to introduce the QualityTourism program into the target market and how these tools should be implemented*. The main aim of this marketing & communication plan is to enlarge the QualityTourism business club.

Since the first introduction of the QualityTourism program was only to explore the market opportunities, the program now needs to be officially launched into the chosen target market. Therefore, next to a business & implementation plan, a marketing & communication plan had to be created. After conducting the internal and external analysis, it became clear that the current use of marketing & communication tools should be adapted in order to make the launch of the program a success. None of the approached potential business partners (as well as most of the questionnaire respondents) knew the QualityTourism program before contacting them, so this means the QualityTourism program is promoted via the wrong channels or by using the right channels in the wrong way. Until now, the QualityTourism program has been promoted via the internet (limited), social media channels, holiday fairs and the brochure.

However, after conducting the questionnaire by phone and the personal visit to the four contact persons of the approached hotels in Noordwijk, it appeared that none of them participated in holiday fairs. Nowadays, all marketing & communication is done via the internet and social media channels. Especially the last one is a valuable marketing & communication tool and the EUCC should make effective use of this low cost opportunity to fully integrate the QualityTourism marketing & communication strategy.

Furthermore, after showing the four contact persons of the hotels in Noordwijk the QualityTourism brochure, it appeared that the brochure gives the receiver the impression of presenting a travel agency and not a program connected to sustainable tourism. Next to that, brochures are not really used anymore by most of the approached hotels and since they receive many brochures on a daily basis, the brochure really needs to jump out to be read. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the QualityTourism brochure. The EUCC should adjust the brochure according to the recommendations given by the contacted hotels or the EUCC should decide to stop using the brochure in the marketing & communication mix.

During the field research, it also appeared that the EUCC should adjust the target group of the QualityTourism program. Since the program does not have any name recognition yet and did not

seem very interesting for the bigger hotels approached (they prefer to participate in the worldwide well-known programs like the Green Key), it might be wise to start focusing on the smaller hotels in QualityCoast destinations in Europe and to start with, in the Netherlands.

The EUCC introduced the Business Service Options package (*see Appendix 5*), so the hotels with less available resources can adapt the membership fee to their financial possibilities. When approaching smaller hotels, a brochure could be useful because often, smaller hotels receive less brochures and have thus more time to read them.

The most important conclusion is that the market of sustainability programs is highly competitive and because the programs are often hard to distinguish from each other it is very important to have a unique marketing & communication strategy to be remembered by the target group. As mentioned in the tactical communication advice, there is only a little budget available. Therefore, the internet and social media channels are the best options for the marketing & communication mix. These are also the most popular marketing & communication tools among the target group (business partners) and the general public (tourists). Above that, a Smartphone application could be created as extra addition.

The objectives to be achieved by the advice are the following: the QualityTourism business club should consist out of at least ten paying three star business partners and this amount should be doubled every year (financial), at least 20 potential business partners should be contacted every week, the QualityTourism brochure should be adapted and the streamlining of the QualityTourism website should be completed by the end of October 2012 (marketing), in 2013 four big social media campaigns should be conducted to gain brand awareness (societal).

The implementation of the tactical communication advice is the responsibility of the small QualityCoast team, and therefore the team should grow as the program grows. The Smartphone application should of be developed by an external organization. As follow-up, weekly meetings should be organized with the QualityCoast team and the General Director Sustainable Development, Albert Salman.

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Appendices

1. Interview article

Date: 14 March 2012

Duration: 45 minutes

Interviewee: Mr. A. Salman

Function: General Director Sustainable Development at the Coastal & Marine Union in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Programs

As international NGO, the EUCC is involved in a lot of programs. The most important ones are QualityCoast for green and sustainable tourism, OURCOAST which is a program that actually delivers a lot of knowledge to the whole coastal community, it provides good practices for coastal management in general, so it is important for the coastal practitioners community, like coastal managers, coastal planners and politicians that want to improve the management practices in their community. There is also a program that is examining the biodiversity around shipwrecks, the Program Healthy North Sea (2011-2013). The stakeholders of the programs are different and wide. For the OURCOAST program, the most important stakeholders are coastal practitioners, for the program Healthy North Sea, it is fishermen and for the QualityCoast program, the most important stakeholders are policy makers and planners in coastal areas trying to attract tourists, tour operators and the public. For QualityTourism (a new sisterprogram of QualityCoast that focuses on the private sector in the tourism branch) it is the whole business sector in QualityCoast destinations. The visitor centre of the EUCC on the Schevening Pier can also be seen as one of the most important programs. X-Pierience (the name of the visitor centre) is very important as well for the communication of the QualityCoast program and its destinations.

Relation with the European Commission

Most of the EUCC programs are EU related, so therefore the EUCC International Office has a lot of contact with the European Commission. The EC has different DGs, these are a kind of ministries, and EUCC's closest relation is with the DG Environment. The EUCC helps the European Commission in the development of European policies for coastal management and for the marine environmental policy. The European policy the EUCC is involved in is called the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and this directive is still in the preparation phase (defining criteria, defining objectives and defining ways to measure the success of policies). The EUCC is helping the European Commission with the completion of this directive. The EUCC is also

involved in the DG Research, because it is involved in different research programs for the EU, and the EUCC is a link with DG Mare (which is Latin for *sea*) for the fisheries policies. The relation between the EUCC and the European Commission is good. Every week, the EUCC has meetings with the European Commission by phone, e-mail and skype. Furthermore, about ten times a year someone from the EUCC will go to Brussels to meet in person during workshops and conferences.

Organizational culture

The Coastal & Marine Union is a bottom up organization. It is an association, so the members own the organization. Therefore the members can have input whenever they want. They can get into the Board, they can be involved in the programs. On the other side, the Board has created several offices (such as the EUCC International Office in Leiden) and these offices cannot always be bottom-up. This is because they are responsible for a lot of money and staff and for the execution of the policies. However, the organizational culture is not so dominated by official procedures, hierarchy or formalities, the EUCC tries to be efficient and effective. The EUCC tries not to do everything on its own, but they try to involve the members through the national branches.

They try to involve the whole association, the whole active network in everything they do. But of course they need a management team and directors to make decisions, and of course not always everyone agrees, but the EUCC does try to make the hierarchy light and not rigorous. The EUCC really takes into account all kinds of cultural differences because they work with a lot of people from different cultures, also in the offices itself. Together they make sure that they try to be open at least to European cultures.

It can be stated that the leadership of the organization is decentralized, because also the national branches which bring together the EUCC members (for example in Germany), have organized themselves sometimes as an association according to national law. They do their work in their country and they decide. This is the same in Spain, France and in the Netherlands for example. The EUCC International Office in Leiden divides the tasks. They bring together all the national branches and make sure they complement each other in what they do. But the EUCC International Office will not recruit employees in Germany, without the agreement of the national branch in Germany. However, the EUCC International Office is responsible for the international relationships as an international organization. They do the contact with Brussels for example. There are big differences between the national branches of the EUCC. Every national branch has a niche. In Germany for example, the EUCC attracted a lot of people with an expertise in marine research, so their national branch is strong with marine research. In France, the EUCC concentrates on dune management and dry habitat for example. Every national branch thus has their expertise

on a certain field. And together they cover the whole field. So they are complementary to each other.

Communication tools

The EUCC uses various communication tools, both internally and externally.

Examples of external communication tools are: the website, newsletters in several languages (both internal and external), different Facebook pages (one for QualityCoast, one for the Dutch national branch, one for the EUCC International Office), LinkedIn (for international communication between experts on a certain topic).

Examples of internal communication tools are: skype meetings, conferences such as Litteral, which brings together members and non-members to discuss on scientific topics every two years, ICCM (the International Conference for Coastal Management, which is organized every year) and the Coast GIS (Geographic Information System) conference, which is organized every two years on how you can use this system for coastal management and re-management. Other examples are: workshops, board meetings (advisory board meetings at conferences for example), communication teams for the staff, department unit meetings (team meetings), a scientific journal published by the German publisher Springer, the Journal of Coastal Conservation. The EUCC is also member of different information and expert networks (IUCN, Econet, Biomarine for example). Every national branch has some unique communication tools.

Organizational identity

The public sees the EUCC as an environmental organization that works in a non-activist way. Albert Salman mentioned that this is exactly the way the EUCC wants to be perceived by its public. EUCC is an expert-based/information based organization. Not opinion or religion based. Therefore objectivity is an important aspect for the EUCC. Nothing is said without being convinced that it is at least close to the truth based upon research or expertise. EUCC's motivation and mission is around the concept of sustainability. The organization is for something and not against something. It is for making progress in sustainability and quality, and the last one in terms of the quality of life of local people living in the coastal areas and the quality of the public domain as you experience that as an inhabitant as a citizen and as a tourist.

Anything that can promote that, that is connected with EUCC's identity. Full sustainability does not exist, but more sustainability does. The most important core values of the EUCC are reliability, truth and being driven by positive principles like sustainability, caring for the future and human rights.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The EUCC has two policies on Corporate Social Responsibility. Firstly, the EUCC has its own CSR policy, because of the need to be an ambassador for their own organization. An example is reducing carbon footprint by travelling to a conference by train instead of by plain. Albert Salman said: “Of course you cannot always avoid travelling by plain, but we are aware of that.” (*Personal interview, March 14, 2012*). Secondly, the EUCC tries to encourage the business sector with whom they work in the fisheries and tourism branch to develop a CSR policy and also to cooperate closely with them to improve their policies. The main aim of creating a QualityTourism Business Club is to help the private sector in the tourism branch to improve their policy performances, because nowadays the performance regarding sustainability is very poor within this sector.

Reputation

In the past the EUCC has had some image problems. When the EUCC was not as big as it is now, the EUCC was seen as very small. However, according to WWF and Greenpeace, the EUCC is still small. Another issue nowadays is that in the Netherlands the EUCC is an umbrella organization and here the EUCC has members both experts and organizations, for example NGO's. These NGO's try to use the EUCC as an umbrella for their own purposes.

If the European Commission asks the EUCC to represent one of these NGO's, the NGO rejects this proposal and wants to act independently. They have their own interest to also promote themselves and wave their flag and be in direct contact with the European Commission. Sometimes these NGO's see the EUCC as a platform, an umbrella and sometimes as a competitor. Because in any field, whether it is cultivation, environment, human rights or development aid there is competition for money and to get access to funding, an organization needs to be all over the place and make sure its flag and logo is on top. Therefore it is a competitive environment.

Issues

Within the area of tourism, sustainability and carbon footprint is a big issue. Besides that, fishery (by chatch) is also an big issue. The EUCC is providing its expertise on these areas towards the European Commission. For example about the by catch of fish. Half the fish that is being caught by fishermen is thrown overboard, because they have too little commercial value compared to the fish the fishermen prefer and the EUCC tries to reduce this.

An internal issue, is that organizations like the EUCC are facing hard times economically, because national governments have actually abandoned their subsidies programs.

Therefore, many organizations have to reduce their size with considerable amounts. The EUCC has to make sure that they are also able to do their work next year. There is less money from subsidies, therefore the EUCC is focusing more on the business sector and on the market. The EUCC has to provide more services to the market. Just because of the fact that the government is not interested anymore.

Cross Cultural Challenges

In Europe there are not that much challenges. However, with the QualityCoast and QualityTourism programs, the EUCC is preparing a global roll out to Southeast Asia and Latin America. This means that issues like human rights will be faced, which the EUCC have not faced before within Europe. The EUCC is in the process of being recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, which is a UN Council. The EUCC wants to stick to the Universal for Human Rights of the UN. It is not always necessary to follow the Western European or Dutch intuition on this human rights matter. There is a need to engage with the intercultural understanding and try to improve things for everybody. There is a need to understand what the situation is and then slowly create awareness for change. The EUCC is in progress of creating partnerships with other NGO's, for example Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and so on.

Future expectations

The most important contribution over the next few years will be in the field of sustainable tourism. There is a need to try to get engaged in broader NGO partnerships worldwide in which the EUCC tries to make a difference in sustainable and socially responsible tourism.

This affects a lot of aspects in the things that hopefully are brought to the attention and brought to the awareness of all of us as a tourist. The EUCC thinks of awareness policies to change the impact of tourism from being devastating to be a little bit less devastating to the planet, to the local identity, cultural heritage and local communities.

2. Questionnaires

2.1 Questionnaire among the general public (tourists)

Page: 1

Sustainable tourism: How does it influence the choice of your holiday destination?

My name is Irene Schouten and currently I am writing a Marketing & Communication Plan for the QualityTourism Awards 2012 of the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC). People are increasingly interested in sustainability issues, also when selecting their holiday destination. More and more people are thinking and living ‘green’, which means that within the near future a lot more tourism eco-labels will be seen in travel guides and websites. A very important part of the tourism branch is of course the private (business) sector of each tourism destination. To the private sector belong for example: hotels, beach taverns, campsites, restaurants and companies making local products.

Tourists are constantly in touch with the private sector, probably much more than they are with the public sector. And this is the reason why the QualityTourism Awards program has been brought into life. This is a daughter program of the QualityCoast Awards. The main aim of QualityTourism Awards is to further encourage and suggest the business partners that are member of the QualityTourism Business Club about improvements of their sustainability and CSR policies.

What I would like to know is whether people actually care about these Tourism Sustainability Awards and to what extent they influence their end decision to go to a certain holiday destination.

Page: 2

Sustainable tourism: How does it influence the choice of your holiday destination?



1.

What is your age?

- < 18
- 18-30
- 31-50
- > 50



2.

What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman



3.

What is your nationality? *



4.

What is your profession?

- Student
- Fulltime job
- Parttime job
- No profession



5.

Are you familiar with the QualityCoast and / or QualityTourism Awards?

- Yes. Please specify.
- No



6.

In general, how often do you go on holiday each year?

- Only once
- Twice
- Three times a year
- More than three times a year



7.

Where do you normally go on holiday?

- Europe
- Asia
- Latin America
- Other. Please specify.



8.

What kind of holiday do you prefer? (Max. 2)

- Camping; tent or caravan
- Camping; bungalow
- Hotel / Resort
- Hostel
- Other. Please specify.



9.

In general, by what transport means do you go on holiday?

- By car
- By plain
- Other. Please specify.



10.

Do you think about the environment during the selection of the transport means when you go on holiday?

- Yes, always
- No, actually never
- Sometimes. Please specify.



11.

If you travel by plain, would you be prepared to pay an extra eco tax to compensate the caused carbon emission?

- Yes
- Only if it is a very small amount
- No



12.

Please rank the following factors in order of importance in the selection of your holiday destination.

	Least important			Most important		
Costs	<input type="radio"/>					
Nature	<input type="radio"/>					

Cultural heritage	<input type="radio"/>					
Beach	<input type="radio"/>					
Eco-friendliness / Sustainability (blue flag, awards)	<input type="radio"/>					
Nightlife	<input type="radio"/>					



13.

If an eco-friendly awarded destination would be cheaper than any other destination of your choice, would you go there?

- Yes, no doubt
- Only if the destination fits my other requirements
- No. Please specify.



14.

If the price would be the same, would you prefer to go to an eco-friendly destination or to any other destination of your choice?

- An eco-friendly destination
- Any other destination
- I do not really care. Please specify.



15.

If an eco-friendly destination would be slightly more expensive, would you still go to such a destination?

Yes

No

Depends. Please specify.



Submit!

Page: 3

Thank you very much for your time! Of course, all results will only be used for the writing of the Marketing & Communication Plan and absolutely no personal details will be made public.

2.2 Questionnaire among the existing business partners in Greece (0 answers)

Page: 1

Questionnaire on the Introduction of the QualityTourism Program 2012

This questionnaire has been developed to investigate the success of the launch of the brandnew QualityTourism program 2012. Since we are creating a Marketing & Communication Plan for the program at the moment, we would like to know which marketing & communication tools are the most adequate for the successful execution of the program in that sense that the business partners will gain the ultimate advantage of their membership of the QualityTourism business club

Page: 2

Questionnaire on the Introduction of the QualityTourism Program 2012



1.

Did you know your destination has received a European award for sustainable tourism: the QualityCoast Award? *



2.

Are you interested in sustainability? If yes, through an eco-label or preferably in another way? *



3.

What will you give priority in the next years: printed media and personal contact at Tourism Fairs (like ITB), or Internet and Social Media? Why? *



4.

Would you be interested in a local initiative to develop an eco-friendly vacation program for your destination, especially targeting spring and autumn? *



5.

Would you mind to be approached about this initiative? *

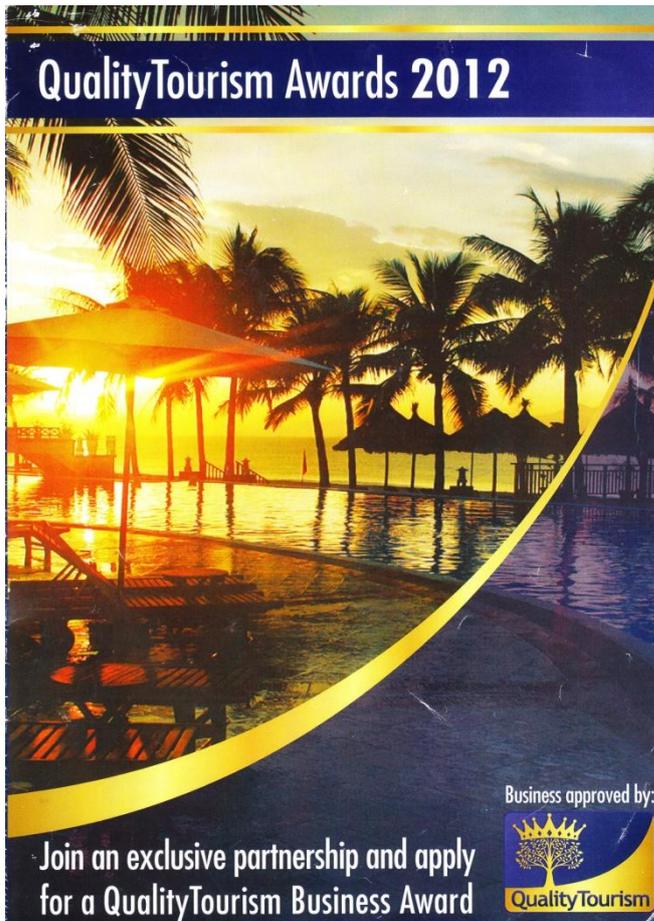


Submit!

Page: 3

Thank you very much for your time! Obviously, the results will only be used within the organization for the writing of the Marketing & Communication Plan.

3. QualityTourism brochure



QualityTourism Awards 2012

Join an exclusive partnership and apply for a QualityTourism Business Award

QualityCoast is among the largest international partnerships for sustainable tourism, with more than a 100 exceptional award-winning destinations and a select Business Partnership. This partnership is involved in the preparation of an exclusive new award series: the **QualityTourism Business Awards**. The first awards of this series will be announced and presented in autumn 2012.

An effective promotion of your high-level tourism service and of your sustainability efforts to the public

The **QualityTourism Business Awards** are introduced in order to provide distinctive value to high-end tourism businesses, which contribute to aspects of sustainability, a greener and a cleaner environment! Those who meet our criteria will be awarded and further promoted to the public as award winners.

Our Advantages

Time – As an improvement to the procedure in some other eco-labels, we developed a new 2-step evaluation procedure: through our Checklist we can assess whether you can already become a **Partner**; the 2nd step is a form to apply for an Award. We have drastically reduced the time for the evaluation and the size of our documents is as low as possible, so that you get your Partnership assessment and Award as quick as possible.

We Promote You – Directly upon passing either of the two steps, we start promoting your specific services and strengths to people who are looking to spend their holiday at a place like yours, but who are not yet familiar with you.

How do we promote you?

The partnership of **QualityCoast Destinations** and Initial Business Partners launched an extensive campaign to promote themselves as the most attractive destinations for visitors interested in nature and landscape, environment, cultural heritage and local identity. We award their effort in tourism **quality and sustainability**. Furthermore, the **QualityCoast Destinations** are highlighted in travel brochures, in company and in-flight magazines, as green and clean ones.

After our successful presence at the Dutch Tourism Expo (*Vakantiebeurs 2012*), attracting 120 000 people looking for holiday options, our campaign will continue to expand. Examples are:



- promotion at holiday fairs: the Dutch Vakantiebeurs (January), ITB Berlin, (March, attracting 170 000 people), and the World Travel Market (London, November);

- dissemination of various publications including our own magazines and brochures (in several languages, circulation 250.000) throughout Europe;

The **QualityCoast social media** campaign (through Facebook, LinkedIn; YouTube...); will enable us to reach more people, providing them with more information about all destinations and business partners.



The campaign provides multiple opportunities to any company in and outside **QualityCoast destinations**. Participation does not only help you to profit as a company in a commercial way, but also contributes to the realization of your CSR policy

We ask from you, as a QualityTourism Business Partner ...

- To specify how your company contributes to aspects of sustainability, by completing our checklist.

- To plant a 'QualityTourism Tree' in your area as a symbol of the partnership; this can be a media event, making a nice story!

- To be an ambassador of "your" destination, by informing, and promoting to your municipality the QualityCoast Policy Award program (optional)

- An active support of quality and sustainability, e.g. through an exchange or cooperation with one or more other Business Partners.

- Willingness to consider participation in Travelife or Green Key eco-label certification in the future (applies only to hotels).

- Making a financial contribution to the **QualityTourism** programme. (See back page)



QualityTourism Awards 2012

Who can join us?

Top-level businesses related to the tourism sector, directly or indirectly, are welcome in our partnership.

We focus on exclusive business stakeholders connected to the tourism industry, such as:

- Hotels (3 stars and higher only)
- Restaurants, Beach taverns
- Camp sites
- Companies making local products
- Companies making products that contribute to the environment or sustainability.

The QualityTourism Business Awards 2012

The idea for QualityTourism Business Award has been developed by the QualityCoast Team at the EUCC, as an effort to further implement sustainability in the destinations that participate in the QualityCoast program and non-QualityCoast destinations. The QualityCoast program is concentrating on tourism sustainability at a policy level, by collaborating with municipalities. Now we go further by promoting sustainability issues in the private sector and by raising awareness on the importance of green tourism and sustainable management within and among businesses.

QualityTourism Business Award

The QualityTourism Business Award is a new award that will be launched in autumn 2012. It will only be given to top-class businesses who promote and support the idea of sustainable tourism.

Registration for an award is only possible for QualityTourism Business Partners. This is because QualityTourism Business Partners already have to pass the checklist re: their sustainability performance.

Through the data collected through our checklists, extended research, and presentations by candidates on special achievements for sustainability, we want to identify, choose and award the best businesses in the field of sustainability, quality and services. We aim at creating a premium award with added and distinctive value in the field of wide public promotion.

Benefits for participants may be twofold:

Strengthen visibility

We aim to strengthen the image of a sustainability oriented business, to help them attracting new segments of the market; businesses can use the reference to the QualityTourism Business Partnership - and later, to the Award.

Create Opportunity

Events can be organized at award winning hotels, restaurants, etc.; extend or empower your brand at an international level; opportunities to create new business partnerships.

Requirements for applicants

- Company management is oriented towards sustainability
- Meet highest quality standards; for hotels: 3 and above stars category
- Highly customer and service oriented
- A special effort must be made for aspects of sustainability.

Types of Awards

- QualityTourism **Platinum** Award
- QualityTourism **Gold** Award
- QualityTourism **Silver** Award
- QualityTourism **Bronze** Award

Our Vision

Creating a network of sustainability oriented, exclusive businesses at a premium level will increase the awareness of the business brand in consumers' minds and can help promoting it as a the most attractive one, connected with sustainability and high quality services; and it can bring top class businesses together, so as to create the feeling among tourists that QualityTourism partners are part of an "elite business club".

Despite the fact that our QualityTourism Business Award concept is brand new, we are already in discussion with the first applicants. Our goal is to expand quickly and to look for new exclusive businesses throughout the World.



It is very important to share ideas among high-level businesses in this new network. Alfredo Efthimiou - General Manager CLUB CALINERASunshine Kreta & Sunshine CreteVillage, Greece

The QualityCoast Team

at the Coastal & Marine Union - EUCC - Leiden (The Netherlands) / Barcelona (Spain) / Klaipeda (Lithuania) www.qualitycoast.info tel. 00 3171 51 22 900



What do we offer to you as a Business Partner?

You can choose from three service packages, connected to one star, two star or three star Business Partnership, as follows:

Service package	★	★★	★★★
QualityTourism door plate/certificate, banner or flag	+	+	+
QualityTourism flags and banners (retail price)	+	+	+
Use of QualityTourism in your own communication	+	+	+
Inclusion in our brochures (1)		+	+
Inclusion in the Dutch Kust&Zee Guide (2)		+	+
Inclusion in our websites		+	+
Your folder in our exhibit at Scheveningen Pier (3)			+
Your folder in our stand at holiday fairs			+
Promotion in our social media campaigns			+
Possibility to apply for a QualityTourism Business Award	+	+	+
Annual contribution (non-QualityCoast Destination)	300€	1500€	3000€

- 1) Next edition to be published in May 2012 (in English-German); dissemination in all QualityTourism destinations and at the Vakantiebeurs (Dutch Tourism Expo) in the Netherlands, ITB (Berlin) and the World Travel Market
- 2) 200.000 copies, dissemination throughout the Netherlands, next publication in May 2012



- 3) QualityTourism exhibitions and display "Green Holidays at the Coast" will be composed as a part of our public information center Kust&Zee x-Pierence: attention value for all 2 million annual visitors of the Pier of Scheveningen (The Hague, the Netherlands).

The above annual contributions applied to business partners outside QualityCoast Destinations. Once your municipality has become a QualityCoast destination (by winning a QualityCoast policy award), the annual contribution will decrease by 20%.

4. Business Sustainability checklist



Business Sustainability Checklist

☞ Companies in QualityCoast destinations are kindly requested to complete this checklist.
 ☞ This checklist will not in any way be used to (dis)qualify efforts of companies.
 ☞ It is a tool to assess interest in sustainability within the QualityCoast destination, and to prepare joint business efforts to enhance quality and sustainability performance.
 ☞ If you have limited time, please restrict to the first six questions indicated in yellow.
 ☞ Please contact us for any clarification!
 ☞ The QualityTourism Business Team, 2 July 2012

Your present involvement in sustainability	Yes	In progress	No	Which programme?
Do you have an environmental policy or a special activity or facility for sustainability? Maybe you provide environmental information to your clients?				
Does your company already participate in any eco-friendly or sustainable vacation programme?				
Is your company already certified through an eco-label? If not, are you considering this?				
Your preferences for sustainability in the near future	Yes	Maybe	No	Comments, questions
Are you interested to participate in the installation of (photo-voltaic) solar panels together with other businesses in your destination? A joint action will have a quick return on investment, and great publicity.				
Are you interested in other tips, advice or cooperation in the field of sustainability?				
Would like to be involved in the development of an eco-friendly vacation package, especially aiming to attract visitors in spring and autumn?				
Do you comply with the following world wide GSTC criteria? (http://new.gstcouncil.org) – You don't need to complete these if you have an eco-label or if you send us your Environmental policy	Yes	In progress	No	Comments, example (optional)
A.1. The company has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health, and safety issues.				
A.2. The company is in compliance with all relevant international or local legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labor, and environmental aspects).				
A.3. All personnel receive periodic training regarding their role in the management of environmental, sociocultural, health, and safety practices.				
A.4. Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken where appropriate.				

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A.5. Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business.				
A.6. Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure ...				
A.6.1. ... comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements;				
A.6.2. ... respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, and land rights and acquisition;				
A.6.3 ... use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction;				
A.6.4 ... provide access for persons with special needs.				
A.7. Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behavior.				
B.3. Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business, where available.				
C.4 The business uses elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops.				
D.1.1. Purchasing policy favors environmentally friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food, and consumables.				
D.1.2. The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and the business actively seeks ways to reduce their use.				
D.1.3. Energy consumption is measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption are adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.				
Do you generate electricity or hot water from sun or wind?				
D.1.4. Water consumption is measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption are adopted.				
D.2.1. Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are measured, and procedures are implemented to reduce and offset them as a way to achieve climate neutrality.				
D.2.2. Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible.				
D.2.3. A solid waste management plan is implemented, with quantitative goals to minimize waste that is not reused or recycled.				
D.2.4. The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized; substituted, when available, by innocuous products; and all chemical use is properly managed.				

D.2.5. The business implements practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants.				
D.3.3. The business uses native species for landscaping and restoration, and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.				
Only for factories, farms or other producers				
Do you produce typical local products ?				
Do you produce certified products ?				
Only for hotels and restaurants				
Do you have a sustainability policy on fish on the restaurant's menu ? E.g. re: MSC-fish, shark fin soup, ...				

CONTACT DETAILS:	
Company Name:	
Contact Person:	
Phone number & E-mail:	
Post address:	
Company website:	

PLEASE RETURN THIS CHECKLIST TO THE QUALITYTOURISM SECRETARIAT:

P.O. Box 11232, 2301 EE Leiden, The Netherlands
 Tel: +31 71 5122900; Fax: +31 71 5124069
www.qualitytourism.info - office@qualitytourism.info

☞ Thank you for completing this list!

Best Regards,



Business Team

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5. Business Service Options checklist

	<h1>Business Service Options</h1>	
<i>☞ Please complete this list to make your own customized Service package in accordance with your interest.</i>		
☞ Wall Plate		
<i>for your entrance: Plexiglas wall plate 10 x 13 cm, with logo and year</i>		
WALL PLATE OPTIONS	SIZE	Your preference and number
Indicate your preferred size		
Standard	10 cm x 13 cm	
☞ Banner		
<i>for your outdoor banner pole: heavy duty (Spun polyester) banner, with the QualityCoast logo:</i>		
BANNER OPTIONS	SIZE	Your preference and number
Indicate your preferred size		
Small	300cm x 100 cm	
Medium	300cm x 120 cm	
Large	350 cm x 120 cm	
Extra large	400 cm x 100 cm	
☞ Flag		
<i>for your flagpole, heavy duty (Spun polyester) flag with the QualityCoast logo:</i>		
FLAG OPTIONS	SIZE	Your preference and number
Indicate your preferred size		
Large	225 cm x 150 cm	
☞ Highlighting you in our QualityCoast – QualityTourism Brochure		
<i>Six-monthly, 10 000 copies, ca. 24 pages, public oriented, circulation in Europe</i>		
BROCHURE OPTIONS	Your preference and ideas	
Only name of your business and your web page		
5 lines and your logo, ca. 1/2 page		
1/4 page		
Half a page		
One full page		
☞ P.O. Box 11232, NL-2301 EE LEIDEN		

☞ **Presenting you at international holiday fairs and exhibits**

Your own folder with promotional and marketing materials at European tourism expos and other events.

OPTIONS HOLIDAY EXPOS AND EVENTS	Your preference and suggestions
World Travel Market (WTM), London UK (ca. 47 000 visitors)	
Vakantiebeurs Utrecht, the Netherlands (ca. 130 000 visitors)	
ITB Berlin, Germany (ca. 170 000 visitors)	
Tourism exhibition and event on the Pier, The Hague, the Netherlands (up to 2 000 000 visitors)	
Please make your suggestion:	

☞ **Highlighting you in the QualityTourism Business Flyer**

several editions each year, 4 pages, Business to Business, circulation all over Europe

OPTIONS B2B FLYER	Your preference and ideas
The name of your business and your web page	
5 lines and your logo	

☞ **Highlighting you in the Kust&Zee Gids (Dutch magazine)**

Annual (May), 200 000 copies, ca. 50 pages, public oriented, broad circulation

OPTIONS KUST&ZEE GIDS	Your preference and ideas
The name of your business and your web page	
5 lines and your logo, ca. 1/4 page	
1/4 page	
Half a page	
One full page	

☞ **Use QualityCoast / QualityTourism in your own communication**

You can use our logo, links and media in your own publications and internet sites

OPTIONS USE OF QUALITYTOURISM	Your preference and ideas
Please indicate format types for QualityTourism logo	
Please indicate other preferences	

☞ P.O. Box 11232, NL-2301 EE LEIDEN

☞ **Highlighting you in our web sites**

Information on your business in various ways in the QualityCoast and/or QualityTourism web site (partly under construction)

OPTIONS FOR OUR WEBSITES	Your preference and ideas
Highlight on the internet map, pop-up for your business; see provisional example <i>here</i>)	
Highlight on the homepage, with web link	
Highlight on the country page, with web link	
Please indicate any other preferences	

☞ **Promotion via our Social Media: Facebook, YouTube**

Posting articles, pictures and videos on our Facebook page(s) and YouTube channel

OPTIONS SOCIAL MEDIA	Your preference and ideas
Facebook postings	
Videos in our YouTube channel	
Please indicate any other preferences	

☞ **Interest in an eco-label**

Advice regarding the selection of the eco-label that best responds to your needs

ECO-LABEL	Your preference and ideas
Travelife	
Please indicate any other preferences	

☞ **Interest in the concept of eco-friendly vacation packages**

Become involved in international, transnational or European Union projects to develop new “sustainable tourism products”

ECO-FRIENDLY VACATION PACKAGES	Your preference and ideas
Please indicate the preferences	

☞ P.O. Box 11232, NL-2301 EE LEIDEN

☞ **Interest in PV-solar panels**

Participate in a combined order of PV solar panels and improve your own sustainability and profitability

PV-SOLAR PANELS	Your preference and ideas
Please indicate your interest	

☞ **Interested in tips or cooperation in the field of sustainability**

Exchange information with you and other partners how the business can be made more sustainable and competitive

TIPS OR COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABILITY	Your preference and ideas
Energy and water saving measures; waste reduction; purchasing policy etc in your business	
Sustainability aspects of your destination (town, island)	
Please indicate any other interest	

☞ *Thank you very much for completing this list!*

6. Scripts for approaching potential business partners

6.1 Potential business partners in QualityCoast Policy Award 2011 destinations



Dear Sir/Madam,

Did you know that [NAME OF DESTINATION] is a QualityCoast Gold Award Winner **(if it is Silver or Bronze, do not mention, just skip "Gold")?**

QualityCoast destinations are already recommended by large tour operators.

But also companies within the destination play an important role – greatly to their own benefit!

It is a European Commission (DG Enterprise) priority to investigate and enhance business sector involvement, and therefore we kindly ask you to complete the attached checklist.

If you have limited time, we kindly suggest to restrict to the first six questions.

Through this survey we are checking your interest to participate in:

- an initiative for the installation of photovoltaic solar panels on hotels in your destination; a joint action will have a quick return on investment, and great publicity;
- the development of an eco-friendly vacation package in your destination, especially aiming to attract visitors in spring and autumn;
- other initiatives enhancing quality and sustainability.

For further information on the QualityTourism initiative, please see our: [webpage](#), [brochure](#) and our [flyer](#).

We will be looking forward to hearing from you in about two weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in case of any questions you might have.

Kind regards,

[Name],

Business development



QualityTourism Program

Coastal & Marine Union - EUCC

P.O. Box 11232, 2301 EE Leiden (NL)

Headquarters and Business Visitor Centre: Breestraat 89A, Leiden (NL)

Public information centre: Pier of Scheveningen, The Hague (NL)

T: +31 71 5122900, F: +31 71 5124069

<http://www.qualitytourism.info> – www.qualitycoast.info - www.eucc.net

You can join us on: www.facebook.com/qualitycoast; [http://www.facebook.com/QualityTourism](https://www.facebook.com/QualityTourism)

6.2 Potential business partners in QualityCoast Policy Award 2012 destinations



Dear Sir/Madam,

Did you know that [NAME OF DESTINATION] has recently been selected as a QualityCoast Gold Award Winner **(if it is Silver or Bronze, do not mention, just skip “Gold”)**? On 18 May the QualityCoast Award has been presented to [NAME OF MAYOR, FUNCTION] of [NAME OF DESTINATION] at an international event in Portugal: <http://www.qualitycoast.info/news>.

QualityCoast destinations are already recommended by large tour operators.

But also companies within the destination play an important role – greatly to their own benefit!

It is a European Commission (DG Enterprise) priority to investigate and enhance business sector involvement, and therefore we kindly ask you to complete the attached checklist.

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Kind regards,

[Name],

Business development



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<http://www.qualitytourism.info> – www.qualitycoast.info - www.eucc.net

You can join us on: www.facebook.com/qualitycoast; [http://www.facebook.com/QualityTourism](https://www.facebook.com/QualityTourism)

6.3 Model letter to respond to the receipt of a completed Business Business Sustainability checklist

Dear Mr./Mrs. ...

First of all I would like to thank you very much for completing our Business Business Sustainability checklist.

After a first review we have recognized **good / very good / excellent** performance of your **hotel / camping** in the field of sustainability.

We would be pleased to promote you as part of the promotion of the QualityCoast destinations. In this letter I will summarise the options that exist in this context.

QualityTourism Business Service Options

I invite you to participate in the QualityTourism program. With this program we aim to create a business partnership to support sustainability and competitiveness in QualityCoast destinations. Participation is possible without any minimum fee. Eligible businesses are offered the opportunity to consider any of the services that are listed in the Business Service Options list (attached). You are kindly invited to indicate your preferences and ideas, and on the basis of that we will let you know what we can offer you.

Interest in an eco-label

Worldwide, 550 different eco-labels exist. Every label has its own difficulties and benefits. Major differences exist in the field of promotion. QualityTourism partners can be advised regarding the selection of the eco-label that best responds to their needs. Please specify your interest and ideas in our Business Service Options list.

Interest in the concept of eco-friendly vacation packages

Every year there are several opportunities for local authorities and SMEs to become involved in international, transnational or European Union programs to develop new “sustainable tourism products”. Also, the QualityTourism team is collecting and disseminating good practice experience in the field of sustainable tourism products and facilities. QualityTourism partners can be kept informed and can become preferred partner in upcoming program opportunities. Please specify your interest and ideas in our Business Service Options list.

Interest in PV-solar panels

The price of PV solar panels has dropped with 70% during the last 10 years, while the price of electricity has dramatically increased. Investing in PV solar panels has now become a better investment than bank interest, stock markets or real estate. We aim to develop an international program to double the generation of renewable energy in QualityCoast destinations in the next two years. We will encourage local authorities and the business sector in QualityCoast destinations to participate in a joint order of PV solar panels on the world market. A joint order should guarantee the sharpest possible price.

When this program succeeds, its implementation in the participating destinations and businesses will be a major publicity event. And it will be a considerable improvement of your sustainability and your profitability. Please specify your interest and ideas in our Business Service Options list.

Interested in tips or cooperation in the field of sustainability

We are committed to make QualityCoast destinations more sustainable and more competitive. Numerous opportunities exist for the business sector to contribute to this, both to improve your own business sustainability and competitiveness, and to help your destination. For instance, an average 150-room hotel consumes in one week as much as hundred 4-person households in one year (consumption and waste). Efficient hotel management reduces environmental impact while significantly decreasing costs.

We would be delighted to exchange information with you how your own business can be made more sustainable and competitive and how you could contribute to improve sustainable tourism in your destination as a whole. Please specify your interest and ideas in our Business Service Options list.

Please use the attached Business Service Options checklist to indicate your interest. Please do not hesitate to contact me in case of any questions you might have!

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

On behalf of the QualityCoast-QualityTourism team,

....

