



IMPLEMENTATION AND USE OF GREEN STANDARDS IN TOURISM: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Diyora Adilova

*Scientific-Research Institute for Tourism Development under the
Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan*

Abstract: This article examines the international experience in implementing and utilizing green standards in tourism. The study reviews green standards and certifications that have international status as well as those used in different countries around the world. Key principles of sustainable tourism are identified. The author analyzes existing programs and initiatives aimed at promoting the development of sustainable tourism. Author concludes on the necessity of more active implementation of green standards in the industry to preserve the environment and attract environmentally conscious tourists.

Key words: green standards, certificate, sustainability, environmental friendliness, biodiversity.

Introduction

"Sustainable" standards in tourism, also known as "green" standards, are a set of rules and practices aimed at reducing the negative impact of tourism on the environment, socio-cultural heritage, and local communities' economies. They contribute to a more responsible and sustainable development of tourism by ensuring a balance between economic, social, and ecological aspects. Adopting sustainable standards in tourism helps to reduce the negative impact of the tourism industry on the environment, such as by efficiently using resources, reducing emissions and waste, and protecting biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

Additionally, they contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions of local communities, as well as to the creation of jobs and the improvement of the well-being of the local population. There are various certification programs and initiatives worldwide aimed at establishing and adhering to sustainable standards in tourism, such as ISO standards or certifications like "Green Key," "Travelife," and "EarthCheck." They help tourism enterprises and organizations become more responsible and sustainable, ultimately contributing to the preservation of nature, culture, and the local population. Various standards and certification systems promoting sustainable tourism development at the national level exist in many countries around the world.

Methodology

The methodology for writing this article started with conducting a comprehensive literature review to gather information on international experiences and case studies. Next, researchers identified key concepts and theories related to green standards in tourism and develop a research question or hypothesis to guide the study. Data from various was collected, such as academic journals, reports, and government websites, to support their argument and provide evidence for their findings.

Methodology involved analyzing the data collected using qualitative and quantitative research methods to draw conclusions and make recommendations for implementing green standards in tourism. International experiences of different countries in implementing green standards in tourism were compared to highlight best practices.

Analyses

Tourism is one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the global economy today. Last year, around 1.3 billion travellers embarked on trips to various parts of the world, and this year the indicators are expected to grow by 3-4 percent. This has a positive impact on the tourism industry, however, it can have a negative impact on the state of our planet. Controlled tourism can help in preserving natural resources and cultural heritage. In this regard, it is necessary to consider ISO environmental standards, or international quality standards, created to regulate the tourism sector and protect local communities and ecosystems.

When planning a trip, every tourist thinks about where to find accommodation. But no matter where a tourist decides to stay, they must first ensure that nature does not suffer as a result. ISO 21401 "Tourism and related services. Sustainable management systems for accommodation establishments" states that those who provide accommodation for tourists must minimize their impact on the ecological environment, while contributing to the economy. [1].

Summer is the best time for outdoor events. It is during the summer season that tourists often attend music festivals, sports competitions, outdoor theatre performances within the framework of event sustainability management systems. ISO 20121 states about event management systems taking into account the level of sustainable development. [2]. These were used during the 2012 Olympic Games in the capital of the United Kingdom, including efficient use of resources and assessing the impact of events on the environment of a particular area.

Nature conservation area administrations provide services for tourists while prioritizing their conservation. For example, ISO 18065 "Tourism and related services" states that in this way, travelers have the opportunity to get acquainted with the environment and learn more about how not to harm it. [3].

The ISO list includes a number of standards related to recreational diving. This includes a series of training programs. If a tourist plans to explore the underwater world in the summer, it is recommended to adhere to the ISO 21416 standard. [4]. This document is dedicated to international practices in this field. By following this standard, diving centers will not harm the aquatic environment, and boats will be operated in environmentally friendly ways thanks to the document containing the relevant requirements.

In addition to the ISO 21416 standard, there is also the ISO 21417 standard, which contains requirements for divers. [5]. Their aim is to inform divers about the state of the environment and help them minimize negative impact on nature, particularly the underwater world.

Tourism often involves adventure, as travelers are constantly seeking memorable experiences. ISO 20611 "Extreme tourism. Advanced sustainability principles for adventure tourism" states that adventure tourism providers must adhere to a number of recommendations to minimize negative impact on the ecological, economic, and social spheres. [6].

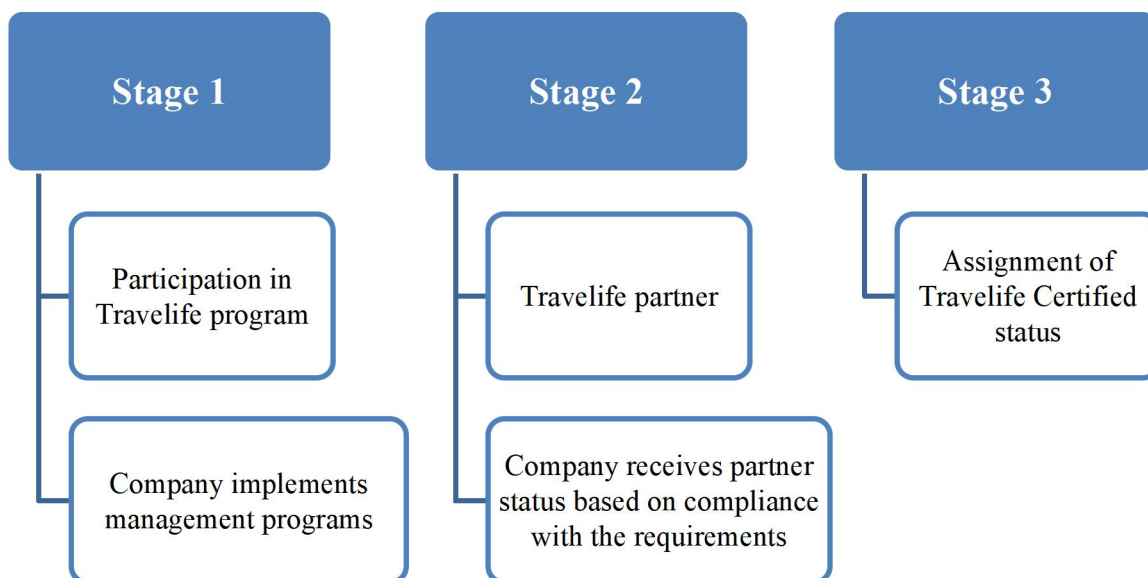
Travelers embarking on journeys need to thoroughly study the existing standards. This way, tourists can truly experience something interesting and give themselves unforgettable emotions and impressions, while also not harming the planet. Everyone should have the opportunity to travel the world, but first we need to think about the state of the environment and how we can help it.

Results

In addition to the ISO stability standards, in the context of worldwide standards, the Travelife standard can also be mentioned. Travelife is an international certification standard for sustainable tourism, designed to help tourism companies improve their social, economic, and environmental responsibility. To obtain a Travelife certificate, companies must undergo a strict audit to ensure compliance with a set of criteria aimed at sustainable development. Criteria include aspects such as control of natural resource use,

compliance with laws and workers' rights, implementation of programs to improve local communities, and much more. The certification program requirements are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Travelife certification program is based on a three-step approach



Source: compiled by the author based on materials from the [Travelife for Tour Operators and Travel Agents](#)

By receiving a Travelife certificate, a company gains official recognition of its efforts in sustainable development and becomes more attractive to potential customers who appreciate a responsible approach to tourism. Another certification standard widely used around the world today is EarthCheck. EarthCheck is one of the world's leading certification systems for the tourism industry. This system helps companies and enterprises improve their environmental, social, and economic sustainability, reducing harmful impacts on the environment.

EarthCheck certificates are available in several variations, depending on the level of sustainability and compliance with the organization's standards. There is the EarthCheck Bronze certificate, which confirms that the company has met the minimum requirements for sustainability. The EarthCheck Silver certificate requires additional measures and resources to comply with stricter standards. EarthCheck Gold is the most prestigious certificate, confirming high standards of sustainable development and environmental responsibility.

EarthCheck also helps organizations in the tourism industry optimize their processes, minimize waste, and improve energy efficiency. Obtaining an EarthCheck certificate is becoming increasingly important for companies seeking to attract environmentally conscious tourists.

Green tourism is becoming more popular among travelers today, who want to leave a smaller ecological footprint during their trips. More and more countries around the world are starting to implement government standards and certification systems to maintain sustainability in tourism.

For example, in Switzerland, there is the "Label de Qualité Paysage" standard to protect the country's cultural and natural heritage. This standard helps manage tourist flows and preserve the beauty of landscapes.

In Norway, there is a special certification system called "Miljøfyrtårn" for hotels and tourist organizations, which helps them become more environmentally sustainable and efficiently manage resources.

In Costa Rica, there is a certification called "Certification for Sustainable Tourism" (CST), which evaluates tourism companies based on 5 key principles of sustainable tourism: ecological sustainability, natural resource management, protection of culture and communities, quality of services, and economic

sustainability. It is also important to mention the national sustainable tourism practice that has received international recognition.

For example, in Denmark in 1994, the "Green Key" system of ecological certification was established, which by 2002 was accepted by the Foundation for Environmental Education as the fifth international partner. Since then, it has spread to nearly 65 countries and continues to grow in number and scope worldwide. The "Green Key" is a symbol that can be awarded to cottages, guesthouses, hotels, conference centers, amusement parks, and even educational institutions that have taken on commitments and initiatives to ensure environmentally sustainable business practices.

The criteria for obtaining the eco-certification are extensive, ranging from limiting electricity and water consumption, using environmentally friendly cleaning products, to providing locally produced organic products, environmentally safe mobility options, and waste sorting. The Green Key certification is not permanent. Independent inspectors are required to visit owners of tourism establishments within the first three years of receiving the "green key."

The emergence of such standards and practices in different countries around the world helps make tourism much more sustainable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to note that green standards and certifications help tourism companies demonstrate their social responsibility and contribute to environmental conservation, promoting sustainable tourism on a global scale.

The implementation of "green" standards brings numerous benefits, both for the environment and for the tourism and hospitality industry. Reducing carbon emissions, avoiding single-use plastics, and implementing proper waste sorting and disposal methods in hotels all contribute to the global fight against climate change and help protect the planet's natural resources.

As the demand for eco-friendly tourism grows, hotels and tourism companies that prioritize sustainable development will have a competitive advantage in the market.

List of references:

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