

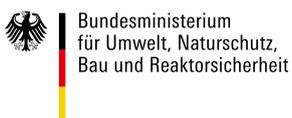
REPORT

SUSTAINABILITY



2016/17 FEDERAL COMPETITION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN GERMANY

The Federal Competition for Sustainable Tourism Destinations in Germany is a joint initiative by the German Tourism Association (DTV), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation.



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More information about the competition:
www.bundeswettbewerb-tourismusdestinationen.de

PREFACE



*Reinhard Meyer,
President of the German Tourism Association*

The United Nations has proclaimed 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development – for no matter where in the world we travel, tourism and sustainability are inseparably linked. Virtually no other sector of the economy is as dependent on natural and cultural resources and the support of local communities as tourism. The Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve is an excellent example of how a firm commitment to sustainability can strengthen local people's sense of community identity. This was one of the reasons why the jury chose the Swabian Alb as the winner of the 2016/2017 Federal Competition for Sustainable Tourism Destinations in Germany. Tourism and nature conservation organisations, municipalities, businesses and local citizens are all working together towards shared goals. Their commitment inspires others and results in high-quality local products and services for guests.

In all, 27 destinations entered the competition and took on the challenge of being evaluated against a set of 40 criteria. The finalists included not only the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve but also Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, the North Sea island of Juist, the North Eifel and the town of Celle. In contrast to the previous competition in 2012/13, cities were, for the first time, actively encouraged to participate.

Four other destinations presented convincing evidence of their dedication and commitment in specific areas and were honou-

red with special awards: Saxon Switzerland was the winner in the Sustainable Mobility category, the Peene region in Western Pomerania scored highest for Biodiversity and Outdoor Experience, the North Sea island of Juist beat the rest of the field in the Climate, Resources and Energy Efficiency category and the Allgäu stood out for its visible commitment to Regionality.

The competition is another step towards strengthening and mainstreaming sustainability in tourism. It is not about a sustainability label or a stand-alone offer of an outdoor experience. It is about finding ways to support businesses that commit to climate action, creating barrier-free products, involving local communities and suppliers, preserving regions' typical landscape appearance or encouraging visitors to switch from the car to public transport. Clearly, this cannot be achieved without effort – and certainly not for free. Sustainability is a process which takes continuous work, has no defined endpoint and is an ongoing challenge requiring a strong commitment to cooperation. In that sense, the Federal Competition was, and is, an important interim step on the journey towards more sustainable tourism in Germany.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which reads "Reinhard Meyer". The signature is written in a cursive style.

27 COMPETITION ENTRIES FROM ALL OVER GERMANY



12 GERMAN STATES • 6 LOCAL DESTINATIONS / RESORTS
 12 DESTINATIONS • 8 SUBDESTINATIONS OR TOWNS • 1 CITY

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For the many stakeholders in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve, winning this very special competition is a great tribute to all their hard work and commitment. The competition entry was a joint effort and so too is the celebration of the award. We are delighted by this success, which motivates us to make use of the opportunities available to us in future. Taking part in the competition had another important effect as well: working on the competition entry showed us where we stand and how we need to improve, and where, in order to make our mission – “More quality, more conservation of biodiversity, more regional value added” – even more of a reality.

Petra Bernert, Head of the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve Management Team



COMPETITION



2016/2017 Federal Competition Sustainable Tourism Destinations in Germany

Sustainable development is a key task for the future of tourism in Germany. The Federal Competition for Sustainable Tourism Destinations strengthens the commitment of destination managers and businesses at the local level to a sustainable pathway and provides substantial publicity for the best initiatives currently in existence.

The Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations, published ahead of the competition in March 2016, provided practical guidance and recommendations for the development of sustainable tourism destinations. The Federal Competition is responsive to the content of this publication and the criteria were the basis for assessment by the jury. The competition followed on from the first Federal Competition on Sustainable Tourism Regions in 2012/13. The aim was to raise the industry's awareness of sustainability in the context of tourism, to encourage it to put the criteria into practice, and to support the development and diffusion of viable sustainable processes at the destination level.

In 2014, at the recommendation of its Committee on Tourism, the German Bundestag endorsed the continuation of the Federal Competition. The awards were once again made by the German Tourism Association (DTV) and supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds from

the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

Sustainability counts

The concept of sustainability, with its three dimensions – environmental, economic and social, enhanced with a management dimension – is fundamental to the competition. Participating destinations identified clear pathways showing how they reconcile the needs of visitors and local residents with those of nature conservation and the environment and, in parallel, how they aim to pursue an economically viable and socially compatible development pathway over the long term. The competition looked at other aspects as well: how tourism stakeholders ensure a particularly high level of resource efficiency, protect and make sustainable use of biodiversity, and help to preserve cultural heritage. The award-winning destinations are models for environmentally and socially compatible high-quality tourism in Germany. For travellers, the competition provides some ideas on how they themselves can be more mindful in their vacation choices and inspires them to holiday in Germany. With that aim in mind, communication and marketing tools were offered as prizes in the competition.

More information about the competition: www.bundeswettbewerb-tourismusdestinationen.de

Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Naturschutz,
Bau und Reaktorsicherheit



Prof. Dr. Hartmut Rein,
BTE Tourismus- und Regionalberatung /
Eberswalde University for Sustainable
Development

This year's Federal Competition followed on seamlessly from the successful first round of awards in 2012/13. We are delighted that once again, so many destinations have submitted so many innovative sustainability projects for assessment against the competition's 40 criteria, thus underscoring the relevance of sustainability in the tourism context. Held on a regular basis, the competition has the potential, in future, to make a major contribution to strengthening destinations' commitment to sustainable tourism.



Dr. Dirk Glaesser,
Director, Sustainable Development of Tourism,
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Entirely in keeping with the United Nations' proclamation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, the Federal Competition has generated significant momentum for the promotion of sustainability in tourism and presented original examples of best practice. Through this contribution to raising awareness and inspiring tourism stakeholders and regions to move towards (more) sustainable destination management, the competition has also supported the goals defined for this International Year. In this way, the competition itself is a lighthouse project for sustainable tourism, underlining its international significance.



Florian Pronold, Parliamentary State Secretary at the BMUB

ASSESSMENT

The competition was open to all local destinations / resorts, towns / smaller tourist areas, classic tourist regions and cities in Germany. Contender destinations had to fall into one of the following four categories:

A **destination** is a tourist region below *Land* (state) level.

A **subdestination** is a tourist area or a town with a population of less than 100,000 within a destination.

A **city** is an urban area with more than 100,000 residents.

A **local destination / resort** covers at least the area of a municipality and at most a locality within a tourist area. This category also includes towns and villages with a population of less than 20,000 / no municipal status of their own.

In addition, all contender destinations were required to

- » have a tourism organisation,
- » be implementing a tourism / destination strategy or mission statement,
- » engage in collective external marketing, e.g. via a logo and website.

Prizes

The Federal Competition offers winners the opportunity to showcase themselves nationally and internationally as Germany's leading destinations in high-quality sustainable tourism. In addition to the winning destination, the four finalists and the four special award winners benefit from their success in the competition.

The five best contenders and the special award winners received the following communication and marketing tools:

- » a formal award ceremony in Berlin,
- » a special Federal Competition logo for use in their own marketing,
- » publication of a profile, with details of their award-winning achievements, in this brochure,
- » a showcase on the competition website and partners' websites,
- » media relations activities within the competition framework,
- » inclusion in the German National Tourist Board (DZT) overseas marketing package.

The five best contenders were also showcased:

- » in a nationwide Ströer media campaign at railway stations in selected German cities.

In addition, the winning destination:

- » featured in all communications,
- » was given advertising space in the [German Railways] timetable on selected German High Speed Train (ICE) routes.

The competition was based on the 40 criteria defined in the DTV's *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations* and assessed performance in the following areas:

Sustainability assessment

MANAGEMENT

The destination has developed strategies and policies based on the principles of sustainable development. Governance mechanisms are in place that create optimal conditions for sustainable structuring of the destination. The tourism organisation actively influences the development and design of sustainable tourism offers at the destination.

ECONOMIC CRITERIA

Tourism at the destination contributes to local people's economic well-being and stimulates regional economic structures. A broad range of training offers is available for tourism service providers.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

Nature and landscape conservation is supported and the destination contributes to the preservation of biodiversity. Tourism stakeholders make highly efficient use of natural resources. The tourism organisation promotes sustainable mobility at the local level and actively draws visitors' attention to modes of public transport that can be used to reach the destination. Climate action, energy saving and resource/energy efficiency measures are in place.

SOCIAL CRITERIA

The tourism offer strengthens specific regional traditions and cultural heritage. Tourism also helps to maintain and promote host communities' well-being and quality of life. Local citizens have the opportunity, for example, to participate in tourism development processes.

CATEGORIES AND LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS

The contenders could choose one of four thematic categories in which the destination is performing particularly well. This included the description of a lighthouse project as a good example of tourism activities in the category, enhancing the visitor experience. The lighthouse project should already be available on the market, show a high level of innovation and serve as a model for other destinations. A special award was made in each category.



The publication *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations* is available free of charge as a printed edition or download from the German Tourism Association: www.deutschtourismusverband.de (under Service)

Download here:
<https://www.dtv-kundencenter.de/shop.php?ses=09a35f8d71e7175dd8005311ee0e0e76&prog=90000000&spgid=5.11.0>



WINNER



The jury liked the following:

- » The Biosphere Reserve is a good example of how tourism can work as a driver of sustainable development across the entire area.
- » The closure of the Münsingen military training ground initiated a conversion process which, with the creation of the Biosphere Reserve, has led to a consistent focus on sustainability throughout the region and an image upgrade par excellence.
- » As a result of the developments over recent years, “quality of life” and “identity” are well-established as selling points, with sustainability as the core element.
- » A wide range of tourism service providers, local producers and tourism organisations are working together towards shared goals. Consistent networking creates synergies and a sense of community identity. The common denominator of quality and sustainability leads to high-standard products and services which evoke positive emotions.
- » The jury recommends: the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve Centre with various interactive elements.



SWABIAN ALB BIOSPHERE RESERVE

A region to enjoy with a clear conscience! With its plateau and foreland, the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve has an impressive array of diverse landscapes, a variety of geological and climatic conditions and a traditional form of land use from a bygone era, making this a region with many facets – a good reason for UNESCO to honour it with recognition as a biosphere reserve in 2009. The region is perfect for nature-watching and for hiking and cycling to experience nature and landscape – and enjoying the local cuisine.

Regional awareness of sustainability issues

Numerous tourism stakeholders were involved in securing UNESCO recognition for the biosphere. More than 200 people participated in preparing the framework document in various forums and more than 1500 citizens contributed their ideas on the region’s sustainable development. UNESCO status initiated a dynamic process which is reflected in a multitude of regional initiatives. Since then, more than 200 sustainable development projects have been launched, almost half of which consisted of investment in the tourism sector.

Quality and sustainability: the perfect partnership

In the biosphere region, new product development is always guided by the principle: “More quality, more conservation of biodiversity, more regional value added”. With the targeted involvement of local product marketers, hotels and restaurants, new ideas and attractive offers for tourists are developed and implemented. For example, two rural districts worked with the tourism, hiking and nature

conservation organisations to redesign all the hiking trails in and around the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve. This project is now being implemented.

Certified Biosphere Partners offer a guest-oriented experience of nature combined with high quality standards. Currently, more than 100 businesses are recognised as Partners in the biosphere region. Strict criteria apply, including at least one energy efficiency or environmental consultation for small businesses and certification in environmental protection for large businesses, and all Partner hotels have introduced the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), the strictest of its kind in Europe.

Local restaurateurs have joined together to launch the Biosphere Hosts association, in order to underscore their connection with this unique cultural landscape and their passion for their work. Their guests can enjoy speciality products typical of the Swabian Alb – spelt, lentils, juices from the region’s extensive meadow orchards, and quality wines and spirits in creative compositions – or simply relax in tastefully furnished accommodation.



Conservation of nature and the environment

In the biosphere region, green tourism development is a priority. This is achieved through a carefully crafted blend of visitor management, tourism stakeholder engagement, development of sustainable tourism services and a quality visitor experience. For example, as part of last year's projects, the network of hiking trails was consolidated, 31 top trails were upgraded, nine thematic cycle tours were developed and additional opportunities for nature-watching were created. On principle, only sustainable, eco-friendly amenities are advertised through the biosphere media. In addition, clearly defined quality standards apply to hiking, cycling, the culinary offer and nature-watching.

Green visitor mobility is another priority in the biosphere. A Biosphere Bus has been introduced, several leisure buses are now equipped with cycle trailers and the leisure network has improved. With a view to improving local public transport, a survey of certified Biosphere Partners was conducted and the findings are now being acted upon. Additional local public transport is provided for major events and this has resulted in new services being integrated into the regular timetable.



More information about the winning destination: <http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de>

CATEGORY: REGIONALITY

Creating new experiences from well-preserved heritage – this is one of the successes achieved by Swabian Alb tourism stakeholders. Cultural identity is a key factor here and is embedded as a strategic element of the framework document for the biosphere region. All its cultural offers must meet specific quality standards in order to be marketed to tourists. Regional events, leading-edge projects and the Partner scheme all help to foster ideas and initiatives that are rooted in culture and heritage, forging a strong common identity for local communities.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT: Hofgut Hopfenburg Holiday Resort



Hofgut Hopfenburg Holiday Resort gives guests a holistic experience of holidaying close to nature. It offers a diverse array of accommodation options in architectural styles typical of the Swabian Alb and biosphere reserves around the world. Many of the buildings, accommodation units and vehicles came from biosphere reserves from a variety of eras and countries and were imported and restored. Holiday apartments, camping and up to 80 caravan pitches are also available. With its focus on regionality, the resort and its programme of events give guests an authentic holiday experience.

Further information:
<https://www.hofgut-hopfenburg.de>



FINALIST



The jury liked the following:

- » The close working relationship based on partnership between the Biosphere Reserve's management team and tourism decision-makers creates synergies in the development of the tourism offer.
- » Nature tourism offers are designed and existing offers upgraded with reference to the DTV's *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations*.
- » Through active participation in schemes such as Green Destinations, Green Travel Map Germany and TourCert Sustainable Destination certification, the region is being continuously assessed as the basis for its further development.
- » Sustainable mobility offers such as the Saarland Card and membership of the Destination Nature (*Fahrtziel Natur*) scheme facilitate green guest mobility.
- » The jury recommends: a trip on Biosphere Bus 501 with a certified landscape guide.

BLIESGAU BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Traces of past cultures, a warm Saarland welcome and a rich natural heritage – Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve is a treasure trove for tourists. Lying in the south-eastern corner of Saarland, this enchanting region has a rich array of cultural and natural landscapes with extensive meadow orchards, precious beech forests and impressive river meadows. Although largely rural, Bliesgau has a high population density and urban structures and so has much to offer culture lovers as well.

Commitment to sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism has featured as a strategic element of the region's tourism policy, with specific targets, since 2011. The region has consistently pursued a sustainable development pathway since then. For example, in 2016, Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve was assessed by the international Green Destinations initiative and was included in the Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations. All of its certified sustainable tourism businesses are included on the Green Travel Map Germany. Starting this year, the Biosphere Reserve is participating in the process for Saarland's certification as a sustainable destination.

Promoting networking

Stakeholder networking facilitates joint and coordinated tourism engagement. The Biosphere Association and Saarpfalz-Touristik share office premises and have thus established a close working relationship, consulting each other on all major projects and programmes. Networking also takes place in a variety of forums with Saarland's

destination marketing organisation and nature conservation associations. Biosphere Reserve Partners are drivers of sustainable tourism development in the region and offer added value for guests and customers. Every Partner acts as an Ambassador for the Biosphere Reserve concept, provides quality and a high level of service, promotes environmental conservation and sustainability and is committed to regional engagement.

The sustainability offer

Starting in 2016, nature tourism offers are designed with reference to the DTV's *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations*. In developing the tourism offer, efforts are made to prioritise businesses which have joined the Partner initiative.

The region's tourist attractions should be accessible to everyone. The Barrier-Free Tourism in Saarland project therefore develops amenities, such as the accessible hiking trail in Kirkel and *Netzwerk Hören* (Hearing Network), for people with disabilities.



Green mobility

The Biosphere Reserve makes it easy for guests to leave the car at home. With the Saarland Card, launched in April 2017, overnight guests benefit from free bus and rail travel throughout the region and enjoy free entry to more than 60 attractions. The region has joined Destination Nature (Fahrziel Natur – a sustainable mobility scheme involving Germany Railways and major environmental organisations) and is committed to green mobility at the local level. For example, the Biosphere Bus won a Fahrziel Natur Award in 2014 as a model of good practice in the Sustainable Mobility category.

Regional value added

A range of quality local products are made in the Biosphere Reserve. A Bliesgau Good Shopping Guide showcases the most important and lists local stockists. The town of Blieskastel joined the Cittaslow movement in 2012, signalling its commitment to sustainable urban development in the region. Biosphere Reserve Partners and local products are considered in the development of the tourism offer and feature in marketing. In addition, Saarpfalz-Touristik supports the organisation and promotion of biosphere markets and other events involving the region's producers.



More information about Bliesgau: <http://www.biosphaere-bliesgau.eu/index.php/en>

CATEGORY: BIODIVERSITY AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

The destination as a whole is protected as a biosphere reserve. Destination managers support a variety of projects whose aim is to protect ecosystems, such as the development of the European Culture Park Bliesbruck-Reinheim, an archaeological park and open-air museum on the French-German border, and work by tourism sector Partner enterprises in a meadow orchard. There is a strong regional commitment to offering an experience of biodiversity. Certified nature and landscape guides run regular tours of interest to visitors keen to find out more about aspects of the landscape. A range of tourism offers focusing on the biosphere, nature and environmental education, a calendar of events dedicated to species diversity and project-specific visitor management systems guarantee a high-quality holiday experience close to nature.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT: WaldKultUrlaub



This lighthouse project offers tourists and local residents an experience of the natural world through hands-on activity in the heart of the forest. Visitors gain craft skills and practical insights in working with various types of local timber and learn traditional techniques in a fascinating forest setting. The *WaldKultUrlaub* brand covers a range of small and larger-scale projects and offers (e.g. *Waldness*, *WaldVital*, *WaldVision*).

Further information:
<https://www.saarpfalz-touristik.de>



FINALIST



THE NORTH EIFEL

Nearby. Far away. Not far away from the major cities on the Rhine, the North Eifel offers infinite opportunities to leave the daily routine behind. As part of the Eifel mountain range and home to the Eifel National Park and two nature parks, the unique natural landscapes are the region's dominant feature. But there is culture on offer as well: traces of the Neolithic, the Roman period, the Middle Ages and the post-war era can all be experienced up close in the Eifel.

Sustainable tourism planning

Working closely with tourism industry partners, destination managers have pursued a variety of strategies in recent years in order to develop the North Eifel as a sustainable tourism region. The tourism infrastructure has been continuously upgraded in order to meet target groups' demand for a very special experience of nature. For example, premium hiking trails have been created, such as the Eifelsteig and the fully accessible Wild Kermeter area for experiencing nature. The Eifel National Park also attracts visitors with an interest in the nocturnal, for the region has been awarded official Dark Sky Park status – only the second in Germany – and offers guided night-time nature walks and star-gazing. Some hosts have volunteered for “star-friendly” status, which means that they are responsive to the requests and needs of guests taking part in evening or night-time tourism activities.

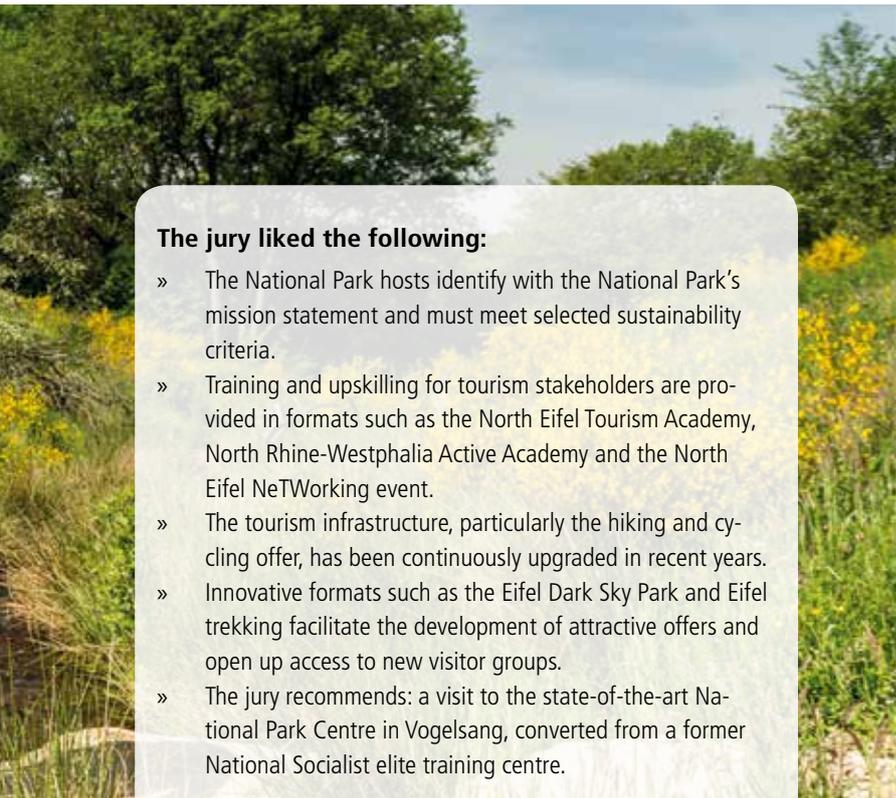
Protecting and experiencing nature

When it comes to tourism, the North Eifel's outstanding natural beauty and landscape are its capital assets. Tourism service providers are aware of this and design their offers

accordingly. For example, the *EifelNaturReisen* (Eifel Nature Travel) scheme enables visitors to book new and unconventional experiences of nature in the region. All the offers have been carefully selected in accordance with clearly defined quality criteria. The region has many years of experience in working in close partnership with nature conservation stakeholders. This collaboration always produces new and exciting offers, such as Eifel trekking, which gives guests the exclusive opportunity to camp at specially selected sites in the midst of nature. The precise locations are kept under wraps until a booking has been made.

Partner networks

Various Partner networks ensure the provision of eco-friendly tourism services with a strong regional connection. The network of National Park Hosts has existed since the Eifel National Park was first established. In order to qualify for the scheme, Hosts must fulfil various optional and mandatory criteria, focusing on quality and sustainability. All the Partner businesses feel a special commitment to the Eifel National Park's mission statement and have introduced their own sustainable management practices.



The jury liked the following:

- » The National Park hosts identify with the National Park’s mission statement and must meet selected sustainability criteria.
- » Training and upskilling for tourism stakeholders are provided in formats such as the North Eifel Tourism Academy, North Rhine-Westphalia Active Academy and the North Eifel NeTWorking event.
- » The tourism infrastructure, particularly the hiking and cycling offer, has been continuously upgraded in recent years.
- » Innovative formats such as the Eifel Dark Sky Park and Eifel trekking facilitate the development of attractive offers and open up access to new visitor groups.
- » The jury recommends: a visit to the state-of-the-art National Park Centre in Vogelsang, converted from a former National Socialist elite training centre.

Products and services sold under the EIFEL regional brand stand for certified quality. Hosts can also display the brand label: a yellow “e”. However, this is only awarded to businesses that have a transparent, proven and audited commitment to quality and regionality. All the participating businesses are conscious of their responsibility to the Eifel natural space and are committed to honouring their quality pledge. The *KlimaTour Eifel* (Eifel Climate Tour) network is actively engaged in protecting the climate, showcasing businesses with a small carbon footprint and featuring specific tourism offers; guests can also calculate the climate footprint for their own visit.

Stakeholder training

Providing training and upskilling for tourism businesses is another focus of activity. For example, every year, Nordeifel Tourismus GmbH offers six days of consultations for tourism service providers wishing to grow their business and make them fit for the future. *Zu Gast in der eigenen Heimat* (Guest at Home Activity Day), introduced in 2014, is designed with local residents in mind, giving them insights into their local tourism industry. The North Eifel NeTWorking event was first held in 2015 and helps to improve networking among tourism service providers.



More information about the North Eifel: <http://www.nordeifel-tourismus.de/en/startseite>

CATEGORY: SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

In recent years, the mobility offer for tourists has greatly improved as a result of substantial stakeholder engagement. New local public transport links have been established and demand-responsive schemes, such as taxibus services and share taxis, have been consolidated and the provision of hire stations for cycles and pedelecs (pedal electric cycles) expanded. Bus connections to the fully accessible Wild Kermeter area for experiencing nature and, since 2017, the Eifelsteig hiking bus are new additions. Day visitors, overnights guests based at one location but also long-distance hikers are equally attracted by the new offer. Another scheme designed for tourists is the GuestCard. It enables guests who have booked overnight accommodation with participating businesses to use local public transport free of charge within the Rhein-Sieg and other networks and also benefit from discounts and/or additional services currently provided by more than 30 tourism partners.

**LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:
Cycle and Hike Railway Stations**



The Cycle and Hike North Eifel Railway Stations project has further enhanced the quality of this cycling and hiking region. A total of 19 railway stations were modernised and upgraded within the project framework and provided with visitor information and signage drawing attention to their amenities and pointing the way to cycle and hiking trails. The railway stations are now also equipped with bicycle air pumps, rest areas and benches, well-designed bicycle stands and information terminals with Internet access to tourist sites in the region. This extensive infrastructure, with its ease of access, provides a new luxury service for visitors and local residents alike.

Further information:
www.radundwanderbahnhoefe-eifel.de





THE NORTH SEA ISLAND OF JUIST

The perfect place to slow the pace! The car-free North Sea island of Juist – part of the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park and the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Natural Heritage site – is a fascinating biodiversity hotspot: almost a quarter of Germany's flora and fauna can be found here. On the island of Juist, everything is transported without the use of the internal combustion engine – and that colours the vacation experience and the perception that Juist really is "a different world". This island is all about the experience of leisure and relaxation.

A consistent focus on sustainability

Juist has been evolving as a sustainable travel destination for many years and has adopted relevant measures in the fields of education, participation, research and development. It aims to be climate-neutral in 2030 and position itself as one of the world's leading sustainable tourism destinations. In recognition of its commitment, Juist was honoured with a German Sustainability Award in the Municipalities category in 2015, signalling that it is already a leading sustainable tourism destination. In late 2016, Juist gained TourCert certification as a sustainable destination.

Nature conservation

Around 70 per cent of the island lies in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park. In order to protect these areas, no new building zones are designated and no tourist activities take place in the quiet or protected zone. Targeted visitor management utilising attractive infrastructures such as the Otto LEEGE Path, an educational and art trail, leads tourists through sensitive areas without harming the environment. Guided tours at the National Park Centre on

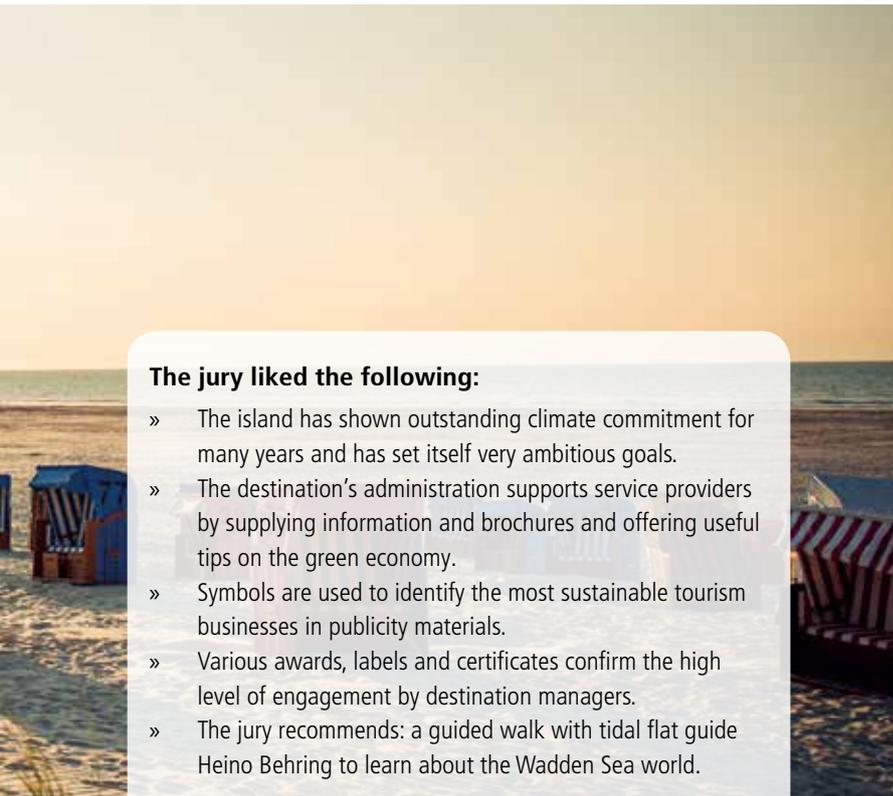
topics such as ornithology and the tidal flats enable visitors to experience this coastal habitat up close.

The sustainability offer

Tourists can find the most eco-friendly and sustainable tourism businesses by checking the symbols in the host directory and on the Internet. These businesses are intensively promoted by the destination's administration. They have calculated their climate footprint, use electricity from renewable sources, apply eco-friendly management practices, buy local, sustainable or fair trade products or are generally committed to sustainability. And this year, a new approach was introduced to help visitors explore key aspects of sustainability through fun-filled activities.

Public participation

Tourism is the most important source of income for the island and its residents, so it is even more important to actively involve local people in tourism planning. A study on perceptions of the *Klima-Insel* (Climate Island) project was conducted in 2013, with another to follow this year,



The jury liked the following:

- » The island has shown outstanding climate commitment for many years and has set itself very ambitious goals.
- » The destination’s administration supports service providers by supplying information and brochures and offering useful tips on the green economy.
- » Symbols are used to identify the most sustainable tourism businesses in publicity materials.
- » Various awards, labels and certificates confirm the high level of engagement by destination managers.
- » The jury recommends: a guided walk with tidal flat guide Heino Behring to learn about the Wadden Sea world.

CATEGORY: CLIMATE ACTION, RESOURCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Juist is the winner of the special award in this category. For more information, please turn to page 26.



this time focusing on perceptions of sustainable tourism. Local people and tourism businesses were also involved in developing a tourism mission statement for the island. In 2017, a habitat strategy will be produced together with local residents as the next step in the mission statement’s evolution. It will focus on local people’s wishes and expectations, and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Local produce

There is no farming on Juist itself and therefore no local produce, so products from the surrounding North Sea region are promoted intensively and used by tourism stakeholders. These regional products reinforce all stakeholders’ sense of connectedness with the North Sea region. In addition, an online marketing platform is currently being developed for the food and restaurant industry, retailers and consumers in order to solve the problem of local product availability. One-day regional showcases are also held for locally produced goods in the island’s shops.



More information about the North Sea island of Juist: www.juist.de

FINALIST



CELLE

To the north of Hanover, south of Hamburg and close to Lüneburg Heath, there lies the town of Celle, with 72,000 residents. Celle's historic townscape is dominated by its half-timbered buildings, some 480 of them, which are listed as protected – making this Europe's largest ensemble in this architectural style. Visitors to Celle have a colourful mix of museums, galleries, theatres, music festivals, concerts, open air events, boutiques, cafés and restaurants to enjoy. Celle also has unique landscapes: the Südheide, for example, is a nature lover's paradise. With more than 1000 km of cycle paths to explore, tourists can take in the magic of the landscape as they ride along, or get to know typical Heath villages such as Hermannsburg.

A strategic focus on sustainability

A milestone on Celle's sustainable tourism pathway was reached in 2014, with the production of a tourism mission statement. Together with tourism stakeholders and experts from business, administration and politics, tourism strategies were developed to enable the town to market itself as a sustainable destination in future. Celle's tourism advertising slogan – "Celle ex(Celle)nt nachhaltig" (Ex(Celle)nt in Sustainability) – was adopted at the same time. Local residents were actively involved in producing the tourism mission statement. A citizens' survey gave them the opportunity to share their views, aspirations, ideas and concerns about the future development of tourism in the city. In spring 2017, Celle gained TourCert Sustainable Destination certification, signalling that the city's destination managers are firmly committed to a sustainability pathway and to continuously improving the tourism offer. The city's tourism marketing organisation Celle Tourismus und Marketing GmbH is leading by example: as part of the certification

process, it was required to meet a range of criteria and disclose details of how it applies sustainability principles in its own operations. Measures to improve aspects of environmental performance were identified, a staff survey was conducted and initial action was taken in relation to office management. A company mission statement was developed, summarising how the organisation sees itself and identifying its goals; this now serves as a mission statement for employees.

Stakeholder networking

Celle was exploring the topic of sustainability within the framework of the *Nachhaltiges Celle – Wirtschaften für die Zukunft* (Sustainable Celle – Doing Business for the Future) initiative as early as 2008. In all, 21 companies and organisations have voluntarily sought certification as "Sustainable Celle" Partners. With the new tourism mission statement for the city, the partner network has been restructured. Stakeholders must now meet various sustainability criteria



The jury liked the following:

- » With its current mission statement, the city has made a firm commitment to sustainable tourism.
- » Tourism stakeholders which meet specific criteria can join a sustainability network.
- » Best-practice businesses are showcased on a dedicated sustainability website featuring interesting stories about these companies.
- » Traders at markets and public events must achieve a certain performance level in aspects of eco-friendliness.
- » The jury recommends: a visit to the Institute for Apiculture in Celle's French Garden.

in order to qualify as partners. Service providers which have been admitted to the Partner initiative form part of Celle's official certified sustainability offer and are promoted separately by the tourism organisation through marketing activities in Germany and abroad.

Marketing

Comprehensive information about sustainable travel offers is already available on a new website, with detailed profiles of Partner enterprises. The website also provides recommendations for tourism businesses wishing to market themselves as sustainable tourism Partners in future. The goal is to assist Partner enterprises to continue their progress towards sustainability with appropriate training and upskilling.

Nature conservation

Nature conservation also plays a key role in Celle. Celle Tourismus und Marketing GmbH is engaged in dialogue with nature conservation stakeholders in various forums and plans joint activities in the region. One example is the town's cooperation with the German Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), with guided tours through the river meadows near the city. Information boards and brochures about the natural landscape provide facts and figures about the lowlands along the River Allee near Celle.



More information about Celle: <http://www.celle.travel>

CATEGORY: REGIONALITY

Celle wants its guests not only to explore its attractions but also to enjoy the best that the city has to offer at its art, Christmas and wine markets. Traders at these events must meet specific standards: for example, they may only serve refreshments in recyclable containers or, in the case of the Christmas Market, only use fresh foliage from fir or pine in their decorations. Other criteria include local sourcing of hand-made products and quality labelling of goods on sale. A Good Food Guide showcases all the region's specialities, with recipes for visitors to try out at home.

To give visitors an authentic experience of the region and its specialities, guided tours such as Celle in One Day and Rustic Rendezvous, which includes a visit to a herd of Heidschnucke moorland sheep, are available as "voyages of discovery" around Celle's Old Town and the surrounding area. The tours always include a chance to taste some of Celle's culinary delights.

**LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:
A Taste of Celle Tour**



This lighthouse project gives visitors a very special experience of the city and its history, traditions and culture. During the two-hour tour with a qualified guide, visitors find out fascinating facts about the city's identity and culture. As one of the highlights, selected local restaurants or speciality stores are introduced, with a chance to taste local products, accompanied by a commentary by the tour guide. The tour can also be booked in combination with accommodation provided by sustainability-certified Partners.

Further information:

<http://www.celle.travel/guided-town-tours.html>



SPECIAL AWARD



SPECIAL AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

SAXON SWITZERLAND

Saxon Switzerland is located a few kilometres from Dresden, the capital of Saxony, in the far south-east of Germany; part of it extends into the north of the Czech Republic. It has a fascinating array of landscape features – mesas, high plateaus, crags and stacks, deep gorges, forests and the Elbe river valley. Extending for more 700 square kilometres, it is notable for its great diversity of flora and fauna. It includes 170 square kilometres of national park.

Sustainability: a strategic vision

In Saxon Switzerland, sustainability is embedded as a cross-cutting strategic priority in the tourism mission statement. In 2017, a sustainability strategy for the tourism industry was developed in order to mainstream this issue in all areas of work on tourism. A key priority in this context is to guarantee soft mobility for guests. Tourism stakeholders have been working on this aspect for many years and are implementing joint projects and measures.

Destination Nature

In 2003, the region joined Destination Nature (*Fahrtziel Natur*), a joint initiative involving *Deutsche Bahn* (German Railways), environmental organisations BUND/Friends of the Earth Germany and the German Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), and the German Transport Club (*Verkehrsclub Deutschland – VCD*). Prospective members must meet stringent criteria for admission to the scheme. A network of regional stakeholder groups has been working actively for some years to achieve continuous progress on eco-friendly mobility. The network also looks at ways of improving services and linking regular transport with leisure mobility, e.g. by adapting routes

and timetables or tailoring capacity and amenities to meet tourists' needs.

Mobility planning

Tourismusverband Sächsische Schweiz e.V. is also involved in producing and updating mobility strategies, focusing, for example, on *Wanderbus* routes, the Saxon Switzerland National Park railway, and improvements to signage at railway stations. A mobility manager was appointed at rural district level in mid 2017 and will be implementing targeted eco-mobility initiatives at this level over the next three years.

Range of information

Information about reaching the destination by public transport is provided in all the region's print and online tourist media. In addition, interactive touchscreen information terminals are available at more than 20 locations across the region, mainly in local tourist offices, which also offer local public transport information. Every year, a separate tourist timetable is published to provide visitors with clear and appropriate information about public transport services. All the hiking routes suggested in the activity guide for the



National Park region, entitled *Wanderromantik in der Nationalparkregion Sächsische Schweiz – Hiking in Saxon Switzerland*, and in the leisure brochure include eco-friendly travel information for arrivals and departures.

Local mobility

The region offers a wide range of eco-friendly mobility options for tourists. There is an extensive network of e-bike hire centres and charging stations, and e-bike tours are being developed. In Bad Schandau, the Guest Card is valid as a ticket for the ferry and city bus. On the Saxon side of the border, 11 Wanderbus – Hiking bus routes are a particularly attractive service for tourists.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

The Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland National Park Railway

Since 2014, the Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland National Park Railway has reconnected the two national parks and now provides a new and attractive public transport offer for visitors and local residents alike. The line, which was closed in 1945, was reopened and Bad Schandau Railway Station has now become a modern transport hub connecting the *S-Bahn* light rail network, the National Park railway, the ferry and various *Wanderbus* routes. The redesigned station has thus been dubbed “Germany’s first National Park railway station”, winning a special award for tourism in the Pro-Rail Alliance’s Train Station of the Year competition in 2012.

SPECIAL AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

Sustainable mobility planning for tourism destinations can achieve a range of positive environmental impacts. Reduced energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions, less air pollution and conservation of natural resources are just a few examples. Eco-friendly mobility is intended to maintain and enhance the quality of the holiday-maker’s experience and local residents’ quality of life. Sustainable mobility services must therefore meet guests’ needs for tranquillity and relaxation and, at the same time, reconcile the diverse linkages and interactions between transport demand and supply. Not least, it is essential to ensure that seamless mobility is possible at the destination, with no need for compromises.

The following factors played a key role in judging in this category:

- » An innovative and integrated mobility strategy which connects various tourism-relevant modes of transport and amenities
- » Active support and awareness-raising for guests to encourage them to use eco-friendly transport to the destination and throughout their stay
- » Development and communication of innovative mobility offers
- » A lighthouse project which is a particularly good example of sustainable mobility at the destination.

The jury liked the following:

- » A wide range of stakeholders are working on soft mobility in the region.
- » A mobility manager was appointed at rural district level in mid 2017 and is implementing targeted mobility initiatives.
- » Visitors are informed about eco-friendly transport options through various channels and outlets.

More information about Saxon Switzerland: <https://www.saechsische-schweiz.de/en>

SPECIAL AWARD



SPECIAL AWARD FOR REGIONALITY



THE ALLGÄU

From the rolling foothills of the Alps all the way up to the mountain peaks, the Allgäu is an active holiday-maker's paradise – in summer and in winter. And travellers in search of health and wellness or culture are bound to find just the right experience in the Allgäu. After all, it is one of the most extensive tourism regions in Germany.

Regionality: the core of the brand

The destination's ambition is to position itself by 2020 as a leading high-quality future-oriented rural space for living, working and holidaying. The core of its tourism strategy is sustainability, supported by award of the official Allgäu brand logo, which is coupled to sustainability criteria. Businesses may only become brand partners once the sustainability criteria have been met. All brand partners undertake to report once a year and provide proof of their activities. Broadly speaking, the aim is to refocus attention on the existence of high-quality, wholesome local produce. Local origin is key, no problematical, harmful or genetically modified products may be used, and businesses must have a "down to earth" ethos. The brand logo may only be displayed on products that fulfil all these criteria. Many Allgäu brand partners have already switched to higher-value, healthier production, so a wide range of local foods is now available, targeted at local restaurateurs and distributed through wholesalers. Everything is produced in the Allgäu and meets the highest quality standards.

Integrating local products

Last year, six brand partners from the brewing sector came together and, within the Allgäu brand framework, launched

the *Allgäuer Braukünstler* box of carefully selected beers to mark the 500th anniversary of the Bavarian Beer Purity Law and to showcase the sense of community and the diversity of brewing in the Allgäu. This is also promoted by Allgäu GmbH in combination with cycling tourism under the "cycling for pleasure" label – along with local cheeses. Awareness-raising measures by Allgäu GmbH also include participation in the annual *Allgäuer Festwoche* (Festival Week). Sustainably produced local goods – such as cheese from local shepherd's huts and sausage made from Allgäu beef – are promoted together with farming and food industry partners.



SPECIAL AWARD FOR REGIONALITY

Regionality indicates quality and builds trust. In tourism in particular, local products and services create a sense of connectedness and convey authenticity to guests. This in turn can build a lasting emotional bond connecting the holiday-maker to the destination, which is why showcasing local products and services is so important. It also generates higher economic value at the local level and promotes acceptance of tourism. Destination management organisations should facilitate and create synergies in order to strengthen regional economic cycles and build local stakeholder networks.

Judging in this category awarded points for the following:

- » Preservation of the cultural space and cultural identity as a key component of strategic planning of tourism
- » Importance of quality and regionality in developing cultural tourism offers
- » Measures to build an awareness of culture and identity among tourism stakeholders
- » A lighthouse project that is a particularly good example of regionality at the destination

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

High Alpine Agriculture and the *Alpgenuss* Brand — Promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage

The lighthouse project – High Alpine Farming and the *Alpgenuss* Brand – brings together two initiatives whose purpose is to support sustainable farming in the Allgäu Alps. Farming in the high Alps is a near-natural and extensive form of agriculture which has contributed to the formation of a species-rich landscape and continues to be practised to this day as a living tradition with a long cultural history. The *Allgäuer Alpgenuss* businesses, currently 40 in number, offer products from the Alpine economy. The *Alpgenuss-Alpen* brand is an important form of regional direct marketing and stands for quality local produce: businesses must meet minimum quality standards, prioritise local production, use their own menu, appropriately label their Alpine meadows and chalets, be part of a joint monitoring system and participate in collaborative marketing campaigns. The project has created a successful model for sustainable mountain farming which safeguards responsible tourism in the Allgäu for the long term and offers new types of tourism products that are distinct from Alpine skiing.

The jury liked the following:

- » Regional identity is part of the Allgäu brand, with active brand partner engagement.
- » Various regional initiatives are integrated into the tourism offer and marketed appropriately.
- » The *Alpgenuss-Alpen* (mountain pasture) brand strengthens traditional economies for tourism and makes them part of the visitor experience.

More information about the Allgäu: www.allgaeu.de

SPECIAL AWARD



SPECIAL AWARD FOR BIODIVERSITY AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

THE PEENE REGION IN WESTERN POMERANIA

The extensive river system between the Mecklenburg Lake District and the Baltic coast is a charming and unspoilt natural landscape. For holiday-makers, a tour through the Peene riverscape, with its rich diversity of flora and fauna, is a unique voyage of discovery in which the experience of the natural world, active leisure and revitalisation of the senses take centre stage.

An abundance of species

The Peene Valley is renowned for its large colonies of otter and beaver. The Peene also has one of the most varied populations of freshwater fish of any of Germany's rivers, with rare species such as the river lamprey and spined loach. The fluvial plain, extending some 20,000 hectares, is one of the largest continuous areas of fens in Central and Western Europe. It is also the most unspoilt of all the North German river valleys. Rare moorland species of fauna and flora flourish here, including the Baltic orchid and the large copper butterfly. Almost the entire valley is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU's Birds Directive, with breeding populations of three species of eagle and three species of tern.

A quality tourism offer

In developing and marketing tourism offers, it is quality not quantity that counts. For example, the *Abenteuer Flusslandschaft* (Adventure Riverscape) brand is used exclusively to promote natural experiences that comply with sustainability principles. In future, suppliers will only be admitted to the brand if they are also Nature Park Partners. The Nature Park itself only employs certified nature and landscape guides. A code of conduct for visitors to the Peene Valley Ri-

verscape Nature Park was devised with input from tourism stakeholders and is intended to serve as "golden rules" for visitors, assisting them to behave responsibly towards the natural environment.

Tourism close to nature

The Peene region is particularly noted for its waterways, cycle paths and hiking trails. There are links to the long-distance Berlin-Usedom and Oder-Neisse Cycle Routes and to the nature trail, now being developed, from Schaalsee to the island of Usedom. In 2010, the region won an EDEN Award for its innovative sustainable water tourism product.

Designing the tourism offer

Destination managers work actively with nature conservation authorities, protected area management teams and local suppliers in order to ensure that the tourism offer is environmentally friendly and attractive to visitors. Tourism service providers which meet the Nature Park's quality standards and comply with its code of conduct are showcased in the Peene Valley Nature Park region's guide to outdoor experiences and environmental education. Nature conservation events, such as "Night-Time with the Bats in the Peene Valley" and the "Snipes and Beavers" evening



walk, led by a nature conservation expert from the Nature Park, offer visitors a very special experience in harmony with nature.

Reinvestment

In late 2014, the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) – via the Peene Valley Riverscape Nature Park Association – launched the *Peenetaler* campaign for visitors and tourism businesses. By acquiring the symbolic Peene “thaler” coins, they can donate some of their revenue to support the conservation of ecosystems for which no other funding is available.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

PEENE SAFARI IN A SOLAR BOAT

The Peene Safari in a Solar Boat project is an innovative and sustainable tourism offer available at various locations along the Peene. A guided tour in a solar-powered boat combines an experience of nature and environmental education with a chance to sample local cuisine in comfortable surroundings. The on-board catering offer, available on request, showcases local products. During the tour, guests learn about the local flora and fauna, which experience minimal disturbance due to the low level of engine noise and careful piloting of the craft by the fully qualified on-board guide. Group sizes are kept small, with a maximum of 11 passengers.

SPECIAL AWARD FOR BIODIVERSITY AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

For many tourism destinations in Germany, nature and biodiversity are the capital assets on which long-term commercial success depends. It is therefore in tourism stakeholders’ fundamental interests to preserve the destination’s natural beauty and thus safeguard their business base. The tourism industry can help to valorise nature and landscape in both conceptual and financial terms by facilitating access to income sources which benefit nature and cultural landscape conservation and local communities alike. A further aim is to support the preservation and protection of biodiversity.

The following aspects were judged in this category:

- » Integration of biodiversity conservation in strategic planning of tourism
- » Existence of protected areas and cooperation with their representatives
- » Establishment of quality criteria for the development of nature tourism offers
- » Measures to motivate tourism businesses to help protect and provide an experience of natural diversity
- » A lighthouse project which offers a particularly meaningful experience of biodiversity at the destination.

The jury liked the following:

- » Conservation of nature and biodiversity is firmly embedded in the tourism offer.
- » Tourism and nature conservation stakeholders work together, develop offers that provide an experience of nature and organise conservation events.
- » A regional currency, known as the Peene thaler, supports the conservation of ecosystems.

More information about the Peene region in Western Pomerania: <https://www.abenteuer-flusslandschaft.de/en.html>

SPECIAL AWARD



SPECIAL AWARD FOR CLIMATE, RESOURCES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

THE NORTH SEA ISLAND OF JUIST

The car-free North Sea island of Juist is regarded as a trailblazer in regional climate action and resource efficiency. The island aims to be climate-neutral in 2030, with its engagement reaching far beyond its own boundaries. For example, it contributed to the development of the German Climate Action Plan 2050 and the Recommendations on climate-friendly tourism in Lower Saxony.

Climate neutrality

In order to move closer to its goal of climate neutrality, Juist has developed a concept for a complete switch to renewable energy, which includes an analysis of the potential afforded by all the various forms of renewable energy and an assessment of the climate protection concept. In addition, all the municipality's buildings have been audited and action plans developed. Based on these data, a climate neutrality strategy is being developed with the involvement of local residents and with professional support. The destination's administration (*Kurverwaltung*) has been powered by green energy for many years, is committed to climate-neutral printing and mailing, uses a green server solution and supports tourism businesses' sustainability engagement. For example, the municipality offers low-cost energy advice for tourism service providers, and restaurants have introduced a Veggie Day once a week, with a special vegetarian menu, to highlight the link between CO₂ emissions and meat production. The island itself has produced a climate protection strategy, which it is implementing with the support of a Climate Manager. Energy-saving project days take place in children's nurseries and schools, and these topics are also addressed

as a priority at the annual Children's University. A carbon footprint for the tourist information office was first produced in 2015, with offsetting of residual emissions. Juist thus has the first climate-neutral tourism information office in Germany.

Engagement

Other initiatives such as *Juistus Klimaretter* – the Climate Rescuer on Juist awareness-raising campaign – give guests an experience of climate action on the island and encourage tourism service providers to step up their engagement in this area. Businesses wishing to take part in the project must have obtained TourCert CSR certification and disclosed their carbon footprint – which must continuously improve – via Viabono. The service providers are then awarded a Climate Rescuer on Juist label, which they can display on their door and use for other purposes. Symbols in the directory and online booking platform provide clear and accessible information to guests about participating businesses' climate engagement. These businesses are also given pride of place on an interactive information pillar. They can of course include a Climate Rescuer on Juist logo in their directory entry. In 2017, Juist became a model



region for the Klima-Cent project, which focuses on carbon offsetting and looks for funding options to help destinations such as Juist invest in climate projects.

Climate change adaptation

Adaptation to climate change is another topic taken seriously by tourism stakeholders. As part of a current project, a strategy is being developed to help tourism stakeholders adapt to climate change challenges.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

Juist Unplugged – Sustainability behind the Scenes

The Juist Unplugged lighthouse project, launched in 2017, offers a 3½-hour cycling tour to key sustainability-related locations around the island, enabling guests to gain first-hand experience of the topics of climate and sustainability. At the various stops along the way, there are short talks to explain how the island community is taking action. Persons with restricted mobility can participate in the tour using a wheelchair bicycle. The project won Juist a Tourism with a Future award in Lower Saxony's innovations competition in 2016.

More information about the North Sea Island of Juist: www.juist.de

SPECIAL AWARD FOR CLIMATE, RESOURCES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The natural resources required by the tourism industry should be used efficiently and inputs should be reduced to a minimum. Sparing use of energy, heat and water not only benefits the environment; it also offers potential for companies to save money. So for destination managers, it is important to sensitise businesses to environmental issues and take the climate into account when developing the tourism offer.

The following aspects were judged in this category:

- » Consideration of climate, resource and energy efficiency issues in strategic planning of tourism
- » Support for campaigns to reduce CO₂ emissions and promote environmentally friendly behaviour by tourism businesses
- » Consideration of climate, resource and energy efficiency issues in the development of the tourism offer
- » A lighthouse project which provides a particularly good experience of climate action.

The jury liked the following:

- » Climate protection is taken seriously at all levels of the tourism industry on the island and appropriate action is being taken.
- » Guests learn about climate protection in a fun way.
- » In addition to action on climate change, adaptation strategies are being developed.

OTHER NOMINEES



The jury liked the following:

- » Clear quality standards, including environmental and sustainability criteria, have been established for product lines featured in marketing campaigns.
- » Ammergauer Alpen GmbH was intensively involved in the designation of the planned Nature Park.
- » With the KönigsCard – a mobility and guest card – guests can use local public transport free of charge.

Further information: <https://www.ammergauer-alpen.de/en>

AMMERGAU ALPS

The Ammergau Alps offer a wealth of opportunities for total relaxation of the body, mind and soul, along with attractions, heritage sites and sports for active holiday-makers and families. The Oberammergau Passion Play, recognised by UNESCO as part of the world's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014, is a top international event.

Quality standard with sustainability criteria

In 2012, Ammergauer Alpen GmbH introduced its own quality standard for hosts offering specific product lines – time to relax, active travel and cultural holidays – at this destination. The lists of criteria include certification under the nationwide Viabono scheme, which gives hosts the opportunity to score additional points. A minimum number of points are required for successful certification, so this encourages hosts to audit their business operations for eco-friendliness and sustainability and acquire additional certificates.

Sustainable mobility

The region is part of the *Fahrtziel Natur* (Destination Nature) scheme and offers guests numerous eco-friendly mobility options, including a relaxing journey to the destination by rail. With the electronic guest card, tourists can use local buses free of charge and also benefit from a range of discounted offers.

Experiencing nature

An example of a sustainability project which has already been implemented is the trail at the Zeitberg am Hörnle, which includes various stopping points, created in cooperation with a local carpenter, with information about the

region's flora and fauna in order to enhance awareness of nature and landscape. The stopping points are designed to offer visitors an experience of tranquillity without negatively impacting on grazing.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

Designation of Ammergau Alps Nature Park

The planning of Ammergau Alps Nature Park was a lighthouse project in recent years, which reached a major milestone with its designation in summer 2017. As part of this project, the entire network of trails was upgraded and aligned to principles of eco-friendly leisure, and management strategies were developed for outdoor activities. Targeted visitor management and environmental education measures are designed to further reduce negative impacts and enhance appreciation of the natural space.





The jury liked the following:

- » The region has achieved TourCert certification as a Sustainable Destination, signalling its compliance with sustainable tourism criteria.
- » A network of sustainable Partner businesses is showcased by the tourism organisation in publicity materials and guides visitors towards sustainable tourism services.
- » The destination has developed a tourism mobility strategy and adopted various mobility targets and actions.
- » Support is provided for climate engagement by tourism businesses at the destination.



Further information: <https://www.mein-schwarzwald.de>

THE NORTHERN BLACK FOREST

The Northern Black Forest offers tourists and visitors the perfect setting for hiking, cycling, relaxation and leisure. Four thematic categories – culture, wellness, culinary delights and the great outdoors – are designed to appeal to relevant target groups.

Sustainable Destination Certification

The most important sustainability milestone to date was reached in early 2016 when the Northern Black Forest was certified as a Sustainable Destination. The award was presented by the State of Baden-Württemberg's Ministry of Justice and European Affairs and the certification organisation TourCert. Certification marks the start of a process lasting several years.

An emphasis on sustainable businesses

Sustainable partner businesses at the destination are identified with a symbol on the website. Sustainable tourism products are also marked and feature on the website.

A sustainable destination management organisation

As part of the process, the destination management organisation – Tourismus GmbH Nördlicher Schwarzwald – has drawn up a package of measures, including projects to be assessed over the next three years, mainly against sustainability criteria. The DMO is committed to raising tourism industry partners' awareness of sustainability and is leading by example. Sustainability is already built into its office management: staff use natural cloth towels and eco-friendly washing-up liquid, print on eco-friendly paper and drink organic coffee, and the offices are powered by green energy. Preference is given to partners from the region and

visitors are always encouraged, as a priority, to use public transport in combination with the KONUS Guest Card.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

E-Mobility Package 2016

The lighthouse project is an e-mobility package comprising the use of an electric car combined with various excursion options. The vehicle can be hired on a daily basis for 19 euros, while the two-day hire is offered in combination with an attractive package of entry vouchers of the guest's choice provided exclusively by sustainable businesses partnered with Tourismus GmbH Nördlicher Schwarzwald. The package was expanded to include additional types of electric vehicle in 2017.



OTHER NOMINEES



The jury liked the following:

- » Borkum is keen to position itself as the most attractive East Frisian island for tourists and offer the best quality of life and holiday experience.
- » Events such as *Borkums Gerichte – Borkums Geschichte* (Borkum's History on a Plate) and *Kulinarischer Herbst* (A Culinary Autumn) showcase the destination's local cuisine.
- » There is regular dialogue with the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park management team, with joint project planning and implementation.
- » On Clean Ocean Day, a beach clean-up is organised together with NABU; around six tonnes of marine litter is collected every year.

Further information: <https://www.borkum.de>

BORKUM – A NORTH SEA SPA

With its mild but bracing climate, wide sandy beaches and small island town with a cultural programme, Borkum has a special charm all of its own. Countless festivals and events give visitors – but also its own younger generation – a sense of its traditions and regionality and a taste of the local cuisine. The Borkum ferry, the *Ostfriesland* operated by AG Ems, is the first ferry in the EU to switch to eco-friendly liquefied natural gas (LNG).

High-quality holidays – high quality of life

Borkum is keen to position itself in the long term as the most attractive East Frisian island for tourists – and the one with the best quality of life. With that aim in mind, new dedicated teams have been set up, one of which deals with projects and programmes relating to living and livelihoods – for achieving better quality of life also means creating attractive training opportunities and employment and providing affordable housing. In the culture sector, destination managers are committed to promoting Borkum's language, Plattdeutsch (Low German), and integrating this important element of the island's culture more fully into daily life.

Protecting the environment

The island has a strong commitment to environmental conservation and energy efficiency. The vehicle fleet operated by municipal service provider *Wirtschaftsbetriebe Borkum* is switching to electric propulsion technology and all municipal buildings are supplied with renewable electricity. Key businesses on the island use modern energy-efficient technologies and have established energy management systems. In cooperation with the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park, the destination management organisation (DMO)

organises readings, guided tours, lectures and walks in and around the Wadden Sea World Natural Heritage site. On Clean Ocean Day, the local branch of the German Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) arranges for all the litter collected on the beaches to be picked up by municipal vehicles. In addition, a large number of beach bins have been set up for the disposal of marine litter. Each year, around six tonnes of beach litter are collected by visitors and locals and disposed of. There are also regular clean-up days for volunteers to keep the rest of the island litter-free.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

The Island Musical – Up De Walvis

The local heritage group, which performs in traditional costumes, runs a packed programme of events to foster awareness of local culture and identity, such as the maypole festival and songs to mark the passing of the year. The group also supports and organises the island's musical Up de Walvis, which is performed twice a year and features dancing and shanties.





The jury liked the following:

- » Destination managers conducted a detailed analysis based on the DTV's *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations* and identified areas for action.
- » A marketing strand for sustainable offers is currently being developed.
- » A sustainability manual covers processes and structures within the DMO.
- » Local products and the FEINHEIMISCH regional brand are supported by destination managers and used as a marketing tool.

Further information: <https://www.ostseefjordschlei.com>

OSTSEEFJORD SCHLEI

“Slow down” is the slogan chosen by Ostseefjord Schlei, a Baltic Sea inlet, as its invitation for visitors to come here for rest and relaxation. This has involved a repositioning and new emphasis on connectedness to the natural world and sustainability. Since 2014, the region has marketed a relaxed pace of life with the Slowness campaign, which focuses on core offers in five categories: local products, outdoor activities, water experiences, bathing and beaches, and arts and culture.

Status analysis

Since 2016, measures taken by the tourism organisation have focused on the three dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic and social. For that purpose, a workshop on sustainability in the hotel and restaurant industry was held, attracting around 80 attendees. The DTV's *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations* was used as the basic document and the destination was analysed against the criteria. The areas for action identified in this way are now being addressed on an ongoing basis as part of the follow-up process.

A sustainability manual for the DMO

Ostseefjord Schlei GmbH, as the destination management organisation, is keen to lead by example and has therefore produced a sustainability manual for its internal operations, which sets out guidelines and options for promoting a sustainability pathway.

Awareness-raising for tourism businesses

Ostseefjord Schlei GmbH hosts various events which aim to raise regional service providers' awareness of sustainability

and create synergies. At the *Regionales Frühstück* event, for example, restaurateurs and hoteliers from the area were invited to enjoy a typical regional breakfast, combined with the opportunity to network with local producers and suppliers. Regional specialities from farming and fishing are showcased on the tourist website. Local cafés and restaurants, fishing and smoking businesses, farm shops, crafts and weekly markets are also featured.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

Schleidörfertag (Schlei Villages Day)

Schlei Villages Day is a summer festival for visitors and local residents whose purpose is to showcase and celebrate regionality. This annual one-day event puts the participating Schlei villages in the spotlight with a diverse programme of events for holiday-makers, guests and locals of all ages. A large number of craft businesses, cafés and restaurants, leisure tourism providers and artists use this as an opportunity to present themselves and their communities to the wider world.



OTHER NOMINEES



The jury liked the following:

- » Destination managers engage in regular dialogue with regional stakeholders at *Gastgeber-Treffs* (Host Meetups).
- » Local products are promoted to tourists through various marketing tools, such as the Nature Park Hosts, the *Kaiserlich genießen* (A Royal Treat) brand and the *Echte Gastlichkeit* (True Hospitality) award.
- » A regular dialogue takes place with nature conservation stakeholders, with active support for the provision of training for Nature Park, Black Forest and wine/winery guides.
- » The KONUS Guest Card is regarded as a model of best practice for tourism mobility schemes.

Further information: <https://www.blackforest-tourism.com>

THE BLACK FOREST

The Black Forest charms the visitor with its diversity of landscapes – broad valleys, narrow gorges and sun-kissed summits – and, scattered among them, 320 cities, towns and villages. The region offers outdoor experiences all year round, including family-friendly offers, as well as wellness, culture and regional cuisine. More than 30 premium hiking trails, some 20 quality hiking trails and two quality cycle routes give guests the chance to feel close to nature.

Nature conservation

The Black Forest enjoys the special protection afforded by two of Germany's largest nature parks, which together cover more than two thirds of the holiday region. It also hosts Baden-Württemberg's first national park and a new biosphere reserve, designated in 2017. Compatibility with nature is the key priority in the region's hiking, cycling and excursion offers. Schwarzwald Tourismus GmbH is represented on the governing bodies of the Black Forest's large-scale conservation areas.

Regionality

In the two nature parks – the Southern Black Forest Nature Park and the Central/Northern Black Forest Nature Park – there are more than 100 Nature Park Hosts with whom Schwarzwald Tourismus GmbH also cooperates. Local produce is sold at nature park markets. In addition, the Nature Park Hosts are committed to supporting local producers, tailoring their offer accordingly, and making use of local foods. Wherever feasible, local products are linked in with and promoted through relevant themed activities. Schwarzwald Tourismus GmbH has also established partnerships with producers, including Rothaus (beer), Faller Konfitüren

(preserves) and Bad Peterstaler Mineralquellen GmbH (mineral water).

Cultural identity

Tourism here in the Black Forest is nurtured by the authenticity of its traditions, a widespread interest in the history that has shaped local identity, and a packed festival programme. Through tourism, in turn, the effect of these festivals, traditions and regional heritage in building a sense of cultural identity is strengthened from within.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

KONUS-Guest Card

The lighthouse project – the KONUS Guest Card – provides free travel on local bus and train routes for all overnight guests in more than 140 local destinations / resorts. Anyone booking an overnight stay with one of the 11,000 hosts has access to all the benefits provided by the Guest Card and can travel on public transport as often and as long as they like.





Further information: www.st-peter-ording.de

The jury liked the following:

- » There is intensive and regular exchange with tourism stakeholders at all levels in various formats, e.g. Host Workshops and Hotelier Meetups.
- » Outdoor activities are designed to be nature-compatible.
- » The SPO beach clean-up takes place several times a year and involves a range of stakeholders.
- » A variety of measures are taken in cooperation with partners to encourage businesses to integrate environmental and climate protection into their operations.

ST. PETER-ORDING

Sankt Peter-Ording – the North Sea’s Healing Spa and Sulphur Spring – is situated on the western tip of the Eiderstedt peninsula in Schleswig-Holstein. Its unique selling point is its fine sandy beach, two kilometres wide in places and stretching along 12 kilometres of coast. The beach forms part of the Wadden Sea National Park and UNESCO World Natural Heritage site. The municipality became a National Park Partner in November 2016, signalling its commitment to a sustainable development pathway.

Stakeholder dialogue

The Sankt Peter-Ording Tourism Office (TZ SPO) supports or hosts a series of events in order to engage with tourism stakeholders. During the low season, regular 90-minute *TZ im Dialog* (TZ in Dialogue) sessions provide information on various tourism-related topics; the sessions receive support from experts and are accompanied by media relations activities. This format makes the Tourism Office’s work more transparent, shares knowledge, creates synergies and builds trust. The Tourism Office’s *Gastgeberwerkstatt* (Host Workshop) series is a forum for the holiday rental sector to discuss a range of topics. The *Hotelier-Stammtisch* (Hotelier Meetup) promotes dialogue with hotel managers in the region. Sustainability is regularly discussed at these events and is also explored at joint workshop sessions.

Nature conservation

Additional measures were taken in recent years to protect the beach at Sankt Peter-Ording. Various regulations ensure that it is preserved in a near-natural state and protected from pollution. For example, permission is required to stage larger-scale events, and guidelines are

in place setting out a framework for the use of the beach, the host-ing of events and certain commercial uses. In 2015, the Tourism Office launched the “*SPO klart auf!*” campaign. This beach clean-up is held twice a year in cooperation with partners from tourism, business, nature conservation and water-based sports and attracts around 100 participants each time. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the problem of beach litter.

LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT:

Experience Nature Week

The *Naturerlebniswoche* (Experience Nature Week) packages a range of outdoor experiences. From the *Vogelkiek* bird-watching festival to the classic guided tour of the tidal flats, from hunting for amber to baking wild herb bread, and from the spiritual to the literary beach walks – at all these events, visitors and local residents alike can admire the great diversity of the region’s natural environment. The week is intended to boost tourism during the low season. The National Park Partners are particularly active and devise some interesting events of their own.



OTHER NOMINEES



The jury liked the following:

- » The *Ferien fürs Klima* (Holiday for the Climate) network of service providers and the Partner initiatives within the National Natural Landscapes framework emphasise responsible tourism stakeholders' commitment to sustainability.
- » Tourism businesses' sustainability offers are showcased by the DMO in a clear and accessible manner.
- » A sustainable tourism mission statement assists all tourism stakeholders to pursue a sustainable development pathway.
- » Various projects involving nature conservation stakeholders contribute to soft tourism development.

Further information: <https://www.tourismus-uckermark.de>

THE UCKERMARK

In the Uckermark in Brandenburg, nature is at the forefront of the visitor experience. More than 60 per cent of this destination's natural area is protected. One of Germany's most sparsely populated regions, the Uckermark is the ideal place for finding tranquillity and perfecting the art of slow. Here, nature tourism – walking, cycling and outdoor activities on and in the water – takes pride of place, enhanced by cultural offers at some locations and local produce to enjoy. Sustainable tourism development aims to consolidate this base and safeguard its long-term use.

Partner initiatives for tourism stakeholders

A broad network of tourism service providers which operate sustainably was set up back in 2012. Topics such as climate change and conservation of the environment are firmly embedded in these stakeholders' business models. Suppliers who are members of the *Ferien fürs Klima* (Holiday for the Climate) network must demonstrate, through their compliance with specific criteria, that a commitment to sustainability principles is part of their company mission statement, for example by providing climate training for staff, using green energy or producing their own electricity, encouraging guests to leave the car at home, or making use of local products and food. In 2013, the Uckermark Partner initiative, which operates within the National Natural Landscapes framework, was set up for businesses which strongly identify with the protected areas and have a proven track record in operating sustainably.

The sustainable tourism mission statement

A sustainable tourism mission statement for the Uckermark, developed in conjunction with regional stakehol-

ders in 2013, sets out clear guidelines for future-focused tourism development at this destination. In 2016, the region initiated the process for certification as a Sustainable Destination in order to embed its pathway towards sustainability in tourism and create synergies.

LEUCHTTURM-ANGEBOT:

Gutshof Kraatz Country Estate

The Gutshof Kraatz lighthouse project offers a barrier-free holiday experience at a country estate and local producer. The buildings at Gutshof Kraatz were restored using green and historically authentic building materials and include a small restaurant and farm shop. There is a particular commitment to preserving the estate's orchards, where heritage apples and other local fruits are still grown. The estate is a member of various networks and Partner initiatives in the Nature Park and wider region and has already won awards for its commitment to sustainability.



JURY & ADVISORY BOARD

The independent jury brought expertise, knowledge and experience from the municipal level, associations, business and politics to the decision-making process. The members of the jury visited and judged the finalists and selected the competition winners.



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The project advisory board, consisting of professionals from all the key tourism industry segments, ministries and associations, provided advice and support.

- » Dr Marion Weber, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi)
- » Carsten Hansen, German Association of Towns and Municipalities
- » Claudia Gilles, German Tourism Association (DTV)
- » Dr. Andreas Zimmer, Tourismus-Marketing Brandenburg GmbH
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- » Felix Frost, TourismusMarketing Niedersachsen GmbH
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- » Birgit Grauvogel, Tourismus Zentrale Saarland GmbH
- » Kim Hartwig, Tourism Cluster, WTSH GmbH

OUTCOMES

The Federal Competition showcased a wide range of convincing concepts and innovative instruments for the development of sustainable tourism at German destinations. The 27 contenders from 12 German states amply demonstrated that, together with partners, they are committed to environmentally and socially compatible development of tourism as an economic factor. With judging based on 40 sustainability criteria set forth in the DTV's *Sustainable Development Criteria for German Tourism Destinations*, a clear model was established for the standards which must be met. Nonetheless, some degree of latitude is required in order to take account of the specific natural and structural conditions in place at the destinations themselves. Based on thematic categories, the contender destinations were therefore able to showcase their strengths in specific areas and convincingly presented a diversity of ideas and high-quality initiatives. As one outcome of the judging, the following were identified as particularly relevant to all tourism destinations' future endeavours:

Create viable offers

One aspect of particular importance, now and in future, is to ensure that the largely theoretical requirements for a sustainable tourism pathway genuinely lead to easily identifiable and accessible offers. In practice, tourists often still find it difficult to identify and access specific offers, not least due to a lack of transparent marketing of sustainable tourism products. Moreover, products should be designed in such a way that the sustainability dimension is not regarded as a loss but as an additional quality pledge to visitors. That means ensuring that they are visitor-oriented and presented in a way that is easy to understand. Furthermore, many sustainability features are an ideal platform for story-telling and conveying product authenticity.

Strategic coherence

At a strategic level, a destination-wide understanding of sustainability is required to enable all stakeholders to work together towards shared goals. Tourism policies and destination strategies should therefore have a clear connection to the overall sustainability pathway, which they should support with

specific targets and actions. Sustainability should not be seen as an additional issue for tourism but as a cross-cutting topic of relevance to all segments. A major obstacle in this context, however, is often the lack of human and financial resources at the DMOs. Without ringfenced resources, the focus on sustainability cannot capitalise on its potential. What's more, sustainability and quality are almost impossible to separate; they should therefore be addressed as mutually reinforcing dimensions in a strategic context as well. Thematic and, if appropriate, personnel overlaps should be identified and direct linkages established.

Sustainable businesses

Without the commitment and willingness of tourism businesses to make their products and services environmentally and socially compatible, it will not be possible to move destinations towards sustainability. At any destination, the tourism organisation has a key role to play in encouraging service providers to sign up for certification schemes that focus on sustainability. Due to the great diversity of these schemes, however, a better overview of the quality and focus of the individual certificates is required. Consistent resource conservation is only possible if the destination moves beyond the basic legal requirements and works actively to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and water consumption and avoid waste in tourism businesses. Clear targets from policy-makers can also generate momentum here.

Soft mobility

Eco-friendly mobility is another factor of key relevance to sustainable tourism. Here, the winners of the Federal Competition are leading by example, with innovative initiatives which prove that travel to and from the destination can be cleverly combined with sustainable mobility offers at the local level. Car sharing, free use of public transport throughout the region, guest cards for tourists and e-bike networks are outstanding examples of schemes already in place at these destinations. In future, e-mobility – particularly the expansion of electric vehicle schemes – will further gain in importance.

Due to the great diversity of certification schemes, a better overview of the quality and focus of the individual environmental and sustainability certificates is required.

Promoting and implementing collaborative processes

Tourism planning must involve all stakeholders: this is the only pathway towards successful outcomes. The destination management organisation itself has only limited scope for action in relation to sustainability processes; its primary role is to provide impetus and coordination.

Destination managers and businesses should therefore involve all stakeholders from the outset in project planning and implementation; examples of stakeholders include nature conservation and environmental organisations, protected area management teams, the culture sector, outdoor sports associations and representatives of farming and forestry. Here, the first step is to identify thematic priorities which can then be addressed on a continuous basis. Tourism stakeholders should also interact with each other on a regular basis and engage in cooperation: the DMO can fulfil a coordinating role here. Networking among participating destinations should also be encouraged in order to facilitate active dialogue about sustainability initiatives that have been implemented or are planned. This type of dialogue can create synergies and lead to a win-win situation for the regions themselves, and also encourage stakeholders to progress sustainable tourism across regional boundaries.

In future, networking among participating destinations should also be encouraged in order to facilitate active dialogue about sustainability initiatives that have been implemented or are planned.

A sustainable pathway for all types of destination

The ambition of this year's competition was to enable all types of destination to participate. This was successful: many smaller destinations, as well as small towns and larger area-based destinations, submitted very convincing applications. Larger cities, on the other hand, were not sufficiently engaged. For that reason, it is important, for the future, to identify the specific needs of sustainable tourism in cities, not least because they are the main focus of tourism in Germany.

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Protected areas in Germany

Protected areas are key instruments of nature conservation and landscape protection. They make a direct contribution to the conservation of species and habitats. Several types of protected areas are designated in Germany. The various categories are defined in the Federal Nature Conservation Act (BNatSchG). They can be classified by size, protection purpose and conservation objective and by the resulting restrictions on land use. It is important to note that in many cases, protected areas of different types can overlap: for example, a nature conservation area may also form part of a nature park. The most important categories of protected area in Germany are described below:

Landscape protection areas are generally subject to fewer restrictions on use. These areas are protected primarily because of their special importance for recreation. In general, landscape protection areas are designated by counties or municipalities by means of an ordinance. Due to their importance for recreation, they generally cover a relatively large area.

Nature conservation areas are defined as areas in which the special protection of nature and landscape as a whole, or of individual parts thereof, is required in order to conserve, develop or restore habitats and the associated species of wild fauna and flora, for reasons of science, natural history or national heritage, or because of their rarity, special characteristics or outstanding beauty. Any activity causing destruction, alteration or damage in a nature conservation area is prohibited. Nature conservation areas may be accessible to the public if the protection purpose permits. Most nature conservation areas are designated by the authorities responsible for nature conservation at regional government level, although some are created by higher or lower nature conservation authorities at the state (Land) level by means of an order or ordinance.

NATURA 2000 is a European network of protected areas, established for the purpose of preserving or restoring biodiversity in the EU. It consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive, respectively. At Habitats Directive sites, specific species

and habitats are protected, depending on the area. Natura 2000 is based on the principle that the conservation of biological diversity can only be achieved by means of a coherent network rather than isolated habitats.

Nature parks are large-scale cultural landscapes which consist mainly of landscape protection and nature conservation areas. In nature parks, efforts are being made to encourage sustainable tourism (recreational function). They support sustainable land use and also promote sustainable regional development. There is considerable variation among nature parks and states (Länder) regarding how the statutory provisions on management and development are implemented. The reasons include differences in structural conditions; varying statutory provisions and prioritisation in nature park concepts and statutes; and the different objectives pursued by their administrations.

Biosphere reserves fulfil protective and development functions. They also serve as models for testing and monitoring sustainable development in its economic, environmental and social dimensions. Biosphere reserves have been recognised by UNESCO since 1976 under the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. This is an interdisciplinary scientific programme whose purpose is to research the relationship between humans and the environment and to reconcile conservation of biological diversity with the needs of human communities.

National parks are large-scale landscapes which require protection and which, in the greater part of their territory, should ensure the undisturbed progression, as far as possible, of natural processes in their natural dynamics. Where their protection purpose allows, national parks also support scientific environmental observation, education in natural history, and public experience of nature.

Weitere Begrifflichkeiten

Barrier-free: To ensure risk- and problem-free use of tourism amenities and attractions by people with disabilities or specific needs, clear and reliable information about the offer is required, describing the extent to which the amenity can be accessed and utilised by these visitor groups. This information can provide a comprehensive overview

of barrier-free offers at the destination, showing how an accessible holiday is possible.

Visitor management: Visitor management refers to measures to influence the flow of visitors and their behaviour and attitudes during visits to sensitive areas or amenities. The purpose of visitor management is to mitigate negative impacts on protected sites and ensure a high-quality recreational experience. Destination managers should be actively involved in planning visitor management measures at the destination.

Biodiversity: Biological diversity, or biodiversity, means the diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic variety within species. Intact natural and cultural landscapes generally have rich biodiversity. Biodiversity is one of the main features determining the perceived natural appeal and landscape appearance at a tourist destination.

Intangible cultural heritage: This refers to living traditions, such as language, dialect, song, music, dance, festivals, fine arts, drama and crafts skills, which characterise a region's cultural identity. Local residents identify with these elements, which – thanks to revenue from tourism – can be integrated more fully into their lives.

Climate footprint: A climate footprint (or carbon footprint) means the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by an individual within a given period of time. In the context of travel and tourism, the climate footprint shows the climate impacts of the journey in question.

Carbon offsetting: Offsetting is a synonym for compensation. Businesses and private individuals can make a payment to ensure that the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from tourism-related activities, such as travel to and from the destination, are reduced by the same amount elsewhere. Carbon offset providers invest the funds in solar, hydro, biomass or energy efficiency projects which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mobility strategy: Local and regional transport needs, mobility and transport services, residential and leisure structures and their interaction are analysed and the findings are then used to produce and agree a mobility strategy.

Mobility manager: Sustainable mobility solutions for leisure and tourism are only possible if the transport, tourism and environmental sectors collaborate intensively at all levels. The various measures and actions to promote mo-

bility cannot be viewed and implemented in isolation but require an integrated approach. This is the responsibility of the mobility manager, who works to promote sustainable transport at the destination.

Sustainable procurement: In many cases, it is possible to specify environmental and social criteria which must be met in the procurement of products and services. In supporting sustainable purchasing, there should be a focus on regionality, environmental compatibility (organic certification) and/or fair trade products.

Premium hiking trail: Destinations may apply for high-quality paths to be certified as premium hiking trails. The certification organisation is the German Hiking Institute in Marburg. A total of 34 criteria are applied in the certification process, including trail surface, the hiking experience of natural areas, waymarking, attractions and variety of terrain.

Quality cycle path: Touring cyclists wishing to find out about routes, regions and the availability of high-quality services can refer to the seals of quality awarded by the German Cyclist's Association (ADFC). Using a points-based system, the ADFC awards up to five stars to long-distance cycle routes.

Regional economic cycles: In the tourism context, consumers tend to view local produce as higher-quality. These products also create a sense of connectedness to the region and authenticity in the tourism offer. Commercial added value and purchasing power are also retained in the region, rather than being diverted elsewhere. This creates a stable regional economic cycle which safeguards jobs and enhances quality of life in the region, making it more attractive.

Resource efficiency: Resource efficiency means using natural resources such as raw materials, energy, clean air, water and land (soil) responsibly and as sparingly as possible and minimising negative environmental impacts.

