



**The label for sustainability
and corporate responsibility
in tourism**

TourCert
organisation for certification in tourism

“CSR-Tourism-certified“ – The label for sustainability and corporate responsibility in tourism.

- What remains in the country when the tourist season is over?
- Do tourism enterprises pay their workers living wages that can feed a family?
- Do resorts minimise waste and do they dispose of it in an environmentally friendly manner?
- Does the itinerary take into account natural resources, e.g. regarding the provision of water and energy, and the protection of nature and endangered species?
- Has the food offered at a typical local restaurant really been produced locally?
- How much CO₂ is emitted per tourist in transport?

The answers to these and many other questions provide information on the degree of sustainability and social responsibility actually achieved by a tour operator in his business operations.

Tourism enterprises using this label have examined their business practices according to sustainability criteria. They have applied and evaluated quantitative and qualitative environmental and social criteria. The companies have written a sustainability report according to the standards of TourCert and have designed a programme for improvement. Companies with this label have committed to continue to improve their sustainability performance.

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR describes the contribution a company makes to sustainable development by going beyond legal provisions and by integrating social and environmental responsibility into its core business. The idea is to deliberately achieve a balance, taking into account the interests of the various stakeholders: customers and staff, owners and shareholders, hotels and service providers in the destinations, as well as local communities.

According to TourCert, sustainability and CSR are just different terms expressing how companies assume social responsibility.

Eight CSR guidelines

1. Travel in an environmentally friendly manner
2. Carefully select accommodation
3. Compare destinations
4. Involve local communities
5. Pay adequate prices
6. Observe labour standards
7. Conduct business on a partnership basis
8. Ensure transparency

CSR in Tourism

Tourism enterprises are responsible for the conditions under which a holiday trip is organised. At the same time, tourism is a complex business sector: seasonal work, low wages and long working hours are typical for many of the jobs. In the context of socially responsible management, a number of different questions arise: How many jobs are created, and what are the job conditions? What does tourism contribute to improving the level of education and employment? What contribution does it make to support economically underdeveloped regions? How does tourism preserve natural ecosystems instead of damaging them? How can tourism activities promote economic development and intercultural understanding? Does tourism contribute to reducing poverty and does it respect the human and labour rights of people in the destinations?

CSR Reporting Standards

The CSR reporting standards were developed in cooperation with the business association **forumandersreisen** and pilot enterprises from Germany, Austria and Spain, and they were tested in the companies' daily operations. The guidelines giving the CSR reporting format build on existing reporting standards. They emerged from the practical experiences made by the pilot companies and from the dialogue with key players in tourism companies, trade unions, NGOs, and universities. In this way, a sector-specific CSR standard for tourism was developed which can be verified, which gives ideas and motivation for improvement and which is, above all, applicable to small and medium sized enterprises.

The CSR reporting standards consist of eight chapters with core content and indicators. They concentrate on aspects of relevance to small and medium sized enterprises in tourism.

Checks and Tools – Instruments for Data Collection

Set of Indicators

Data are gathered with the help of a set of about 80 quantitative indicators. A special software is available that has been developed specifically for this purpose.

Sustainability Checks

Four sustainability checks refer to central elements in the service chain

- Planning packages in the destinations
- Accommodation
- Partner agencies
- Travel services

The checks consist of questions on ecological, social and economic aspects and include a scale for assessment to be filled in by the tour operator. This assessment is seen as a qualitative addition to the indicators. It sums up the qualitative evaluation in a sustainability index.



At the same time, the sustainability checks serve the tour operator's orientation when it comes to selecting service providers in the destinations, and/or as a tool for evaluation later on.

The **index of staff satisfaction** will be compiled by conducting a survey among employees; the **CSR-customer check** by a condensed evaluation of the degree to which minimum standards are met with regard to customer information. The **index of customer satisfaction** is compiled on the basis of customer feedback and the response rate.



Process of CSR reporting

The process of compiling a sustainability report consists of eight steps, from the decision taken by the management to data collection and evaluation up to developing a strategy, compiling the programme for improvement and editing the CSR report.

According to the experiences to date, it takes about ten to twelve weeks from the introduction of the reporting system to the first finalised report. Depending on the size of the company, ten to 15 working days are needed for the first report. Regarding the certification process, the company enters into an agreement with TourCert.

TourCert – The Certifying Organisation

The following non-profit organisations are involved as partners:

- German Church Development Service – Tourism Watch, Bonn
- KATE Center for Ecology & Entwicklung, Stuttgart
- Naturefriends International, Vienna
- University of Applied Sciences, Eberswalde



TourCert brings together experts from tourism, universities, environment and development organisations, and politics. With many years of experience, they stand for qualified training, consultancy and certification.

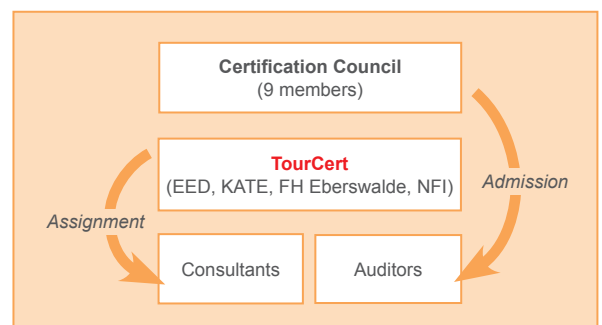
The organisation has the not-for-profit objective of promoting sustainable business operations in tourism through credible auditing and certification. The criteria for certification and the label "CSR Tourism certified" to be awarded are in the hands of an independent certification council. The label is the official distinction for sustainability and corporate responsibility in tourism.

The Certification Council – Independence and Competence

The general meeting of the members of TourCert appoints the certification council for a period of two years; with the possibility of re-appointment. The members of the certification council are representatives of industry, universities, environment and development organisations, and politics.

The CSR certification council decides on the framework for CSR certification, evaluates experiences, continues to develop the CSR certification guidelines, controls the certifying organisation TourCert and decides on the admission of auditors and on the label "CSR-certified" to be issued.

Organisation for Certification in Tourism



External Independent CSR Certification

The CSR certification is a three step process:

- 1. On behalf of TourCert, the sustainability report will be checked by an independent external auditor on the basis of the** CSR reporting standards and the CSR certification guidelines. The evaluation is mainly based on checking the documents and, if necessary, asking for additional information and verification. The CSR auditor will check whether the report has been compiled according to the standards of the CSR reporting guidelines, whether the reporting principles have been observed, and whether the CSR minimum standards are met.
- 2. In companies with more than four full time positions, the auditor will check at location** the data given in the report and will do a random check of the evidence provided. An auditor's report will be compiled, which will provide a condensed feedback with suggestions for improvement as well as a comparison of the company's data with sector-specific benchmark **CSR core indicators**.
Thanks to the qualified feedback and the core indicators, the company will be able to see where they stand as compared to other companies and will be able to identify potentials for improvement.
- 3. An independent certification council of experts decides on the certification on the basis of the** CSR report and the auditor's report submitted. **TourCert then issues** the label „**CSRcertified**“.
The year mentioned gives the time frame of validity of the respective company's certification.



10 Core Indicators:

1. CO₂ emissions per guest per day
2. Business ecology: CO₂ emissions generated in the company per employee
3. Percentage of the price paid by the customer that goes to the destination
4. Quality of customer information
5. Index of customer satisfaction (including response rate)
6. Business culture: Index of staff satisfaction
7. Business success: Cash flow in relation to total turnover
8. Sustainability index partner agencies
9. Sustainability index accommodation
10. Sustainability index tourist guides

The CSR process turns good intentions into sustainable action!

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Pioneers in CSR!

Several tour operators from
forumandersreisen
are already CSRcertified

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