Environmental management of a tourist destination
A factor of tourism competitiveness

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Abstract

Although research to date has addressed various elements of destination competitiveness there has been little attempt to systematically and comprehensively study the environmental competitiveness from the managerial perspective. Since the Calgary tourism competitiveness model brought a systematic approach to tourism competitiveness research, this paper selectively uses its management element as a tool to link the competitiveness and environmental management. Following the model the destination management is divided into two parts: (1) managerial and (2) marketing efforts. This paper studies them from environmental perspective. First, destination environmental competitiveness can be increased by appropriate managerial efforts related to environmental impact (EI), and environmental quality (EQ) management. Second, the destination competitiveness can be enhanced through certain environmental marketing activities. Further, environmental management is categorised into groups: management by codes of conduct, by self-developed environmental practice, by certified or awarded best practice and by accreditation schemes. Their usefulness for environmental destination management and competitiveness is evaluated. © 1999 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Environmental impact management; Environmental quality management; Calgary tourism competitiveness model; Codes of conduct; Environmental best practice; Environmental awards; Environmental accreditation

1. Introduction

Tourism theory has recognised the fundamental importance of environmental quality for ensuring the future existence of most types of tourist destinations. Tourism managers have been willing to incorporate environmental measures into current management strategies and methods if they resulted in lower costs and/or higher revenues and profits (Stabler & Goodal, 1997, p. 19). Increasing environmental consciousness, tourist demand for better quality and the increased competition among destinations have changed the situation; environmental quality has become a current issue. Environmental quality of a destination is a prevailing issue in making travel-related decision; it is a competitiveness factor among different tourist destinations with varying environmental quality. In many cases, environmental objectives and practice must be incorporated into the current attitudes,

management strategies and methods in order to stay competitive on the tourist market, e.g. in order to prevent a decrease in sales and prices, revenues and profits.

The environmental debate in tourism recognises the (negative) impacts of the travel and tourism industry on the environment. Therefore, many environmental projects that minimise those impacts have been developed and marketed under the name of sustainability, ecotourism and other green brands and trademarks. In practice, much less attention has been devoted to the problem that other industries can erode the quality of the environment that attract visitors. Consideration of overall environmental quality includes not only control over the environmental impacts of the travel and tourism industry, but also minimises all kinds of environmental problems and includes investments in environmental protection and reinstation of already degraded environment. The first aspect usually refers to energy, water and other resource saving programs and thus, in many cases results in cost reductions; this is also economically attractive for "environmental" managers and easily supported by business and political forces located at the

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destination. The second aspect requires much higher environmental awareness, more information and co-ordination, "public management" (Socher & Tschurtschenthaler, 1998, p. 1) and substantial (public) financial resources; this is much more exacting and expensive to manage. It also requires a long-term view; it brings present costs and future benefits.

2. Environmental quality — destination competitiveness factor

In its narrower sense, the term environment refers to the physical environment that includes natural and man-made components. In a broader sense, social and cultural environments are also considered (Inskeep, 1991, p. 339; Mathieson & Wall, 1996, p. 3). In this paper we refer to the physical environment, unless otherwise mentioned.

Environmental quality refers to the quality of the natural features of the destination that can be deteriorated by human activities. Natural features like beautiful scenery, natural hydrologic structures, clean water, fresh air and species diversity can suffer from pollution and therefore lose their attractiveness. According to tourist demand, environmental quality is an integral part of the quality of the natural attractions. Accordingly, maintaining a high level of overall environmental quality is important for the competitiveness of most types of tourism destinations (Inskeep, 1991, p. 347) and thus a primary concern for destination managers. Many authors (Pizam, 1991, p. 79; Inskeep, 1991, p. 339; Middleton, 1997, p. 136; Mieczkowski, 1995, p. 11) claim that the quality of natural attractions is a part of quality destination. Destination attractions are recognised to be a factor of tourism destination competitiveness by Ritchie and Crouch (1993) as shown in Table 1.

Destination appeal (Column 2) refers to the destination attractiveness and deterrents. Attractiveness includes eleven elements: natural features, climate, cultural and social characteristics, general infrastructure, basic services infrastructure, tourism superstructure, access

and transportation facilities, attitudes towards tourists, cost/price levels, economic and social ties and uniqueness, such as unique religious centres or unique geography. Among destination deterrents, Ritchie and Crouch list security and safety, such as political instability, health and medical concerns, such as poor quality of sanitation, laws and regulations, such as visa requirements and cultural distance. These factors act as a barrier to visiting a given destination.

The proposed model asserts that a carefully selected and well executed program of destination management can serve to improve the tourism competitiveness of a destination. In Table 1 (Column 3) the listed tourism marketing efforts have the potential to enhance the perceived appeal (e.g. image) of a destination; managerial initiatives can strengthen the competitive position of a destination. The model also argues that destination competitiveness can be enhanced through management organisation (DMO) capabilities and strategic alliances (Column 4). According to the model, the information system (Column 5) is a basis for decision making where internal management information provides the ability to better manage the performance of destination's product. Research enables a destination to adapt to changing market conditions. The last factor in the model is destination efficiency (Column 6). The first set of these factors, integrity of experience, relates to the ability of the destination to provide an appropriate (expected and promised) experience, e.g. appropriate to both the situation and the price charged. The second set of the last factors are termed productivity variables. These include variables which are hypothesised to develop skills and/or conditions which can increase the quantity and quality of the output of tourism experiences for a given level of resource input, such as training staff, for example.

The Calgary model of competitiveness in tourism assumes price as a factor of competitiveness and recognises the relations between appropriate visitor experience, different levels of quality and prices charged. Although different levels of quality and customer expectations are appropriate for a given cost level in different situations or

Table 1
The Calgary model of competitiveness in tourism — factors of destination competitiveness[a]

No.	APPEAL Destination appeal	MNGM Destination management	ORG Destination organisation	INFO Destination information	EFFIC Destination efficiency
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	ATTRACT Destination attractiveness	MANAGER Managerial efforts	DMO Management organisation capabilities	MIS Internal management information system	IOE Integrity of experience
2	DETER Destination deterrents	MKGT Marketing efforts	ALLIANCE Strategic alliances	RESEARCH Research capabilities	PROD Productivity

[a]Source: Ritchie and Crouch (1993, p. 48).

settings (Ritchie & Crouch, 1993), it is unrealistic to expect that environmentally less attractive destinations (lower environmental quality) can remain competitive by decreasing the prices in the long run. First, the main factor in setting prices are the costs of a produced tourist product. If the environmental premium earned by a tourist producer is negative, the producer will operate at a loss. Second, a growing segment of visitors is not willing to trade lower environmental quality for a lower price (OECD, 1992, p. 8) and will often pay a premium in order to experience an attractive, clean and pollution-free environment (Inskeep, 1991, p. 347). There is convincing evidence that visitors turn away from what they consider to be polluted destinations. This is especially true where health risks from air and water pollution, for example, are perceived as a problem (Middleton, 1997, p. 138). This is illustrated by the recent tourism decline in the Western Mediterranean and the increase in tourism in the less-polluted eastern Mediterranean, and elsewhere (Mieczkowski, 1995, p. 210). (Realising that due to the filtration process, some segments of the travellers, with lower purchasing power and lower environmental awareness will be attracted by lower prices and will not be so demanding in terms of environmental quality).

Further, the model statically defines attractiveness and deterrents. It does not recognise that the same element can attract or deter the visitor; in some cases it represents attractiveness in other cases a deterrent — due to its quality. An unspoiled scenery would attract visitors. A visually polluted landscape due to inappropriate tourism infrastructure is an example of un-attractiveness. Airport and road congestion or poor hotel service can make a destination less attractive to the potential visitors. Proper management of a destination can turn some deterrents into attractions or prevent attractions from being turned into deterrents.

The Calgary model does not raise the question of environmental quality, which is an important factor of destination attractiveness and influences the choice of a vacation destination (Tschurtschenthaler, 1986, p. 117). If the environmental attractions are negatively affected, tourists will stay away. Thus destination managers must manage the environmental quality of the destination. Our first hypothesis is that destination attractiveness (appeal) and its competitiveness can be increased by proper management of environmental quality of the destination. Further, for our paper it is important to recognise that it is not the real, but the perceived environmental quality (Mieczkowski, 1995, p. 11) or environmental image (Okoroafo, 1995, p. 353) that influences the buying decisions of the potential visitors. Since image is not necessarily founded on experience or facts (Middleton, 1996, p. 87), our second hypothesis is that destination managers have to manage the environmental image of a destination in order to increase its competitiveness. In terms of Calgary model, the first hypothesis refers to

managerial efforts, and the second to marketing efforts (see Tables 1 and 5).

In order to create realistic expectations, it is essential to communicate the proper and true information. In case of a difference between the real environmental quality and the environmental image, the destination will find itself less competitive on the market. A negative exaggeration in the environmental image will result in lost opportunities for a tourist destination in terms of lower prices and/or a lower number of visitors. A positive exaggeration will result in a gap between promises and delivery (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 115). It will increase the visitor's expectations which will not be satisfied and the quality of the visitor's experience will be poor; this will again weaken the competitiveness of a destination and result in a decrease in prices and/or number of visitors in the future. The absence of environmental information can result in exaggerated or poor environmental image or even in lower attractiveness for the potential visitors — due to the absence of information (Nyberg, 1995, p. 34).

Systematic environmental branding would be a natural way to manage the environmental recognition of the tourism product/destination. An environmental brand would give the customer both environmental information and confidence when purchasing, and would help destination managers to manage the environmental expectation and perceptions of the visitors.

For this paper, discussion of branding tourism by product brands (for example Virgin Airlines and Hilton Hotels) or destination brands (Acapulco, Palm Springs and the French Riviera) is irrelevant (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998, p. 146). We refer to tourism branding by a family of brands (see Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998, p. 111). In this way, environmental branding can be carried out through one or more environmental signs or logos, used in combination with other brands — each reflecting different characteristics of a tourism product, connected to the given destination.

3. Different aspects of environmental management of the destination

In order to create a comprehensive framework for our analysis, we are introducing environmental impact and environmental quality management. We also distinguish between four different categories of environmental management approaches.

3.1. Environmental impact (EI) and environmental quality (EQ) destination management

From the above text it is already obvious that we distinguish between

- environmental management, relating to the impacts of the tourism and travel (and other) industry, visitors and domestic population on the environment (EI MNGM); these kinds of activities are the base for the creation of the image of an environmentally concerned or responsible destination;
- environmental management of the environmental quality of the destination (EQ MNGM) that is the base for creating the image of an environmentally sound destination and may include the reinstation of an already degraded environment.

From the point of view of a tourist destination, the two aspects of environmental management are co-dependent. On the one hand, the negative environmental impacts of travel and tourism influence the environmental quality of the destination, yet on the other hand, managing the environmental quality requires lowering the negative environmental impacts of tourism (and other) activities. At the same time there is an essential difference between the two, from the standpoint of the consumer. It is very often presupposed that an environmentally aware tourist acts environmentally responsible. In such a case the information on environmental impacts would be essential for his choice of an environmentally concerned destination. However, according to the research findings there is a gap between tourists' environmental awareness and their corresponding actions. Indeed, the destination choice is influenced by the (environmental) attractiveness of the destination in the first place. Thus, an environmental manager can increase destination competitiveness by managing environmental quality. Environmental management by simply managing (lowering) environmental impacts of the tourism is not sufficient.

Table 2 shows both forms of environmental management. EI MNGM (Row 1) can be product or production-related (Neitzel, 1998a, p. 14). It stimulates the supply of products/services that provide less negative environmental impact and environmentally friendlier production methods and processes. The licensee is generally the final product/service or the producer. Activities usually refer to reduction of inputs and waste minimisation, reduction of water and energy consumption and have cost saving effects. This is illustrated by Meade (1998, p. 6) who calculated the water savings of US $ 21,829 and electricity savings of US $ 23,886 per year for a medium-sized Jamaican green hotel.

EQ MNGM (Table 2, Row 2) stimulates lowering of negative impacts, too. Additionally it refers to environmental protection in a broader sense and improvement of an already degraded environment. It requires external financial support in the form of subsidies, tax reductions and low interest credits for the investors. Although there is enough evidence that visitors turn away from polluted destinations, the links between environmental upgrading or reinstation and benefits for the tourism business (in financial terms) are not easy to evaluate. Hasting's study (Penning-Rowsell et al., 1992, p. 65) used the contingent valuation method and showed that visitors were willing to pay £5.58 per annum for improved coastal quality. Seventy-seven per cent of the visitors were willing to pay through the increased rates and taxes.

EQ MNGM is a base for informing potential customers about the environmental conditions of the destination. In our opinion, this issue is even more important, due to the environmental awareness of today's travellers. First, some codes require that environmental quality information is given to the public. Second, according to the consumer protection regulations, the consumer has a right to get complete and objective information about the product that he is buying — environmental aspect included (see Council Directive of 13 June 1990 on Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours, 1990; Council Resolution of 19 May 1981 on a Second Programe of the European Economic Community for a Consumer Protection and Information Policy, 1981). Third, today's consumer requires such information. And last but not least, in the absence of such information, there is a risk of the wrong environmental image to occur. It has already been mentioned that the destination competitiveness position can be weakened due to unawareness of environmental attractions in the minds of the potential consumers, too.

EI MNGM generally refers to physical environment only. Sometimes social responsibility and impacts of tourism development on the culture are taken into account. One example is the TO DO award that marks socially responsible tourism and takes into account the benefits of the local inhabitants and their culture (Studienkreis fuer Tourismus und Entwicklung, 1997). Another example is the European Prize for Tourism and Environment from DG XXIII Tourism Unit that considers natural, cultural and social aspects (Hamele, 1996, p. 29).

In practice we can find many EI MNGM that refer to environmental impacts of the travel and tourism business (e.g. "green hotelier") and much less of those that recognise the importance of the environmental quality aspects (e.g. "good bathing water quality").

3.2. Different categories of environmental management of the tourist destination

Further, for the purpose of this paper, environmental management of the tourism destination can be categorised into the following groups:

I.　environmental management by environmental codes of conduct,
II.　environmental management by uncertified environmental practice and self-declared labels or brands,

Table 2
Key elements of destination EI and EQ management[a]

No.	Type of MNGMT	Managing	Auditing	Subjects (Licensees)	AIMS	Environmental image regarding destination	Brand example
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	EI MNGM	Environmental impacts in place of residence in transit in destination on: air quality water quality etc. (See Table 2, Column 1)	Products/Services Production methods/Processes	Product/service Company (hotels, tour operators, travel agents, facility operators, carriers, etc.)	To stimulate the supply and demand of products/services with a reduced environmental impact and to inform the potential customers of the environmentally sound tourism products and companies (with lower environmental impacts)	Environmentally concerned (responsible) destination	Blue Angel, Green Globe, Green hotelier, Blue Flag, ISO
2	EQ MNGM	Environmental quality in destination (For elements see Table 2, Column 1)	Air quality Water quality and supply Noise levels Etc. (See Table 2, Column 1)	Destination/place (beach, resort, etc.)	To stimulate the protection of the environment and upgrading of the environmental quality and to inform the potential customers about the environmental quality of the destination/resort/etc.	Environmentally sound destination	Blue Flag (only criteria referring to the quality of bathing water)

[a] EI MNGM: environmental impacts management, eco-label refers to the impact of tourism product, production methods or processes on the environment.
EQ MNGM: environmental quality management, eco-quality label (label of environmental quality) refers to the state of the environmental quality of the destination (e.g. pure water).

III. environmental management by green branding on the basis of broader known,
    (a) environmental competition prize for excellent environmental practice,
    (b) certified environmental good practice or,
IV environmental management by green branding on the basis of accreditation schemes (by internationally known eco-labels and eco-quality labels).

In the above classification, the very popular terms "sustainable" and "eco-tourism" are not mentioned. Yet, both can be added to any of the mentioned four categories of environmental management. An example is in the codes of sustainable tourism (e.g. Charter for Sustainable Tourism — Tourism Concern). Many good practice models are titled sustainable or eco-tourism (e.g. Eco-Tourism Price in upper Austria). Very often the adjectives green, ecological or environmental and environmentally friendly are used, such as Environmental Guidelines, Green Code, Environmentally Friendly Camping, etc. (see Awards and labels, 1998).

In Column 2 (Table 3) the criteria for sustainable tourism are listed in order to show that the concept of sustainable tourism is very broad and that the sustainability criteria do not refer only to the tourism environment as defined in Column 1 (see Stabler, 1997, p. 12). An important and too often neglected element of sustainable development is its moral obligation to promote inter- and intra-generational equity in development (Inskeep, 1991, p. 461, Garrod & Fyall, 1998, p. 200). The criteria (Table 3, Column 2) incorporate different economic and equity measures such as the percentage of locals employed in tourism, the average wage from tourism, average female wage and measures of financial leakages, such as the percentage of tourist expenditure that stays in the tourism resort (Miller, 1998). It is true that the sustainability debate in tourism has been over-simplified (Hunter, 1997, p. 851) and moulded to fit widely differing approaches to environmental management. Many sustainable models and practices refer only to the biophysical aspect of sustainable development (Farrel, 1998). In our opinion such models are simplistic and away from the principles of sustainable development as defined by Brutland Report (World Commision on Environment and Development, 1987) and Agenda 21. Misunderstanding of the term sustainability, reducing it to the level of natural environmental sustainability is incorrect; therefore, such models do not deserve to be labelled and marketed as sustainable. The tourism sustainability concept is to be started to apply to the tourism context. "Unfortunately, what seems atmost doubt at present is the tourism industry's commitment to carry these proposals through" (Fyall & Garrod, 1997, p. 67). True sustainable projects are not as attractive to destination managers because many of their components cannot be directly supported by "cost saving" and/or "increased

tourist demand" arguments. Managers do not have tools to incorporate inter and intra-generational equity into their calculations, visitors are not (yet) willing to pay for it or to take into account all the sustainability dimensions while choosing a destination. Environmental awareness, as it has been practised by environmental tourism managers and tourists, does not refer to (much broader) "sustainability awareness" that will have to be created first. And this can only happen after all the parties are aware of the correct meaning of sustainable tourism. A survey in the Guernsey hospitality sector (Stabler & Goodal, 1997, p. 29) shows that only 18 per cent of hospitality management is aware of the correct definition of sustainable tourism. It is reasonable to believe that this percentage is even lower among potential travellers.

Some elements of the sustainability concept are often implicit in the definition of eco-tourism. Eco-tourism is a form of tourism that fosters environmental principles (Boyd & Butler, 1996, p. 558). Eco-tourism is not harmful to its natural, social and cultural environment. Usually it is defined as tourism that brings economic benefits and financial and local support for conservation (Lindberg, Erniquez & Sproule, 1996, p. 543). The term eco-tourism is narrower than sustainable tourism. In practice, eco-tourism is very often only a short business practice (Wheeller, 1997, p. 4), the first step on a development path to mass eco-tourism. It is often mis-used as a label for many projects that refer to the protection of natural environment only, for tourism in an unspoiled natural environment, for tourism with some understanding of the local culture or for tourism that brings income to the local community. Similarly, as in the case of applied "sustainable tourisms", "eco-tourism" often achieves some, but not all eco-tourism objectives (Lindberg et al., 1996, p. 559). Many forms of eco-tourism are simply self-appointed marketing logos for selling unspoiled natural environments with some information on local culture and have damaged the image of eco-tourism substantially. There are too many "eco" variations with too different criteria on the travel market which substantially reduces their marketing value.

3.2.1. Environmental codes of conduct

Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism vary greatly in coverage, scope and content; there are national, regional and international industry codes. They address the tourism industry, host communities, visitors or governments and other authorities. The Tourism Concern document, shown in Column 3 of Table 3 as an example of a code of conduct, is rather general (Stabler & Goodal, 1997, p. 20). For destination managers it is of limited value, because it neither guides environmental action nor suggests its nature. If the code is written by a national or international organisation, principles will be wider and more abstract. An example are the WTO codes of

Table 3
Elements of environmental quality, sustainability and different destination environmental management categories

Elements of the environmental quality/impacts on … Example criteria	Elements of the sustainable tourism Example criteria	Category I — Codes of conduct Example: Tourism Concern	Category II — Environmental practice Example: TUJ checklist	Category III A — env. competition Example: European prize for tourism & the environment	Category III B — Certification for environmental practice Example: Green Globe	Category IV — Environmental accreditation labels Example: Blue Flag
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Air quality Water quality and supply Noise levels Cleanliness of public places Landscaping Building design and maintenance Urban design Signs Functional land use and transportation patterns Congestion levels Open space, parks and conservation areas Scenic views Environmental diseases Flora and fauna Etc. Source: Inskeep (1991, 61, 344–347, 353).	*For destinations criteria refer to* Physical environmental impacts (on water, air quality, noise, etc.) Energy consumption and waste Social impacts Food hazards Employment and wages Income levels Financial leakages Staff education and training Environmental management Etc. Source: Miller (1998).	To influence the *policies and programs in travel and tourism business by* Using natural, social and cultural resources sustainably Reducing over-consumption Maintaining natural, cultural, social diversity Integrating tourism into planning Supporting local economies Involving local communities Consulting stakeholders and the public Training staff Marketing tourism responsibly Providing environmental information Undertaking research Source: UNEP (1995, p. 20).	*For destinations which comply with the pre-set criteria regarding:* Sea and shoreline (quality of water for bathing, quality of the beaches, etc.) Waste and water disposal Garbage disposal Air quality and noise Surroundings (arihtecture, building density, etc.) Landscape and nature (scenery, nature reserves etc.) Power sources Water supplies Environmental Briefing/Facilities Environmental activities, awareness and behaviour (willingness to provide information, etc.) Source: TUI (1994, p. 6).	For the elaboration and successful implementation of environmentally-friendly *programmes. Proof of extraordinary commitment* required (e.g. nature conservation and preservation, restoration of damaged environments, reduction of environmental damage, environmental information and education programs, etc.) Award: one main prize and several special prizes per year. Source: Hamele (1996, pp. 29, 30).	*For companies and destinations for improving their environmental practice through Green Globe membership and actions:* Waste minimization, reuse and recycling Energy efficiency Waste water management Control of hazardous substances Etc. Award: Green Globe (logo) — a symbol of commitment to environmental improvement Source: URL: http://www.wttc.org, 1998b.	*For beaches the pre-set criteria cover different aspects of environmental management:* Water quality (microbiological quality, public display of water quality data, no discharge affecting beach, no decaying vegetation, etc.) Safety and management (provision for litter, beach cleaning, safe access, no driving, bicycle racing, etc.) Environmental education and information (public warning of gross pollution and unsafe conditions, information on protected sites and rare species, etc.) Award: Blue flag (logo) — a symbol for EQ and concern Source: The European Coordination (1998).

conduct. The Tourist Code calls for respect of the natural and cultural heritage from the side of the tourists (WTO, 1985b, art. XI). The Tourism Bill of Rights encourages the states that they "should protect the tourism environment" (WTO, 1985a, art. III). If the code is written by carriers, tour operators or other parties in tourism, the principles will be adopted to the type and size of business, but will still remain principles of limited value for managerial acting. They are usually a mixture of strategic policies and general principles with more or less indication of the action which might be taken (Stabler & Goodal, 1997, p. 20). Codes of conduct normally recognise the importance of the environmental features for tourism and call for environmentally friendly behaviour. Adopting an environmental code could be the first step towards committing the organisation or tourist destination to environmental responsibility, could contribute significantly to increased environmental awareness, encourage environmental alliances in the tourism industry and destinations and create a framework for political support.

EcoNET (Awards and labels, 1998) lists about thirty widely known environmental codes of conduct, the UNEP Industry and Environment (1995) study more than thirty. It could be argued if there are too many. Many of them are rather specific and take into account the specific needs of the author organisation, body, association or political alliance.

3.2.2. Self-declared environmental practice and awarded or certified good practice

The second group of environmental management approaches is self-declared environmental practice. The term in this paper covers uncertified environmental management by different environmental activities and programs that are carried out by tourism organisations and other bodies located at the destination. These activities can be self-developed by a hotelier or carrier or introduced by (local) consultants. If the certificate or label is awarded, it falls into the category of self-declared labels.

The tourism industry and destination managers have recognised that unknown and/or self-developed environmental programs and actions are of limited marketing value in fostering the environmental competitiveness of the destination. They try to get recognised certification for their environmental efforts in order to develop green branding, such as ISO 1400 or Green Globe. An example is the EAST (Environmental Audits for Sustainable Tourism) program in Jamaica (Meade, 1998). This nationally developed Jamaican environmental management system (EMS) is designed for small hotels and foresees the adoption of the internationally recognised Green Globe certificate for the hotels that successfully implement the EAST EMS. The goal of the EAST is to enhance the environmental image of Jamaican hotels and destinations by an internationally recognised certificate (Smith, 1998).

The Green Globe environmental award (Table 3, Column 6) is an example of the internationally recognised environmental certificate for improving environmental practice that currently has over 500 members in 101 countries including hotels, airlines, car hire companies, tour operators, travel agents and tourism boards. The Green Globe logo is an international symbol of commitment to environmental improvement within the travel and tourism industry, recognised both within the industry and by the public (An invitation to join, 1998).

The environmental checklist from the tour operator Touristik Union International TUI (TUI, 1994) covers both aspects: EI and EQ (Table 3, Column 4). The decision for participation in the environmental checklists of TUI is not a free one — TUI hotel partners have to comply with the given criteria, because the checklists are an integral part of the hotel contract, data collected are published in the TUI publications and catalogues (Rein, 1997, p. 16). The checklist, together with TUI checklists for hotels, resorts and transport operations, helps to create an environmentally oriented tour operator image.

Regular environmental competitions with a prize for excellence in environmental management awarded by authoritative and trustworthy organisations or bodies can be used for environmental image creation, too. An example is given in Table 3, Column 5. The European Prize for Tourism and Environment is awarded for the elaboration and successful implementation of environmentally friendly programmes in tourism by the European Commission. The disadvantage of such prizes from the standpoint of the destination management is that they are not permanent because they are a part of a competition. Another disadvantage is that time usefulness of these awards for environmental image creating is limited to the year of award. For the potential customer, environmental awards usually do not deliver comparable environmental information. They are simply awarded for different kinds of environmental excellence, given to very different organisations and/or even persons: tourism, environmental organisations, communities or governmental representatives. (For examples see Hopfenbeck & Zimmer, 1993, p. 175–177).

While there are many (too many) environmental practice models and logos in the tourism and travel industry there is a need for a more systematic approach in order to enable better communication of environmental performance to visitors and other audiences (IHRA, n.d., p. 1).

3.2.3. Environmental accreditation schemes

Environmental accreditation awards, labels and seals are granted by third parties and based on specified criteria that instruct the destination managers as to which environmental obligations to fulfil. Eco-accreditation schemes usually provide criteria for environmentally friendlier tourism products, hotels, tour operators, travel agents, facility operators, marinas, beaches and tourist

destinations. ECOTRANS studied about 30 different tourism environmental awards, awarded by different organisations in European countries (Hamele, 1996), mainly for hotels and restaurants. All these environmental awards and labels aim to create an environmentally responsible image for the stakeholders. Its market value can be questioned. Because there are too many environmental initiatives with different and overcomplicated criteria, customers are confused (Neitzel, 1998b, p. 10), many of them are not known to the wider public. One study has already called for the limitation of the number of eco-brands, logos, etc. (Alpenforschungsinstitut gemeninuetzige, 1995: 18–19). As shown by Stabler and Goodal (1997, p. 38), only 7 per cent of the Guernsey hospitality managers are aware of the International Hotels Environment Initiative. We can only speculate that the percentage would be much lower among the population of potential guests. Further, many of these environmental awards and labels are not transparent. Since there are no objective criteria, it is very difficult for visitors to judge which tourism products are really less damaging to the environment and which destinations pay attention to environmental quality. Many of them are awarded only to the stakeholders inside a local community, region or only to the awarding association members. Very often the accreditation body is a tourist association or somebody from the tourism business which raises the question of credibility. If independent, neutral organisations and bodies are involved, the environmental management gains considerable credibility (Mihalič, 1997, p. 280). (See Table 4).

As an example of environmental MNGM by accreditation, the Blue Flag example is shown in Column 7 of Table 3. The Blue Flag marks environmental quality (bathing water, beaches) and environmental management of the beaches and marinas. The awarding campaign meets all the criteria for an independent, trustworthy and objective environmental seal (Table 4). Criteria have been developed by an independent non-profit and non-governmental organisation in co-operation with experts. Awards are approved by European jury according to the pre-set criteria and procedures. The award is given for a limited period of time (one year, one bathing season) and the fulfilment of criteria is controlled by national and international authorities. Through the co-operation with the network organisation Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe FEEE and among national Blue Flag operators, the environmental know how is also available for destination managers. It is a label that is widely used — in 1998 2499 Blue Flags were awarded in 19 European states (The European Co-ordination, 1998, p. 3). The Blue Flag environmental scheme has an environmental symbol and the name that can be used for environmental branding of the destinations.

There are some other signs and labels in tourism that meet the standards as described in the previous paragraph. Unfortunately, very well known eco-labels such as Blue Angel, which is known by 80 per cent of the German population (Hopfenbeck, 1993, p. 191), or the EU environmental logo have not been awarded to tourism products yet. So far the Blue Angel has developed criteria for 76 different product groups and one service (RAL Deutsches Institut fuer Guetesicherung und Kennzeichnung, 1998b). Licensees are transport services, e.g. environmental tickets for using short distance public transport instead of private motor vehicles. The part of the logo is the explanation "because by bus and train" (RAL Deutsches Institut fuer Guetesicherung und Kennzeichnung, 1998a, p. 64). The transportation balance developed by tour operator Hotelplan (see Mezzasalma, 1994) that calculates the energy consumption for tourist packages by car, bus, rail and plane could be a base for awarding another such label for environmentally friendly package tours "because of lower transport energy consumption". The European eco-labelling under the Council Regulation on the Community Eco-label Award Scheme (Council Regulation … , 1992), based on life cycle assessment of environmental impacts refers to "products" which are interpreted as being equal to "goods". For that reason, European eco-labelling of tourism products being equal to services is not possible (see Mihalič, 1998, p. 35).

Table 4
The criteria for objective environmental labelling[a]

No.	Criteria
1	2
1	Preparation, implementation, examination and control by an independent organisation/body
2	Pre-set and known awarding criteria
3	Pre-set and known awarding procedure
4	Criteria development in co-opertion with experts
5	Examination of criteria fulfillment
6	Awarding period of time limited (e.g. one year)
7	Possibility to control the criteria fullfilment after the sign has been awarded
8	Sign withdrawal possible, if the criteria are no longer met

[a]Source: Mihalič (1997, p. 280).

4. Increasing environmental competitiveness of the destination in line with the Calgary competitiveness model

Environmental competitiveness of the destination can be increased by proper environmental management. According to the Calgary competitiveness model it can be increased by proper managerial and marketing efforts. In Table 5, both elements of destination management are presented (consecutive row numbers 1.1. and 1.2).

Table 5
How to enhance the environmental appeal of a tourism destination by environmental management — implementation and evaluation through the Calgary model[a]

No.	Sets of comp. factor	Competitiveness factors	Category evaluation			
			I	II	III	IV
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. MGMT — Destination management						
1.1.	MANAGER Managerial efforts	Willingness and efforts to minimise the negative environmental impacts (EI)	+ 0	+ +	+ +	+ +
		Willingness and efforts to invest in environmental protection and preservation (EQ)	+ 0	00	00	0 +
1.2.	MKGT Marketing efforts	Creation of high level of destination awareness regarding the environmental aspects	0	0	+	+ +
		Development of a strong environmental image of the destination				
		– by EI activities and information	−	0	+	+ +
		– by EQ activities and information	−	0	0	0 +
		The use of brands and trademarks and symbols which capture the environmental spirit of the destination	−	− 0	+	+
2. ORG — Destination organisation						
2.1.	DMO Management organisation capabilities	Serve as a focal point for the coordination of all environmental activities in the destination				
		Provide leadership in environmental marketing of the destination				
		Serve as a catalyst and facilitator for environmentally sound tourism development				
		Provide common services which enhace the quality of the visitor experience, regarding the environmental issue				
		Co-operate with all levels of government and other public organisations to represent the views of the destination on decisions affecting the environment				
		Provide specialised services to improve the environmental effectiveness and the profitability of members of the DMO				
		Coordinate the collection and dissemination of environmental information and research				
		Support the development and delivery of environmental education and training programs at the destination				
2.2.	ALLIANCE Strategic alliances	Alliances with environmentally sound companies and organisation				
		Alliances with environmentally aware destinations, especialy with the destinations that participate in the same environmental awarding scheme				
		Research alliances with universities and environmental expert organisations				
		Alliances with tourism industry through environmental programs, research, awards				
3. INFO — Destination information						
3.1.	MIS Internal management information system	Visitor statistics with detailed data on environmental issues				
		Collecting and distributing data on environmental quality of the destinations				
		Collecting and distributing data on environmental impacts of the visitors, travel and tourism sector and other sectors				
		The attitude of the local population towards environmental management and their participation				
3.2.	RESEARCH Research capabilities	Market segmentation studies				
		Forcasting tourist demand regarding the environmental apects of the destinations				
		Tourist satisfaction studies, which indentify the environmental problems and opportunities				
		Research on the effectiveness of the environmental image of the destination and the effectiveness of its management (promotion)				

Table 5 (*continued*)

No.	Sets of comp. factor	Competitiveness factors	Category evaluation			
			I	II	III	IV
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. *EFFIC — Destination efficiency*

4.1.	IOE Integrity of experience	Establishment of environmental standards				
		Programs to monitor the quality of the visitors environmental experience				
		Monitoring residents' attitudes towards tourism in regard to environmental issues				
		Efforts to ensure public environmental awareness and participation in tourism development				
		Support for environmental education and training programmes				
4.2.	PRO Productivity	Efforts to establish the cost of providing different levels of environmental quality for various types of tourism experiences				
		Pilot projects to implement new environmental programs				
		Pilot projects to assess the profitability of alternative environmental projects				
		Training focused on improving environmental performance of the destination/companies etc.				
		Evaluation of the environmental productivity				

[a]Evaluation: (+) very useful (2 points), (0) somewhat useful (1 point), (−) not useful at all (− 1 point).

Category: (I) environmental management by environmental codes of conduct, (II) environmental management by environmental practice, (III) environmental management by green branding on the basis of certified environmental good practice or environmental competition prize for excellent environmental practice, (IV) environmental management by green branding on the basis of accreditation schemes,

Environmental aspects: (EQ) environmental quality aspect, (EI) environmental impacts aspect.

Managerial efforts to minimise the environmental impacts and manage environmental quality can also be carried out with the help of environmental codes of conduct, environmental programs and awards and efforts to fulfil the criteria for their adoption. Codes of conduct can increase the destination willingness to preserve the environment, but are not as useful for the managerial acting. Awarded accreditation schemes, such as Blue Flag can create the willingness framework and support the actions to preserve the environment and are much more useful for destination managers (Table 5, Column 7).

Marketing the environmental appeal of the destination is not an easy task but can be made easier by using environmental awards and labels (press releases, leaflets, award events, environmental guides, displays, diplomas, brochures, stickers, logos, etc.), by marketing information on environmental awards or signed environmental codes of conduct, etc. (Table 5).

Other main destination competitiveness factors (Table 5), consecutive row numbers (2–4) are understood as supporting factors for destination management. For this reason, different categories of environmental management approaches have been evaluated only according to their usefulness for the element MNGM (consecutive row number 1) and summarised in Table 6. Of course, the environmental code or award helps to create the proper

Table 6
Destination environmental management evaluation — summary[a]

No.	Enivironmental management categories	Destination management		
		MANAGER	MKGT	Total
1	2	4	3	5
1	I. Code of conduct	6	− 2	4
2	II. Good practice	6	3	9
3	III. Awarded good practice, competition	6	7	13
4	IV. Accreditation	7	13	20

[a]Note: MANAGER: managerial efforts, MKGT: marketing efforts.
Source: Table 5.

environmental alliances in the destination, and influences the creation of MIS and research system and has the impact on destination efficiency, too.

Environmental management by objective accreditation schemes (according to the criteria in Table 4) proved to be the best (Table 6) because it offers trustworthy environmental labels, brands and/or trade marks. The survey (Kernel, 1997) shows that EI and EQ management with a Blue Flag campaign had positive impacts on the environment. EI MNGM by a Blue Flag improved the management of litter and waste, EQ MNGM

improved water quality in the participating destinations. Furthermore at least 40 per cent of the respondents believe that having the Blue Flag improves the environmental image with the visitors.

Certified good practices are appropriate too, but they will always be less transparent and comprehensive, compared to the pre-set unified criteria and awarding procedures of accreditation schemes (Table 4). Consequently, their label or trade mark will remain less powerful in dealing with trustworthy and transparent information. Codes of conduct are an even less powerful instrument for environmental managers, because they are usually declarative, but can increase environmental awareness of the destination and thus the willingness to support environmental actions. The good practice model gains more points than codes of conduct, because it gives instructions for managerial acting. Since self-declared environmental claims shall not be presented as independent labels, awarded by third party organisations (ISO 14021, Neitzel, 1998b, p. 16), they are not very useful for marketing.

We did not aim to evaluate EI and EQ content of the randomly chosen typical representatives of the different categories of environmental management (Table 3) and also the evaluation results in Table 6 do not take into account this issue. Nevertheless, we repeat that both aspects are to be incorporated into current managerial and marketing efforts in order to be able to enhance the competitiveness of the destination. In case, the destination decide to join EI minimisation accreditation scheme, it will have to develop managerial and marketing activities to deal with EQ separately.

5. Conclusions

The first hypothesis is that destination environmental competitiveness can be increased by proper managerial efforts in the field of environmental impact (EI) and environmental quality (EQ) management. Both aspects are interrelated. The cost saving aspect of EI management is an incentive for managers, while environmental concern is what is appreciated by potential visitors. As a factor of destination competitiveness from the standpoint of the potential visitors, the EQ of a destination is even more important, and it influences the destination choice much more strongly, however from the standpoint of a destination manager it is more complex and expensive to manage. This is especially true, if the destination environment has already been polluted and less relevant for some unpolluted "virgin" destinations.

In addition to environmental managerial efforts, the destination competitiveness can be enhanced through certain environmental marketing activities. Thus the second hypothesis refers to environmental marketing efforts. Since the environmental image, not the real EI and EQ managerial efforts, influence the destination choice, the environmental image of the destination has to be communicated to the potential visitors. Author argues that although both, EI and EQ aspects are relevant and inter-related, the importance of low negative EI image is sometimes overestimated. The EQ aspect is often avoided because the existing environmental quality of the already developed destination is poor and EQ improvement efforts seem too complex and expensive to destination managers.

Further, environmental management is categorised into four groups: management by codes of conduct, by self-developed environmental practice, by certified or awarded best practice and by accreditation schemes. Although this is a general study, based on randomly chosen typical representatives of the mentioned groups of environmental management, evaluation with the help of the Calgary tourism competitiveness model gives the highest rank to internationally recognised accreditation schemes by independent third organisations or bodies. In order to offer a trustworthy brand and to ensure consistency between different eco-labels, green brands and trade marks it is necessary to create a European (international) framework for green branding in tourism. Although all the environmental initiatives are welcomed because they do represent movement in the right direction, too many environmental signs, programs, etc. cause confusion for potential customers, result in inflation of environmental brands and also lower the value of every single green brand. The adoption of codes of conduct helps to raise the level of understanding the tourism and environment interactions, increase environmental awareness of all stakeholders and also helps to create political support for environmental activities. In many cases, creating or ratifying such a code is an excellent first step in creating environmental consensus in the destination. However, for destination managers, environmental accreditation schemes are much more operative if they offer criteria for managerial acting and a well-known (marketing) logo. A well-known logo is a good base for destination environmental image management by green branding. It helps to create (proper) environmental image of a destination and thus can be a powerful tool in increasing the competitiveness of the destination. Not all schemes are equally appropriate for increasing the environmental competitiveness. It is a real danger that many destinations that are developing EI minimisation strategies in order to increase the environmental competitiveness will not achieve the goal; if neglect that the EQ issue is even more important for the potential visitors.

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