

Chapter 21

Developing an International Standard for “Green” Tourism

This chapter provides an example of the strengths and weakness of a private eco-labelling scheme applied to an industry that is not always well-versed in environmental practice. The costs, and uncertain benefits, of such a scheme raise significant issues for developing-country suppliers.

Introduction

Tourism has grown to become one of the world's largest industries. Together with associated travel, it is credited with generating, directly and indirectly, almost 12% of gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 200 million jobs worldwide (WTTC/IHRA, 1999). The impacts of tourism can be extremely varied, however. On the one hand, it can play an important and positive role in the socio-economic and political development of destination countries, creating new employment opportunities in the process (UNCSD-NGO Steering Committee, 1999). It can also help people gain a broader appreciation for other cultures and ways of life. On the other hand, travel and tourism have at times been accused of damaging fragile (often coastal) environments and disrupting indigenous cultures while providing few skilled jobs for local residents. Recognising sensitive and responsible behaviour through a certified, but voluntary, eco-labelling scheme is seen by some segments of the industry as a sensible way to encourage more sustainable development in tourism.

There are currently in the world over 100 certification schemes and eco-labels relating to tourism. Green Globe was one of the first international schemes and predates the emergence of ISO 14001. It is a private international standard for environmental management systems that forms the basis for several eco-tourism standards. Initially launched by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) to increase environmental awareness, Green Globe has evolved over the last decade to become an independently verified tourism certification programme. It is a voluntary initiative that claims to have some 800 members in more than 100 countries. Unlike most other tourism standards, which largely focus on hotels and other forms of tourist accommodation, Green Globe attempts to cover all sectors of the mass tourism industry, from golf courses to nature reserves.

As the oldest and largest certification programme, Green Globe has been the subject of much critical scrutiny, particularly in recent years. It has also undergone a number of transformations, most notably from environmental awareness to certification, and from being process-based to combining process and performance standards. In the process it has attempted to address the problem of high costs as a barrier to entry for small suppliers by introducing a graded fee structure. However, doubts remain as to the depth of commitment of Green Globe members, as only a fraction have achieved certification. And its regular re-branding may present problems of perception both for Green Globe and for its members.

Development of the measure

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) — the Earth Summit — identified travel and tourism as sectors of the world economy that could make a positive contribution to achieving sustainable development. The Summit produced Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action adopted by 182 governments to provide a global blueprint for achieving sustainable development. Yet, prior to 1997, the issue of sustainable tourism had been discussed by the Commission on Sustainable Development only in the context of small island developing states. Unlike most other issues for which an Agenda 21 action plan (or “chapter”) was drawn up at the Earth Summit, that for travel and tourism came later and was spearheaded not by governments but by a coalition of industry, intergovernmental (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The lead organisation in this effort was the WTTC, an international organisation composed of chief executive officers from all sectors of the tourism industry: accommodation, catering services, cruise ships, entertainment, recreation, transportation and travel-related services. The WTTC's objective is to promote the tourism industry at government level around the world and to reduce barriers to growth of the industry.

In 1994 the WTTC launched a programme to encourage practical approaches to sustainable tourism. The programme, called "Green Globe", was billed as the WTTC's response to the 1992 Earth Summit. Based on principles set out in Agenda 21 for travel and tourism, it included an environmental code, with policy guidance, environmental management systems, employee information, consumer tips and other supporting information. Membership was open to any company that could afford the annual fee. This fee ranged from USD 200 to USD 7 500, depending on the company's turnover. In exchange, members were provided with information and guidance on a range of topics, such as how to draft an environmental policy, how to manage waste and how to conserve water. Annual awards were given to members who had made notable environmental improvements. Members were also entitled to use the Green Globe logo, though initially the logo connoted little more than the company's declared commitment to making environmental improvement and to undertaking regular self-assessments; no particular standards or criteria were yet associated with the logo.

In 1996 the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council, an environmental NGO, joined with the WTTC to launch an action plan entitled Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development. Travel and tourism thus became the first industry sector to have initiated its own action plan based on Agenda 21. The report was subsequently circulated for comment to governments, industry and environmental organisations, and was the subject of a series of regional seminars held to increase awareness of its conclusions and to adapt the programme for local implementation. These regional seminars took place in London and Jakarta in 1997, and in Victoria Falls and Dominica in 1998.

Towards the conclusion of this process, the WTTC began to develop its first "GREEN GLOBE 21 Standard", inspired both by the Agenda 21 principles and the evolving ISO 14001 standard, thereby moving the industry from codes of good practice to an approach based on developing an environmental management system for each corporate unit.¹ Although no formal consultation process was used to decide the criteria for the standard, the WTTC assumed that, since much consultation had already taken place prior to and following the production of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, and that 186 governments had signed that document, these criteria could be considered "agreed to" by a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, the output of regional seminars on the action plan inspired by Agenda 21 were being fed into the ongoing development of Green Globe.² Because it was a private, voluntary initiative, the Green Globe standard did not have to be notified to the World Trade Organisation.

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1. Environmental management covered: energy efficiency, conservation and management; management of freshwater resources; ecosystem conservation and management; management of social and cultural issues; land use planning and management; air quality protection and noise control; wastewater management; waste minimisation, reuse and recycling; and storage and use of hazardous substances.
 2. Geoffrey Lipman (former president of the WTTC), personal communication with Dilys Roe, April 2002. Unfortunately, no documentation describes specific issues raised in these meetings or how they were addressed.

In 1997, the WTTC extended the scope of the Green Globe programme by creating “Green Globe Destinations”, a framework for integrating environmental programmes throughout a whole community. Part of its motivation was to provide a means for formally recognising the leadership of local authorities and other groups working to improve the environmental performance of tourist destinations.³ Among the first tourist destinations to participate in the programme were Vilamoura in the Algarve, Portugal; Jersey in the Channel Islands; and three destinations in the Philippines.

To certify adherence to the Green Globe standard, the WTTC developed a partnership with Société Générale de Surveillance S.A. (SGS), one of the world’s leading verification, testing and certification companies. This exclusive arrangement with SGS attracted some criticism until 1999, when Green Globe became an independent for-profit company with a board of directors drawn from major tourism companies.⁴ The scheme was renamed Green Globe 21 and revised to allow independent, third-party verification by a wide range of companies, not only SGS. In addition, an International Advisory Council was established that included representatives from the World Tourism Organisation and from NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Along with a new institutional structure, new fees were set at USD 350 for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), USD 750 for locally based companies; USD 2 500 for companies that operate at national level, and USD 5 000 for companies that operate at international scale (Synergy, 2000). In addition, participants had to pay for the cost of an audit, which could run to around USD 1 500 for a large business. For destinations, the basic cost for the first phase is estimated to have been of the order of USD 50 000, plus the costs of implementing an environmental management system, which vary according to the specific nature and amount of work required (Synergy, 2000). These fees were merely indicative, however. According to Margot Sallows, former Manager of Environmental Services at Green Globe, the organisation used World Bank classifications of developed, less developed and developing countries to set its fees at, respectively, 100%, 75% and 60% of the full fee (Font and Buckley, 2000).

Issues raised by developing countries

To date there has been no independent research to evaluate the impacts of tourism certification schemes on developing country suppliers.⁵ Nevertheless, the proliferation of tourism standards, awards, eco-labels and certification schemes during the late 1990s, coupled with increasing debate about the role and merits of “sustainable tourism” and “eco-tourism” (stimulated further by the United Nations designation of 2002 as the “International Year of Ecotourism”), has prompted several critical reviews of tourism certification schemes in recent years (*e.g.* Synergy, 2000; Honey and Rome, 2001). But these studies have tended towards a comparative analysis of the relative merits of different standards and schemes rather than an evaluation of what the various schemes have actually achieved on the ground in terms of environmental or sustainability improvements and their impacts on different stakeholders.

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3. Margot Sallows (former Green Globe Destinations Programme manager), personal communication with Dilys Roe, April 2002.
 4. Margot Sallows, personal communication Dilys Roe, April 2002. Sallows points out that, where auditing is carried out by local offices of big companies, the price may also be lower than when conducted from headquarters.
 5. This gap was highlighted in a report on standards in agriculture, forestry and tourism prepared by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) for the European Partners for Environment (EPE).

Tourism is a transient business and long-term relationships between buyers (*e.g.* tour operators) and suppliers (*e.g.* hotels) are rare. Certification therefore has limited impact on this relationship.⁶ In any case, most standards are not applied by tourism buyers as such. Likewise, Green Globe is not in the business of buying from certified suppliers. Rather, it acts as a marketing channel and provider of advice. Green Globe promotes its standard by arguing that it can cut suppliers' costs (mainly through environmental improvements), improve their brand image, broaden their market appeal, and help them anticipate and quickly respond to evolving regulations. The cost to the supplier is the financial cost of becoming a Green Globe member and undergoing benchmarking or certification. Still, as the only international scheme and the one with, arguably, the most industry and consumer recognition, Green Globe has been under close scrutiny from the outset.

In 2000 the UK national organisation of the World Wildlife Fund network (WWF-UK) commissioned an analysis of Green Globe 21 and other tourism certification systems (Synergy, 2000). The report concluded that, of all the certification schemes examined, Green Globe had been the most responsive to the expressed concerns and interests of stakeholders. In the August 2000 press release that accompanied the report, however, WWF-UK criticised Green Globe's use of its logos: different logos were being awarded to companies that had merely *committed* to undertaking certification as well as those that had actually *achieved* it. The WWF-UK report noted that the similarity between the logos (one has a tick across it to indicate that the company has been certified and the other does not; see Figures 21.1a and 1b below) is such that "consumers will be unlikely to recognise or understand the difference". WWF-UK criticised the scheme for certifying companies based solely on the fact that, as with any ISO-based scheme, they had an environmental management system in place. This meant that a company that had developed a "green" policy and set up an environmental management system could be certified by Green Globe 21 yet still operate in an environmentally damaging manner.

The WWF-UK report also considered that the cost of Green Globe certification was prohibitive for the small businesses that characterise the tourism industry in developing countries. Green Globe was one of the more expensive schemes at the time of its comparative study and this limited membership significantly. For example, the *destination* programme could cost participants anywhere from USD 30 000 to USD 70 000, with no surety of corresponding benefits. The cost of certification can be a major barrier for many businesses (bearing in mind that over 90% of tourism businesses are small companies), especially where it can not be offset against guaranteed cost savings or price premiums. The WWF-UK also alleged that the cost of certification could be as high as for grading quality,⁷ which, at the very least, gives a company a higher consumer profile. The Green Business Tourism Scheme, a certification programme developed in Scotland, has tried to overcome this problem by combining environmental certification with quality grading.

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6. Health and safety is a different matter. The health and safety audits conducted by the big UK tour operators in response to the EU Package Holiday Directive, for example, have a profound effect on the buyer-supplier relationship. In this case the costs of the audit are borne by the buyer. As a result, there is substantially more commitment to a supplier in whom the tour operator feels a considerable investment has been made.
 7. Restaurants and hotels are graded against quality criteria, *e.g.* the number and condition of toilets, by numerous private companies (*e.g.* Michelin) and in some countries by government tourist boards.

The WWF-UK report estimated that less than 1% of tourism businesses had joined certification initiatives by 2000, with significantly greater participation in some regions than in others. Several reasons have been suggested for this low uptake, including:

- Scepticism about the potential of individual tourism businesses to bring about more sustainable tourism destinations in the long term.
- Confusion about the performance requirements, costs, relative merits, and savings of different schemes associated with various programmes.
- Uncertainty about the importance of environmental or sustainability credentials to visitor purchasing choice.

Consumers have also been confused by the wide variety of schemes in existence. Many are thought to choose a tourism facility that displays some form of eco-label on the assumption that the label is linked to some more widely recognised quality grade. Those businesses that have been certified do in fact use logos in their marketing strategy to distinguish themselves from their competitors. But, to date, little serious analysis has been conducted to determine the extent to which eco-labels or other certification schemes influence consumer choice in the tourism industry.

The report by Honey and Rome (2001) reached many of the same conclusions but also discussed concerns specific to developing countries. As they observed, a number of countries where tourism facilities have traditionally been owned predominantly by either government or nationals — notably Costa Rica, Cuba, South Africa, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Nepal — have witnessed an enormous influx of foreign capital in recent years. Foreign companies and investors have taken over much of the high-end businesses, prime urban real estate, beachfront property and private reserves. In many countries, foreign investors enjoy special advantages over their local counterparts in the form of preferential regulations, licences and taxes. While this foreign investment influx may have helped create a tourism, or eco-tourism, boom, local activists have often questioned whether foreign ownership is contributing to their countries’ long-term sustainable development. “Within this context”, the authors point out:

... poorer countries tend to look with suspicion on international efforts to set environmental development standards for tourism (and other businesses). They fear that such regulations will give unfair advantage to both more-developed countries and international corporations. Rather than helping to lift standards around the globe, certification can, in practice, be used to penalise poorer countries and locally owned businesses that cannot subscribe to the standards or meet, at least in the short term, the criteria.” (Honey and Rome, 2001, p. 66)

Other critics have raised questions such as whether international certification systems are really capable of incorporating sensitive socio-cultural concerns, and whether destinations in developed countries can better afford to apply more stringent requirements for an eco-label than, for example, Tanzania or Thailand.⁸ Such concerns have been raised in discussions of eco-tourism certification taking place at the World Tourism Organization, at activities surrounding the International Year of Ecotourism, and in an online discussion group about eco-tourism certification organised by a not-for-profit organisation, Planeta.com.

8. Attributed to Megan Epler Wood and Elizabeth Halpenny.

Responses to developing countries' concerns

The Green Globe concept has evolved considerably since it was first introduced in 1994, generally in ways that have attempted to introduce greater accountability and flexibility, while strengthening the requirements for certification and offering more value for money. It is difficult to judge the extent to which these revisions were driven by criticisms from WWF and others, as opposed to emerging naturally as the scheme evolved and matured, or in response to market forces. Nevertheless, in 2001 Green Globe 21 underwent yet another major transformation (Box 21.1).

Box 21.1. The Green Globe 2001 upgrade

In May 2001, Green Globe updated its programme. The new millennium GREEN GLOBE 21 Path to Sustainable Tourism differed from its predecessor in several ways, including:

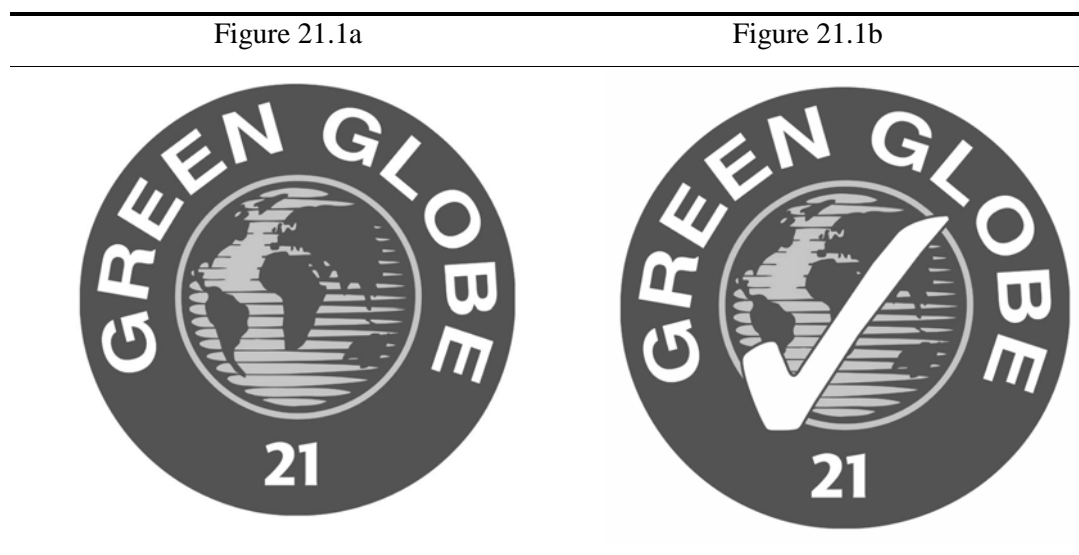
- Improved support for operational cost savings and market positioning.
- Internet-based promotion of GREEN GLOBE 21 members to consumers worldwide.
- Reduced fees: easy low cost, high-value access for small and medium-sized members.
- 2001 upgraded GREEN GLOBE 21 Certification Standard for Companies & Communities.
- Inclusion of Agenda 21: ISO: Triple Bottom Line economic, ecological and social elements.
- An updated guidebook and good practice indicators for 20 industry sectors and four types of communities.
- An “educational affiliate” entry point with a focus on greenhouse gas emissions.
- Global performance “Benchmarking” against Earthcheck™ indicators.
- Advanced EMS support services.
- An enhanced independent accreditation and certification service.
- A new entrepreneurship guide and training programmes for developing markets.
- Research & development at GGv — *Sustainable Tourism Laboratory* & CRC Tourism Australia.
- An International Advisory Council to ensure consistency with global evolutions.
- A new foundation to support sustainable development generally.

First, the programme (now marketed as a “millennium pathway to sustainable tourism”) was revamped to incorporate performance standards. The standards aim to: reduce greenhouse gases, improve energy efficiency, protect air quality, control noise, manage wastewater, better community relations, respect cultural heritage, enhance social performance, conserve nature and wildlife, and encourage good land management. Criteria are organised into five sections: environmental policy; compliance with relevant legislation; key performance areas; environmental management system; and marketing.

Second, three separate categories of membership were established, **A**ffiliate, **B**enchmarked and **C**ertified, with the expectation that members would progress along an “ABC” pathway from one stage to another:

- In an introductory stage, companies, communities, suppliers or professionals may register as a Green Globe Affiliate to learn more about the programme and to prepare for Benchmarking and Certification.
- Alternatively, companies, communities, suppliers or professionals may register directly for benchmarking and measure their environmental performance annually. If their performance is above an established baseline, and they agree to achieve certification within a fixed time frame (usually 12 months), they are eligible to use the less prestigious of the two GG21 logos, the globe without a tick (Figure 21.1a).
- Members who apply for certification must have their performance independently assessed and audited. Audits take place regularly to ensure that performance levels are maintained or improved. Those that reach the required standards are entitled to use the second Green Globe logo, which has a distinctive tick across the globe (Figure 21.b).

Figure 21.1. The Green Globe 21 logos



Third, Green Globe 21 significantly lowered its fees. And, as a further concession to critics, the fees were graduated to reflect differences in size, scale and social development, and special discounts were offered to micro-enterprises.⁹ Even greater differentiation was introduced in the fee structure for 2003 (Table 21.1).¹⁰ In explaining its reduction in fees, the Green Globe 21 Web site at the time (www.greenglobe21.com/refs/history.htm, accessed 13 May 2002) stated that:

“fees have been deliberately lowered in our drive to increase interest in Sustainable Tourism, support for greenhouse gas reduction and increased global involvement. Now, by drastically reducing costs and improving processes — with a major focus on the Web for promotion, service and support — we have slashed the bottom out of that price structure ... Green Globe 21 can now accommodate for the smallest of guest hotels to the international chains of 5-star hotels and base its fees according to the level of work required.”

Green Globe has tried to counter poor uptake by individual businesses and encourage widespread industry participation by seeking to develop its destination certification programme. While considering this idea visionary, the WWF-UK (2000) report pointed out that in 1999 this scheme had not been adequately developed or tested. It claimed, too, that it is not practical to embrace a whole destination with one environmental management system, and that, as of 2000, no destinations had completed the certification process. Since then, Green Globe has engaged in detailed research on destinations in the Middle East, Asia and Australasia and has adapted its approach.¹¹ As of September 2005, three “communities”, of which two are in developing-countries (the Bali Tourism Development Corporation in Indonesia, and the Huatulco, Mexico resort area), had achieved full certification. Green Globe has also actively promoted its scheme and, unlike many others, has achieved a high level of recognition worldwide.

Green Globe has attempted to address the issue of proliferation of tourism standards by merging with (or, in the words of Honey and Rome (2001), “swallowing up”) a number of smaller schemes, such as the Pacific Asia Travel Association’s Green Leaf scheme, which have subsequently been made compatible with the Green Globe standards. Green Globe’s Asia-Pacific arm also signed in 2002 a five-year partnership with Australia’s well-regarded National Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (NEAP), on which the international Green Globe standard for the eco-tourism sector is largely based. Green Globe also claims to have an “open architecture” which embraces other comparable tools and standards; for example, it has enabled hotels that have gone through the benchmarking process of the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) (www.ihei.org/history.htm) to be recognised under the Green Globe benchmarking scheme.

9. Geoffrey Lipman, personal communication with Dilys Roe, April 2002.

10. The fees in US dollar terms were increased by 25% on average in July 2005, in light of the weakening of the value of the USD against other currencies.

11. Geoffrey Lipman (former President of WTTC and co-founder of Green Globe; currently a director of Green Globe 21), personal communication with Dilys Roe, April 2002.

Table 21.1. GREEN GLOBE 21 fee structure for 2003

Sector and status	Global (except Asia-Pacific)	China	Australia and New Zealand ¹
Company			
Awareness (affiliate)			
Annual fee for a single site or per activity for a multiple site	USD 75	USD 75	AUD or NZD 150
Renewal fee	50% of benchmarking category (as below)	50% of benchmarking category (as below)	50% of benchmarking category (as below)
Benchmarking and certification ²			
Micro company (< 5 employees or < 10 rooms), annual fee	USD 225	USD 225	AUD or NZD 450
Small enterprise (5- 50 employees or < 70 rooms), annual fee	USD 450	USD 450	AUD or NZD 825
Large single site (> 50 employees or > 70 rooms), annual fee	USD 1 100	USD 1 100	AUD or NZD 1 925
Large diversified company, minimum annual fee ³	USD 6 000	USD 6 000	AUD or NZD 10 000
Community			
<i>Micro community⁴</i>			
First-year fee	USD 3 000	USD 3 000	AUD or NZD 6 000
Renewal fee	USD 750	USD 750	AUD or NZD 1 500
<i>Small community⁵</i>			
First-year fee	USD 6 000	USD 6 000	AUD or NZD 10 000
Renewal fee	USD 1 500	USD 1 500	AUD or NZD 2 500
<i>Large complex communities⁶ (guideline fee⁷)</i>			
First-year fee	USD 12 000	USD 12 000	AUD or NZD 20 000
Renewal fee	USD 3 000	USD 3 000	AUD or NZD 5 000
<i>Protected areas, annual fees</i>			
Small (limited area, budget, visitation and activity)	USD 750	USD 500	AUD or NZD 1 000
Medium (tourism focus with multiple operations; limited area)	USD 1 500	USD 1 200	AUD or NZD 3 000
Large (large area with complex activities)	USD 3 000	USD 2 500	AUD or NZD 6 000

1. Fees are paid in local currency, *i.e.* Australian dollars in Australia and New Zealand dollars in New Zealand.
2. These fees represent both Green Globe 21 Benchmarking and Green Globe 21 Certifying. They do *not* include the cost of on-site independent assessment for Green Globe 21 Certification.
3. This is a guideline fee for the purposes of negotiation with large operations, such as airlines.
4. Less than 10 000 population equivalent, except in China, where the maximum is 30 000 population equivalent.
5. Between 10 000 and 250 000 population equivalent, except in China, where the range is 30 001 to 500 000 population equivalent.
6. Greater than 250 000 population equivalent, except in China, where it is greater than 500 000 population equivalent.
7. Green Globe's preference is to divide larger areas into a series of "smaller communities".

Source: Based on tables posted at www.greenglobe21.com/Cost.aspx.

Honey and Rome (2001) are critical of this process, describing Green Globe as “the ‘Pacman’ of the tourism certification field, aggressively gobbling up many other tourism logo, award and certification programmes and forming partnerships with tourism

associations in Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, the United States and Europe”. Those directly involved with Green Globe counter that these accusations are unfounded and that the partnerships and mergers that have occurred have been by mutual consent, not aggressive takeovers as Honey and Rome appear to imply.¹² The WWF-UK (2000) also notes that this development of partnerships, *e.g.* with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) and The Co-operative Research Centre in Australia, has been one of Green Globe’s strengths, helping it to deliver regionally relevant information. In 2005 CAST conducted a study among members participating in Green Globe 21 in order to gauge their level of satisfaction. The surveys showed that a very high share of the 30 properties responding to the survey were very or extremely satisfied with having undergone certification, with 90% stating that they had achieved reductions in both water and electric bills as a benefit of their participation in the programme (www.cha-cast.com/GreenGlobeProperties.htm).

Future developments may, however, result in yet more changes. In January 2003 the Rainforest Alliance, an environmental NGO, completed a study into the feasibility of establishing a Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) to act as an international accreditation agency for tourism certification schemes. The study recommended the establishment of regional networks to encourage dialogue among stakeholders and to act as a clearinghouse for information on certification. The first such regional body, the Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas, was launched in Bahía, Brazil, in September 2003, thanks to support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).¹³ Meanwhile, the World Tourism Organisation has recently commissioned a review of international tourism standards, including Green Globe, in connection with ongoing discussions about the possibility of including a tourism annex in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

Concluding observations

Green Globe, in its current form, describes itself as “the ONLY independently verified worldwide certification scheme for travel and tourism”. In a review of tourism certification programmes, Honey and Rome (2001) described the Green Globe scheme as “unique in that it aims to cover all sectors of the tourism industry, has managed to align with many powerful tourism organisations and is the only certification programme run as a commercial, for-profit enterprise”. It is certainly true that, as yet, no government-endorsed international labelling standards exist for the tourism industry. However, that does not mean that governments have not taken a keen interest in the subject.

This case study provides yet another example of the strengths and weaknesses of a private eco-labelling scheme applied to an industry not always well-versed in environmental practice. Green Globe, because of its institutional affiliations, its size and its early start, has been able to tap into established commercial networks, while working closely with intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. These alliances have, in turn, conferred a degree of legitimacy on the label. And, perhaps because it remains a private initiative, it has been able to respond quickly to criticisms — particularly over fees — and to change its structure and image. That responsiveness has

12. Geoffrey Lipman, personal communication with Dilys Roe, April 2002. Margot Sallows with Dilys Roe, personal communication, April 2002.

13. www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/tourism/certification/network-of-americas.html.

not stopped sceptics from suggesting that the series of makeovers that Green Globe has gone through has hurt its credibility, creating confusion about its precise requirements, especially among those that joined the now disbanded membership programme in its early days and still carry the logo. Similarly, Green Globe’s mergers and partnerships with other eco-labelling schemes have been seen in both favourable and unfavourable lights. On the one hand, they have helped reduced the number of schemes and thus encouraged a harmonisation of standards; on the other hand, they have boosted the market power of a privately held company that, at the end of the day, is sustained by the fees that it charges.

The costs, and uncertain benefits, of participation in a scheme dominated by large private interests are naturally major issues for developing country suppliers of tourism services. Small businesses make up about 97% of the total companies servicing the tourism industry and cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment. Generally, however, they are excluded from certification schemes because of the schemes’ price or complexity, or simply because they are unaware of them. Green Globe has over the years tried to streamline its operations and in general design its fee structure to make it more affordable for SMEs and developing country providers of travel and tourism services.

It is unlikely that global certification mechanisms for small businesses will be successful unless implemented through a credible local hotel or tourism association. Green Globe has already followed this route through its partnerships with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (itself an initiative of the Caribbean Hotels Association) and, more recently, the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA), which operates through local associations. As suggested by the WWF-UK (2000), however, the development of guidelines to help local or national authorities to develop credible programmes, which may possibly be certified by a central accreditation network, is probably the best route for success.

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Acronyms

APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (US)
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BAuA	Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Germany)
BGA	Federal Health Office (Germany)
BMZ	Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (Germany)
CAA	Clean Air Act (US)
CASCO	Committee on Conformity Assessment (ISO)
CBI	Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (Netherlands)
CFC	Common Fund for Commodities
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbons
COLEACP	Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee
CREM	Consultancy and Research for Environmental Management (Netherlands)
CsC	Commonwealth Science Council
CSE	Centre for Science and Environment (India)
CTE	Committee on Trade and Environment (WTO)
CTF	Consultative Task Force (UNCTAD)
DSB	durian seed borer
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (US)
EPE	European Partners for the Environment
ESA	Endangered Species Act (US)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration (US)
FDI	foreign direct investment
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GAA	Global Aquaculture Alliance
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services

GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GTZ	Agency for Technical Co-operation (Germany)
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
IDM	integrated disease management
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFCO	International Fruit Container Organisation
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements
IGEP	Indo-German Export Promotion Project
IGG	Intergovernmental Group on Tea (FAO)
IGO	intergovernmental organisation
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOAS	International Organic Accreditation Service
IPCS	International Programme on Chemical Safety
IPM	integrated pest management
IPPC	integrated pollution prevention and control
IRA	import risk analysis
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITF	International Task Force on Harmonisation and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUC	International Union Chemical testing
JAS	Japan Agriculture Standards
JETRO	Japan External Trade Organization
JWPTE	Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment (OECD)
LDC	least-developed country
LOD	lower limit of analytical determination (or limit of detection)
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Japan)
MAP	Mangrove Action Project
MEA	multilateral environmental agreement
MLV	maximum limit value
MRA	mutual recognition agreement
MRL	maximum residue limit

MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service (US)
NOP	National Organic Program (US)
NOSB	National Organic Standards Board (US)
NTAE	non-traditional agricultural export
ODS	ozone-depleting substance
OFPA	Organic Foods Production Act (US)
PCP	pentachlorophenol
ppm	parts per million
PVC	polyvinyl chloride
RCO	Registered Certification Organisation (Japan)
RFCOs	Registered Foreign Certification Organisations (Japan)
RIA	regulatory impact analysis
SCS	Scientific Certification Systems, Inc.
SGS	Société Générale de Surveillance S.A.
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
SPS	(WTO Agreement on) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
STIC	Sustainable Trade and Innovation Centre
TBT	(WTO Agreement on) Technical Barriers to Trade
TEAP	Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (UNEP)
TED	turtle-excluder device
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
VOC	volatile organic compound
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

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