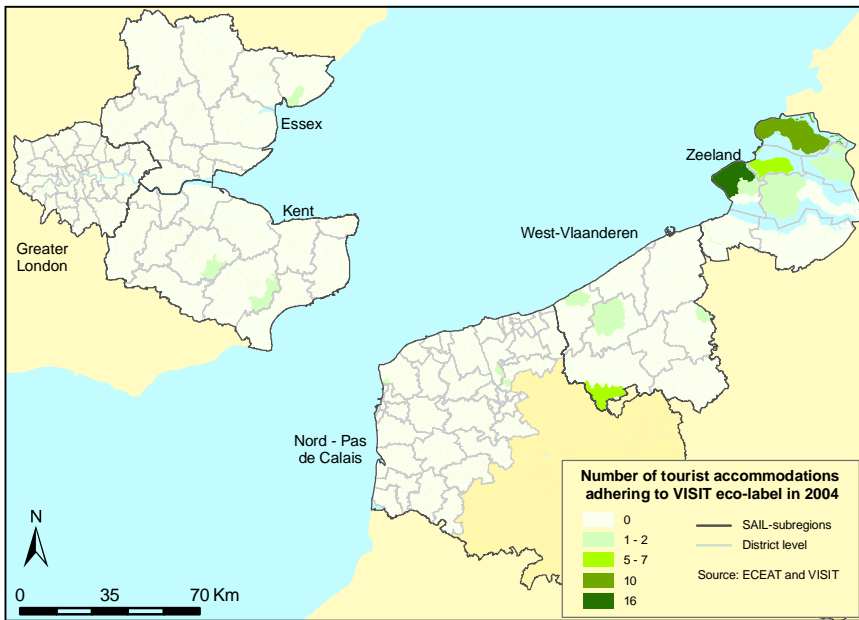
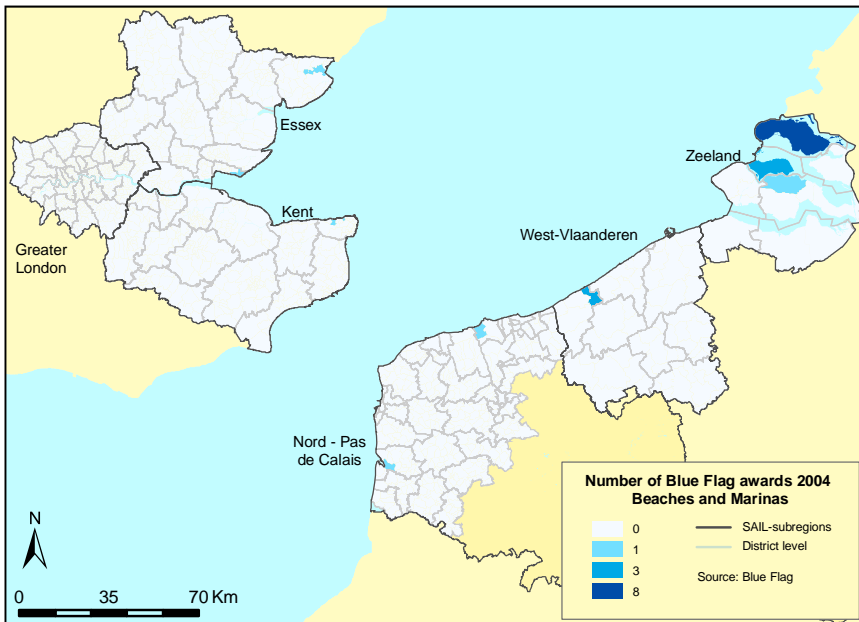
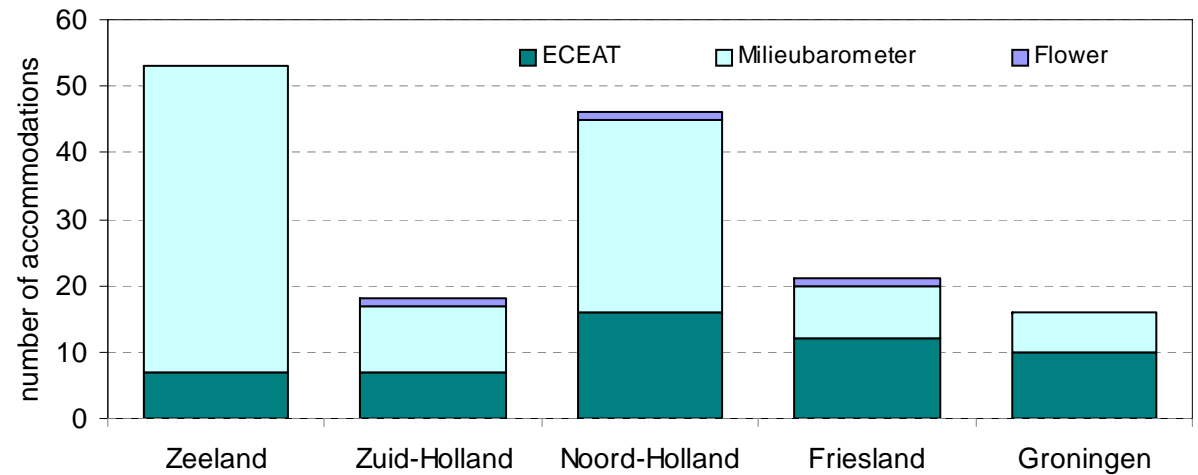


# Indicator 12 Sustainable tourism

Number of tourist accommodations with European Eco-label in Zeeland and The Netherlands provinces - 2004



Number of Blue Flag Beaches	Year		
	2003	2004	2005
West-Vlaanderen	7	0	0
Nord-Pas de Calais	2	2	3
Kent	6	7	3
Essex	4	4	5
Zeeland	6	10	15

Number of Blue Flag Marinas	Year		
	2003	2004	2005
West-Vlaanderen	2	3	3
Nord-Pas de Calais	2	2	5
Kent	0	0	0
Essex	0	0	0
Zeeland	14	12	11

Sub-regions 2004	Regional label	ECEAT	Total sub-region	Coast
Zeeland (Milieubarometer)	40	7	47	33
West-Vlaanderen (Milieubarometer)	0	8	8	1
Nord-Pas de Calais (La Clef Verte)	1	3	4	1
Kent and Essex (Green Business)	1	2	3	0



- *Number of tourist accommodations with EU Eco-label*
- *Ratio of number of overnight stays to number of residents*

## Key Message

- In 2004, 62 tourist accommodations adhered to the European VISIT label in the SAIL region, of which 35 are located in coastal municipalities. A total of 19 marinas (15% of the approximate total of 130) and 26 beaches were awarded a Blue Flag in the SAIL sub-regions.
- There is no tourist accommodation with the EU Flower eco-label in the SAIL region (summer 2005).
- In some of the most popular bathing resorts along the southern North Sea, for each resident living in the area year-round, as many as 135 nights are spent by visitors in tourist accommodation only. Most of these nights are spent during relatively short peak seasons.

## Why monitor sustainable tourism?

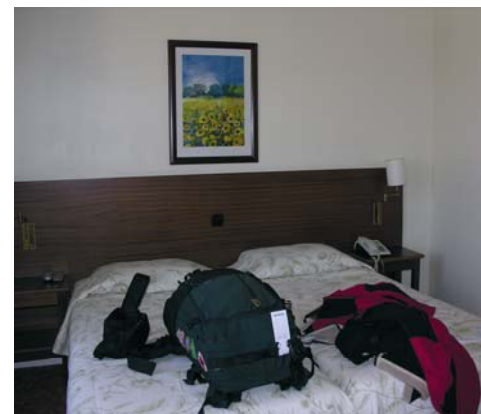
The extent of eco-labelled accommodation at the coast is a measure of on-site implementation of sustainability in tourism. It also indicates how the coast is doing compared to the hinterland, in catering for environmentally friendly tourist services and products. Ecological quality labelling for sustainability has taken off during the last decade and there is a growing awareness of the importance of eco-labels in supporting sustainable coastal economies. The Voluntary Initiative for Sustainability in Tourism – VISIT is the European umbrella for existing national / regional eco-labels in the tourism sector. It is based on common criteria and standards for sustainable use of resources, respect for the environment and local tradition and heritage. The EU eco-label 'Flower' also applies to tourist accommodation. It came into operation in May 2003.

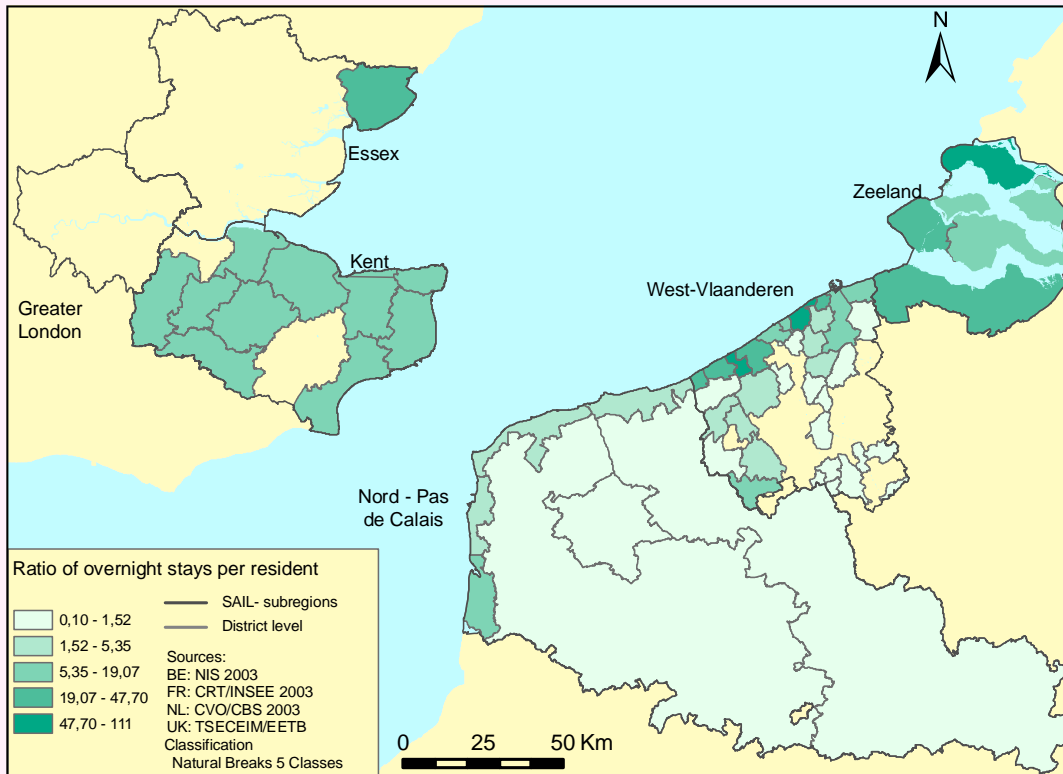
The number of overnight stays per resident gives an indication of the relative social and environmental impact of tourism. Moreover, since tourism at the coast remains a seasonal business, this impact is highly concentrated in a relatively short period.

The 'social carrying capacity' is also defined by the type of destination: a ratio of 10:1 in a small coastal village may have a greater impact than a ratio of 100:1 in an established resort.

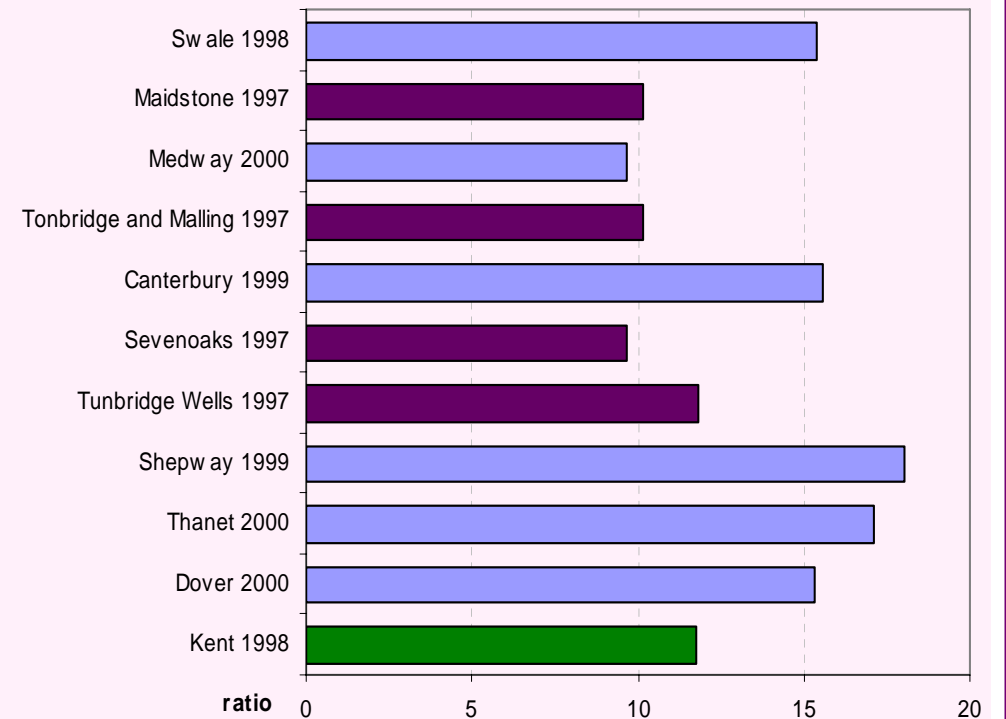
## Where do the data come from?

The EU eco-label 'Flower' ([www.eco-label.com](http://www.eco-label.com)) applies among others to tourist accommodation. Blue Flag international launches the names and locations of the awarded beaches and marinas on the Internet before each summer. Data are available at national, regional and local levels (municipalities) ([www.blueflag.org](http://www.blueflag.org)). 'La Clef Verte' in France ([www.laclefverte.org](http://www.laclefverte.org)), 'Milieubarometer' ([www.milieubarometer.nl](http://www.milieubarometer.nl)) in The Netherlands and Belgium, and Green Business in the UK ([www.greenbusiness.org.uk](http://www.greenbusiness.org.uk)) are regional labels that have joined VISIT. They represent traditional accommodation while the ECEAT label stands for rural accommodation (European Centre for Eco and Agro Tourism- [www.eceat.nl](http://www.eceat.nl)). Number of overnight stays and resident population are provided by both national statistics services and a wide variety of studies and surveys (see metadata 01 and 11).





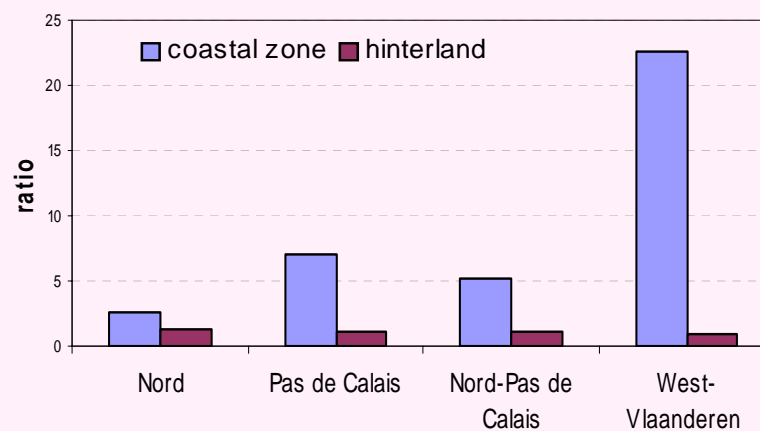
**Ratio of overnight stays per resident (x:1), Kent districts and Kent County Council (1997-2000)**



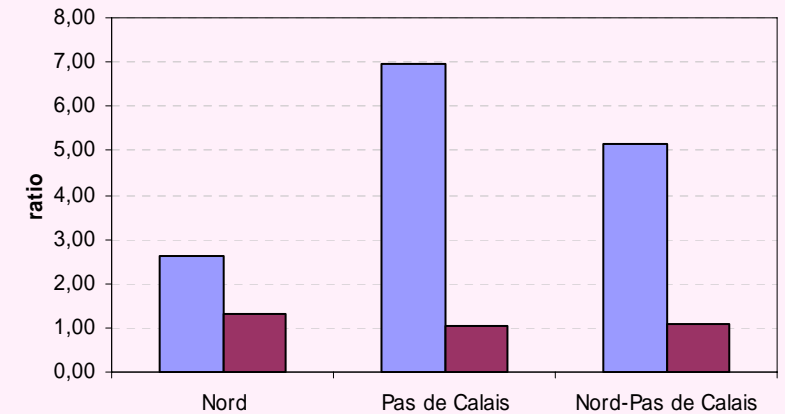
**Ratio of overnight stays per resident (x:1), West-Vlaanderen**



**Nord-Pas de Calais and West-Vlaanderen (2003)**



**Ratio of overnight stays per resident (x:1), Nord-Pas de Calais (2003)**



## What does the indicator show?

In 2004, most of the 19 Blue Flag awards for beaches and 26 for marinas in the Southern North Sea were located in the Dutch coastal municipalities of Sluis, Veere and Schouwen-Duiveland. (57% and 58% respectively, of the total Blue Flag awards in the region).

None of the accommodation in the SAIL region adheres to the EU eco-label flower, which became operational in May 2003. Other VISIT labels represented in the Southern North Sea are the Milieubarometer in The Netherlands and Belgium, Green Business in the UK and La Clef Verte in France. The ECEAT label stimulates rural development through the creation of services and accommodation that respect the environment and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. It is a non-profit organisation that conducts research and draws guidelines for eco-, agro and rural tourism. Twenty ECEAT hotels and sites are located in the southern North Sea sub-regions, of which 6 are in the coastal zone. The highest number are located in Zeeland. This province also has more tourist accommodation awarded the national eco-label 'Milieubarometer' than other Dutch provinces. Five national and regional eco-labels in the Southern North Sea region have joined the European eco-label VISIT for tourist accommodation and beaches and marinas.

On average, for each resident living in one of the coastal districts of Kent, 15 visitor nights are spent. In the tourist zones of Montreuil in Pas-de-Calais this ratio can reach 1:18, but the pressure from tourism is concentrated in popular bathing resorts during summer season. Schouwen-Duiveland has very high ratios (1:130 in the coastal resort of Domburg), while in some coastal municipalities of West-Flanders, ratios are decreasing since peak values that reached ratios of 1:135 in the mid 1990s. As a reference, in the hinterland of The Netherlands the number of overnight stays per resident is on average 4 (data 1997-2004).

## What are the implications for planning and managing the coast?

Eco-labels provide the necessary link between socio-economic concerns and environmental protection in coastal regions. They encourage the use of regional products, benefiting the local economy, and help to raise awareness of environmental protection among residents and visitors. The potential benefits are considerable: a hotel with 63 beds adhering to the eco-label criteria saves 17% of its energy costs, and a hotel with 92 beds uses 25% less cleaning agents. Campsites have the advantage of being a reversible form of land use, but problems with waste water collection, treatment, and domestic waste, can arise during overcrowded peak seasons. Here again, eco-labels can mitigate much of the unwanted impact on the environment. The Blue Flag was born in France in 1985. In 2005 a total of 2,442 beaches and 632 marinas were

labelled Blue Flags, in 30 participating countries. The award is granted on the basis of compliance with criteria for water quality, environmental management, safety, services and facilities, environmental education and information. A new set of beach criteria came into effect in 2000, extending the criteria to wastewater treatment, Local Agenda 21 activities, and facilities for disabled people. For marinas, consideration is being given to the first steps of introducing an eco-management system.

The Blue Flag works towards sustainable development at beaches/marinas through strict criteria dealing with water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, and safety and other services. It includes environmental education and information for the public, decision makers and tourism operators.

## How reliable is the indicator?

Currently, not all prestigious eco-labels for tourist accommodation operating in the EU have joined the VISIT label. It will also demand further time and effort to increase the adherence of accommodation to the EU Flower eco-label. Local datasets on Blue Flag awards are available from the national focal points only. The quality and availability of time series may vary between the responsible Blue Flag coordinators for each country, as is also the case for the VISIT labels.

The ratio of overnight stays to number of residents is too coarse at the district level, since tourist pressure at the coast is concentrated in specific bathing resorts. Hence, more data are needed at the local level (seaside towns) in the UK. For a more accurate evaluation of the pressure exerted by tourism, the number of overnight stays spent in second homes and rented property, and the seasonal character of these, should also be taken into account. Finally, we need to know more about the impact of visitors on local landscapes and social/natural environment.

