

15.- Sustainable tourism

Key message

- The ratio of overnight stays to residents is highest in coastal areas all over Europe.
- In general, the volume of eco-labelled tourist accommodation is higher in the hinterland but is increasing in both coastal and non-coastal zones.
- In order to measure sustainable tourism there is a need for a standardised and centralised database.



Milieubarometer



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Why monitor sustainable tourism?

To achieve sustainability there is a need to link tourism with services and products generated in local economies. Therefore, over the last decade a significant increase in efforts to establish and promote eco-labeling schemes in tourist services and products took place, both at European and local levels.

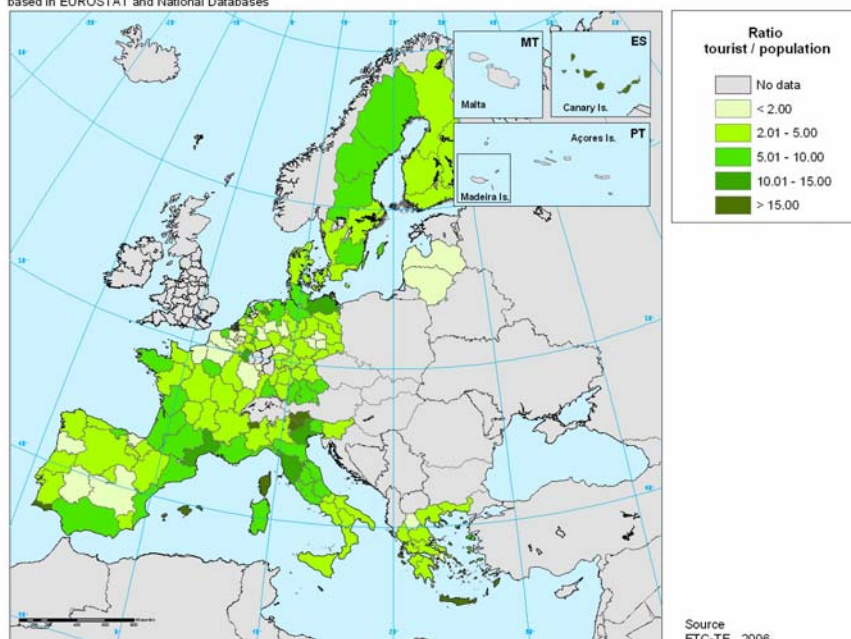
This indicator belongs to the set of 2 indicators that monitor progress towards achieving the third goal for coastal sustainability set out in the EU Recommendation concerning the implementation of ICZM - to promote and support a dynamic and sustainable coastal economy.

The indicator has 2 measurements: the number of tourist accommodation units holding an EU Eco-label and the ratio of overnight stays per number of residents. The two measurements will both be represented in this indicator fact sheet because there is significant coherence between them.

What does the indicator show from European to local level?

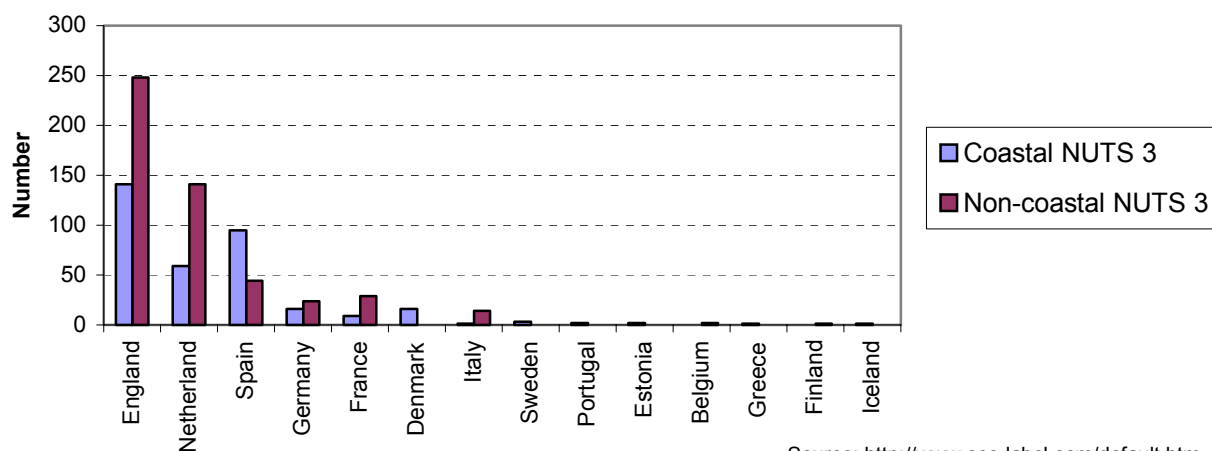
At European level, the coastal areas present the highest share of tourists in relation to the population. This is particularly the case in the largest tourist regions (Mediterranean area) and coastal zones around Europe. The European average is 5 so for each European resident there are 5 visitor nights spent.

Ratio of overnight stays per number of residents by NUTS2 (2001)
based in EUROSTAT and National Databases



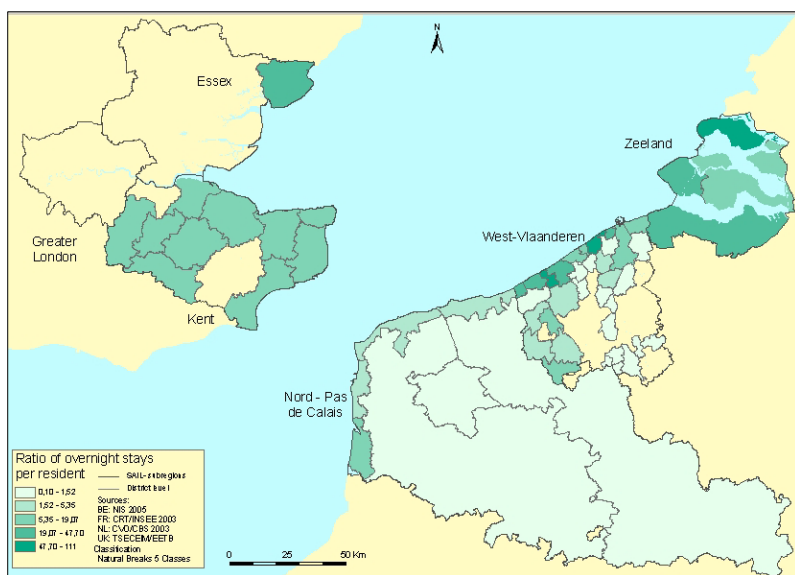
Although the ratio of overnights stays is higher in the coastal areas, this is not reflected in the number of tourist accommodation units at the coast holding an eco-label. The overall picture shows a higher number of eco-labelled tourist accommodation units in the hinterland. In spite of the higher intensity of tourism at the coast, the number of eco-labels in the coastal zone is approximately half that of the hinterland. The exceptions are Spain and Denmark, with a higher number of eco-awards at the coast (50 and 16 extra awards respectively). England (with 140), The Netherlands (60) and Spain (95) are leaders at eco-labelling tourist accommodation in the coastal zone. In several countries less than 3 eco-awards have been issued for the whole region, and they are Sweden, Portugal, Estonia, Belgium, Greece, Finland and Iceland.

Number of tourist accommodation units holding an eco-label in coastal and non-coastal NUTS 3 in Europe by coastal country (2005)



Source: <http://www.eco-label.com/default.htm>

At national and sub-region level, the same trend is seen in the ratio of overnight stays per resident. At the coast, a higher number of tourists-nights are spent per resident. More tourists than residents stay at the coast during their holiday.

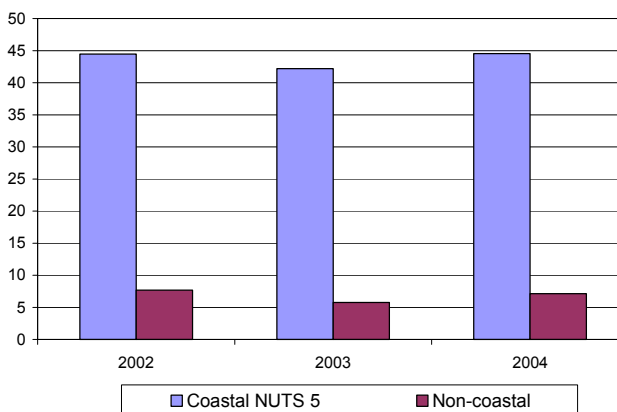


© Compiled by VLIZ from sources in countries bordering the southern North Sea, as stated in the key

In the countries bordering the southern North Sea, the number of overnight stays per number of residents in the coastal tourist zones by far exceeds the ratio for the hinterland. 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 the summer season. In Schouwen-Duiveland for example, ratios of up to 1:130 were recorded in the coastal resort of Domburg.

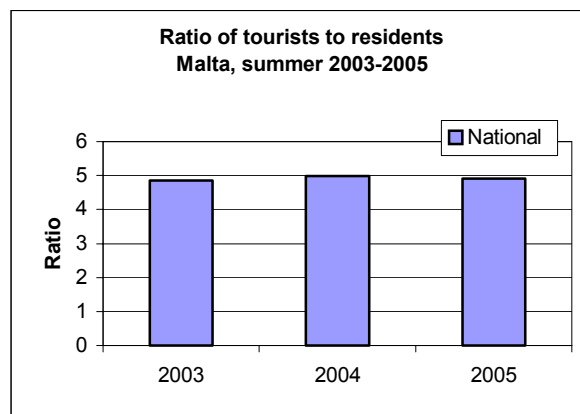
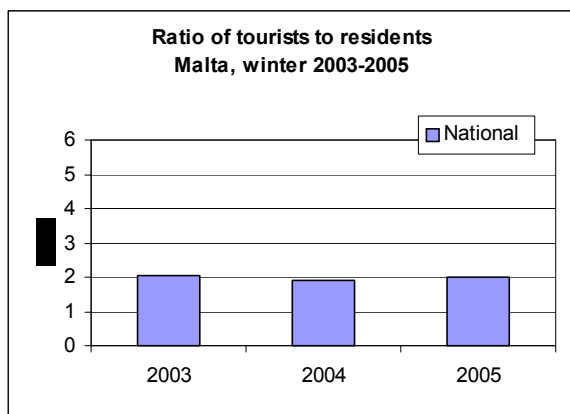
In Catalonia, there is a huge difference between the coastal zone and the hinterland. Compared to other countries, the ratio of tourists to residents is higher in the coastal zone (6 times higher than in the hinterland). Taking into account that the number of overnight stays is actually higher in the hinterland, this emphasises the pressure on the coastal zone in Catalonia.

Ratio of tourists to residents in coastal and non-coastal destinations of Catalonia 2002 - 2004



Sources : Department of Trade, Tourism and Consumption , 2005 and IDESCAT, 2005.

Comparing the number of tourist nights spent relative to the number of residents both in winter and summer in Malta, the tourism industry is still seasonal and focused mainly on the summer months of July and August. The ratio of tourists to residents is twice as high in summer as in the winter period (2:5). Winter tourism is increasing and attracting a grey component, mainly following the *costa geriatrica* movement in the south of France.

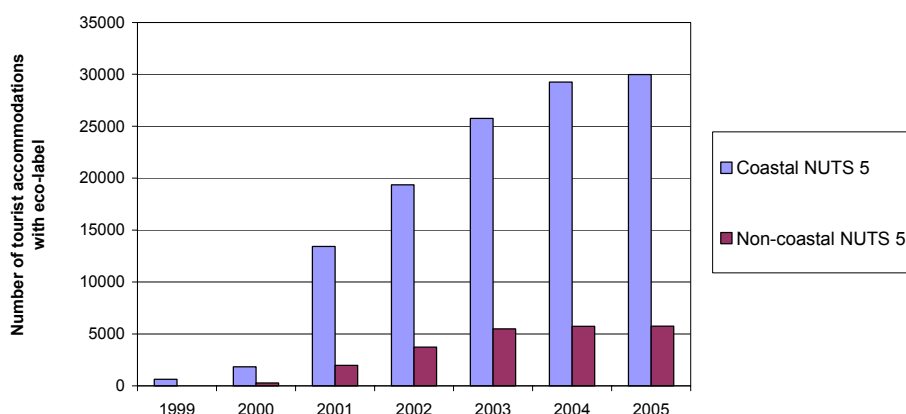


Source: Accomstat survey of the National Statistics Office

At European level, the number of tourist accommodation units holding an eco-label in Spain is one of the exceptions to the conclusion that there are more eco-labelled accommodation units in the hinterland. There has been substantial growth in the number of tourist accommodation units holding an eco-label of environmental quality in the whole of Catalonia. In 1999, there were 618 eco-labels (coastal: 618 and hinterland: 0) and in 2005 this number is nearly 60 times higher at 35,720 eco-labels (coastal: 29,979 and hinterland: 5741).

The trend in the number of tourist accommodation units holding

Trend on the number of tourist accommodations holding an eco-label in coastal and non-coastal NUTS 5 of Catalonia

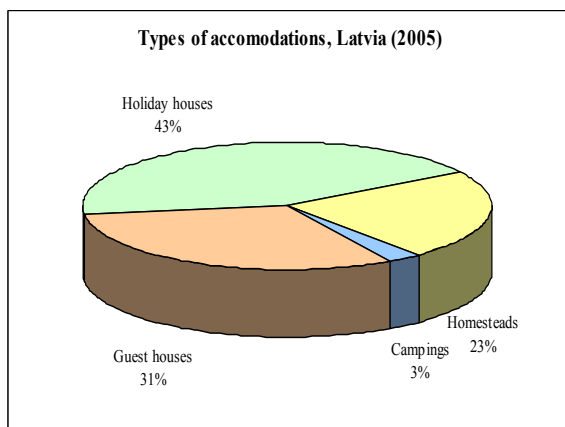
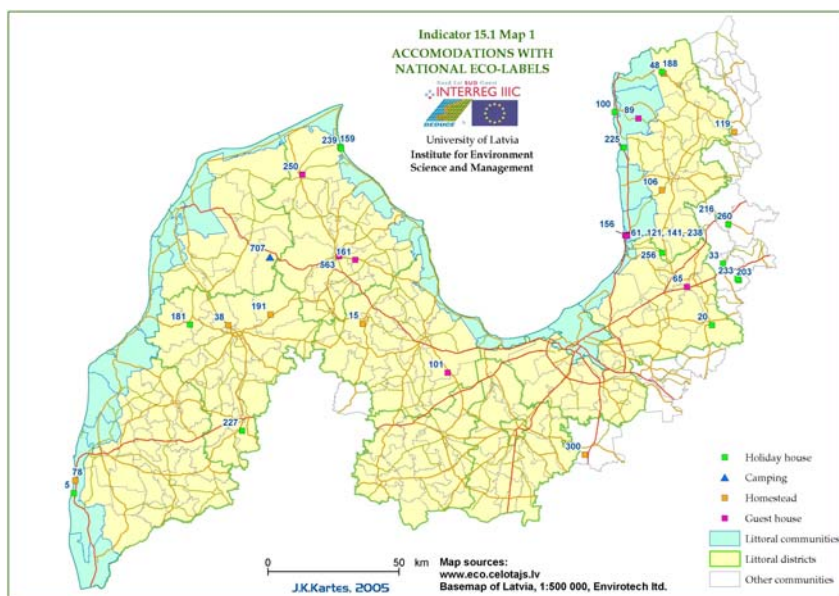


Source: General Direction of Environmental Quality, 2005. IDESCAT, 2005.

This growth has been more important in camping sites and hotels of coastal NUTS 5. In non-coastal destinations, the increase has been shared between other types of tourist accommodation (youth hostels and rural tourist housings). The main part of tourist accommodation in Catalonia holds an EMAS or Catalan eco-label certified by the VISIT organisation.

In Latvia, there are as yet no tourist accommodation units with an EU Eco-label, an EMAS accreditation or an eco-label awarded by an organisation which has itself qualified for a VISIT standard in Latvia.

At present there are 64 national eco-labelled sites in Latvia. Of these, 35 are located in the coastal region and 12 of those are directly in the coastal NUTS 5. Although the major part of eco-labelled tourist accommodation units are located in the wider reference area, recalculating the number per unit of area shows that the density of that accommodation in coastal communities is twice as high. This tends to suggest affinity of the coastal area by comparison with other regions.



Types of accommodation

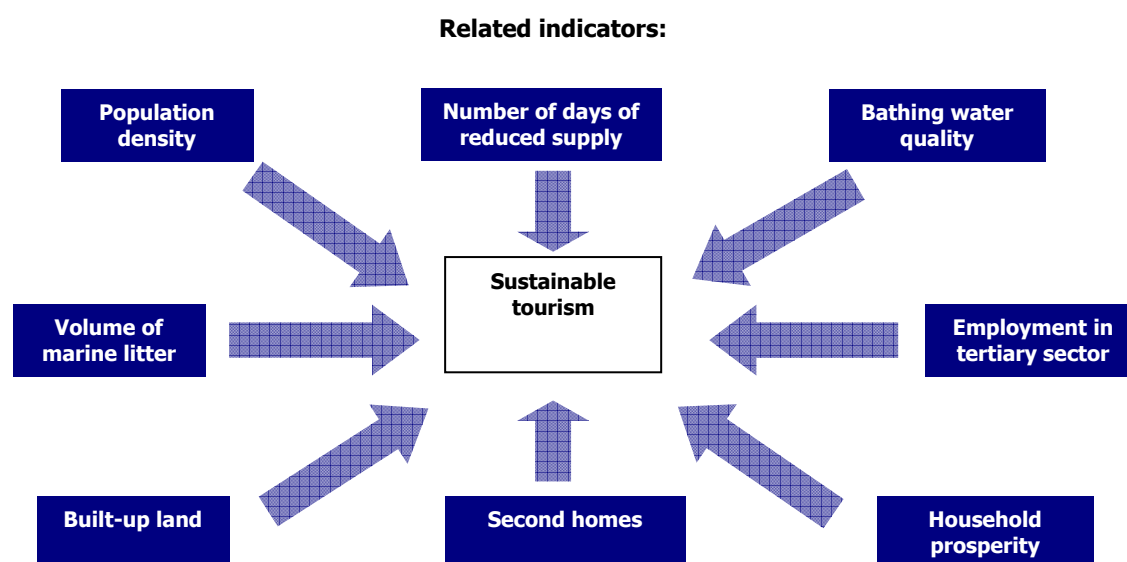
Analysis per type of accommodation shows the domination of holiday houses (43%) in Latvia, possibly because they are cheaper to establish and maintain. The differential benefits obtained from the (costly) eco-labelling schemes seem to be limited, especially since there is no demand from the tourists (which is mainly domestic).

Source: EMAS, www.yourvisit.info www.eco.celotajs.lv http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

What are the implications for planning and managing the coastal zone?

Sustainable tourism focuses on strengthening the link between socio-economic concerns and environmental protection by taking into account both the socio-economic and environmental carrying capacity of the region. It encourages the use of regional products and services - benefiting the local economy - and helps to raise awareness of environmental protection among residents and visitors. Sustainable tourism in coastal regions requires careful planning and creative partnerships among industry, management, municipalities and agencies, to foster a tourism economy that is both healthy for local communities and inspiring for its visitors. This kind of tourism planning can be referred to as sustainable tourism, eco-tourism, nature-based tourism, geotourism, heritage tourism etc. However, the ultimate goal is to achieve practices in tourism that both protect the areas and communities visited while at the same time providing a quality experience for visitors. Tourism has no well-framed EU policy because Article 3 of the Maastricht Treaty gives the European Community limited scope to take forward non-legislative measures on tourism. However, the Council of the EU has outlined its vision, which also includes the aspect of sustainability, on the future of European Tourism in its resolution of 21 May 2002 (2002/C135/01). The Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA Directive 2001/42/EC) further support the environmental considerations in planning for sustainability.

Although it is difficult to set specific policy targets at the European level, in some cases local policy may set objectives for this indicator.



Further work needed

EUROSTAT or national databases deliver free data on the number of overnight stays at NUTS2 or NUTS3 but not at the local level.

The ratio of overnight stays to the number of residents is too coarse at the NUTS2 or NUTS3 level, since tourist pressure in coastal zones is concentrated around specific bathing resorts. Hence, more data are needed at the local level. A more accurate evaluation of the pressure exerted by tourism requires the number of overnight stays spent in second homes and rented property and the seasonal character of tourism to be taken into account. A better understanding of the impact of visitors on local landscapes and social/natural environment is needed in order to interpret pressure generated through tourism activities.

There is no centralised database for the number of eco-labelled tourist accommodation units. The awards are granted year by year or as applications are approved but databases are not necessarily kept or updated systematically. Consequently, there is a need of standardisation of the data collection methodology for the whole of Europe.

Data sources

Europe (2001 & 2005):

- EUROSTAT and National Statistics for Population Data
- <http://www.eco-label.com>

West-Flanders (and local network of partners):

- West-Flanders: Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek (NIS), Stichting Keurmerk, Milieu, Veiligheid en Kwaliteit, Vereniging voor Ecologische Leef- en Teeltwijze (VELT) - 2002-2004
- Nord-Pas de Calais: Institut nationale de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE), Conseil Régional du Tourisme (CRT), La Clef Verte F.E.E.E. - 2003-2004
- Zeeland: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), Stichting Keurmerk, Milieu, Veiligheid en Kwaliteit, European Centre for Eco Agro Tourism (ECEAT), European Union Eco-Flower (FLOWER) - 1995-2004
- Kent, Essex and Thames: Tourism South East Cambridge Economic Impact Model, Kent County Council, East of England Tourist Board, Essex County Council, Green Tourism Business Schemes - 1997-2000, 2004

Catalonia (1999-2005):

- Tourism General Direction
- IDESCAT (Statistical Institute of Catalonia)
- General Direction of Environmental Quality of the Department of Environment and Housing

Malta (2003-2005):

- Accomstat survey of the National Statistics Office
- Malta Tourism Authority (<http://www.mta.com.mt>)

Latvia (2005):

- http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm
- EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)
- www.yourvisit.info
- www.eco.celotajs.lv

Reliability of the indicator

Data on overnight stays are incomplete or lacking and are often based on estimations. There is no similarity in reporting because there is a different set of sampled accommodation in different regions.

Counting the amount of tourist accommodation which qualifies for an eco-label is a crude yet relatively easy way to measure current progress towards greater sustainability. Unfortunately, only a small number of eco-labelling schemes are independently assessed.

References

None



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