

# QualityCoast Award 2016 Jury Report

Hoek van Holland  
The Netherlands



Leiden, October 2016

Final Version

Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)  
**Leiden – Barcelona – Klaipeda**

QualityCoast is a programme of the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)

Date of Application:

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# What is QualityCoast?

QualityCoast is a sustainability award for coastal communities, towns and islands. It is the only sustainable tourism destination award developed by local authorities themselves. It is the result of the European Union INTERREG project "Coastal Practice Network" (CoPraNet 2002-2005), led by the EUCC. The QualityCoast criteria have been developed to measure the success of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) at local level, in connection to the EU Recommendation for ICZM.

People are increasingly interested in sustainability issues, also when selecting their holiday destination. Tourism eco-labels have become common features in travel brochures and websites. Whilst the Blue Flag specifically applies to individual beaches and marinas and Travelife and the Green Key to accommodations, QualityCoast is considering efforts for sustainable tourism in the whole territory of the coastal destination: towns, small regions and islands.

With the QualityCoast programme ([www.qualitycoast.info](http://www.qualitycoast.info)), the Coastal & Marine Union - EUCC aims to establish an international network of coastal communities that share similar values on sustainable and socially responsible tourism, at the same time maintaining high standards in the quality of their tourism offer.

With the QualityCoast Award programme, EUCC aims to encourage tourism destinations for:

- a. their attractiveness for visitors interested in natural and cultural heritage, a clean environment, local identity, or business involvement in sustainable tourism;
- b. their policies re: sustainable tourism and any of the aspects mentioned under point a; c. a combination of a and b.

Since the inclusion of all Destinations Criteria of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) in the QualityCoast Award 2013 Application Form, QualityCoast is now open for applications from all continents.

"QualityCoast" has been registered by EUCC as a European Union trademark; the use of the name is restricted under European law.

## QualityCoast meets European and global standards

The GSTC Destination Criteria (GSTC-D version 1.0), published 1 November 2013, have already been fully incorporated into the QualityCoast Assessment Platform.

In February 2013, the European Commission launched the European Tourism Indicators (ETIS) aiming to measure and enhance the sustainability of destinations across Europe. All ETIS-indicators have also been included into our Award Application Form, mostly for optional use.

## QualityCoast certifies tourism sustainability policy

We offer reliable and transparent international Award programs and a certification option for destinations with serious ambitions for a good sustainable tourism policy. The Awards and certifications are issued for periods of two years.

The programme also offers an assessment of the visible sustainability (performance, or sustainability status) in a broad range of categories and criteria, since tourists are not only interested in policies, strategies, ambitions and plans, but especially on how they experience a destination. The years of experience in this field allow the programme to inform the tourism sector and the public in a transparent way on policies and performance of ca. 1000 destinations, through the national and international ranking lists of the Global Sustainable Tourism Review (). Ranking lists are topped by the QualityCoast Policy Award winners, which have been certified on both policy and status. Next are the destinations that received the QualityCoast BasiQ Award – they are mainly selected on the basis of their status and performance in environmental management, natural and cultural heritage, and local business involvement in sustainability.

## **The importance of QualityCoast for tourism sustainability**

Participation of destination management organizations in the Award programme improves their awareness performance and achievements in an international context. The comparison with other awarded destinations provides the community with a good picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The international assessment and recommendations by our international Jury provide the local authority with a guidance to be considered in an agenda for improvement.

Communities join a network of like-minded communities and share their experiences and best practices in order to improve sustainability and social responsibility in tourism. Their performance in these fields is connected to international tourism marketing through certification under the supervision of an independent international Jury issuing the Awards.

## **Promotional benefits of participation in QualityCoast**

EUCC carries out a marketing campaign together with the Awarded destinations to promote them as the most attractive destinations for visitors interested in nature and landscape, environment, and cultural identity and to highlight their performance in tourism quality and sustainability. The marketing campaign includes promotion at holiday fairs, media publicity, wide dissemination of brochures, promotion via our various web sites and social media. Awarded destinations are also recommended by a number of tour operators of TUI-Benelux, in their travel brochures.

The community's own international tourism marketing can profit from the status of QualityCoast destination. Experience in several countries learns that this will continue to generate media publicity nationally and internationally. Sustainability based marketing efforts will increase the "green profile" of the destination both externally and internally and this will help mainstreaming sustainability on local policy and decision making.

## **What is the QualityCoast Award?**

The QualityCoast Award is an independent international certification programme for sustainable tourism of coastal and island destinations that:

- ❖ Have a good overall policy performance in sustainable tourism, mainly according to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria, according to our [Standard](#).
- ❖ Offer sufficient touristic quality to visitors (mainly measured through an indicator set);
- ❖ Provide transparent information to residents and visitors (partly through our communication campaigns);
- ❖ Plans for improvement (according to the Recommendations of the International Award Jury).

The Award Standard is publicly available on [www.qualitycoast.info](http://www.qualitycoast.info).

The Award program considers policy and performance criteria representing six different categories:

- ❖ Destination Management
- ❖ Nature & Scenery
- ❖ Environment & Climate
- ❖ Culture & Tradition
- ❖ Social Well-being
- ❖ Business & Hospitality

Each criterion is measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, on which the applicant must provide information regarding its entire territory.

## What are the QualityCoast criteria?

See the titles of the 2016 Award criteria on page 8.

**Definitions of the criteria and a complete list of indicators can be found on the QualityCoast Assessment Platform.**

The criteria and indicators will remain subject to annual revision, based upon European and global standards.

## How is the QualityCoast Award attributed?

The QualityCoast Award is attributed on the basis of information to be provided by the applicant(s) through an online (self) assessment & reporting system. The system consists of criteria on policy issues following the Green Destinations standard<sup>1</sup>, and indicators to measure quality and performance. For the Policy criteria, destinations are asked to tick 'yes' or 'no' for each criterion following detailed guidance, and to provide more motivation or upload evidence files as requested.

In addition to the Policy criteria, a detailed Indicator Report is part of the assessment, containing around 100 quantitative indicators on destination quality and sustainability issues. Some indicators are already given by the system based on existing databases and GIS data, and some of these can be reviewed by the applicant. Reviewed values need to be accepted by an auditor before they become effective as input to the destination's ratings.

### Evaluation

All information provided through the Online Assessment System (criteria and indicators rates) is evaluated and assessed by the QC Secretariat. The Secretariat involves (or hires the services of) a local expert, as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditor. The assessment reports produced by Secretariat and local expert are then reviewed by a number of members of the International Award Jury. For each application, a Jury is designated composed of at least three members including: an independent local expert (who is aware of the applicant community); a national expert; and an international EUCC-expert. In order to ensure its independence, the Jury will work anonymously until the moment it is concluding its assessment.

### Scoring and Rating

The Secretariat and the Jury assign scores to all Policy (Green Destinations Standard) criteria, ranging from 0 to 2:

- "0" meaning non-compliance (or not sufficient motivation/information/evidence provided)
- "1" meaning partial compliance, or compliance expected in the very near future (e.g. policy is being drafted, there is evidence that this is being executed) of any quality (or no information provided for an indicator);
- "2" indicating full compliance for a criterion.

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<sup>1</sup> This standard is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) to comply with globally agreed requirements for destination sustainability (GSTC-D).

For the Policy Criteria, a (1-10) score per theme (Nature, Environment, Culture etc.) is calculated based on the scores and weight factors of its criteria. The total of these scores gives the Sustainability Policy Compliance Score (A).

The indicator values are scaled (linear or nonlinear) to a 1-10 score, where the best performing destination in the database scores a 10, and the worst a 1. Aggregated indicator scores give thematic ratings for Sustainability Evidence (B1) and Destination Quality (B2).

To the above mentioned Scores (A), (B1) and (B2), a Certification Status score<sup>2</sup> (4) is added, which combined form the Total Rating (1-10).

### Assessment Results

The Jury issues this Jury Report with a complete list of criteria scores and with suggestions for further improvement. For successful applicants, the Jury report as well as the above-mentioned ratings will be published. No public reference will be made about unsuccessful applications.

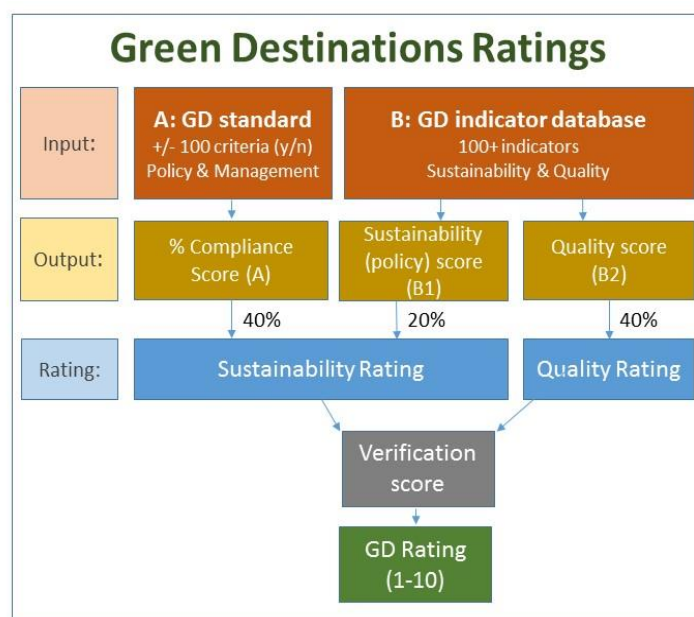


Figure 1. Green Destinations / QualityCoast Ratings

### Successful applicants become QualityCoast Destinations

Applicants who meet the score threshold will be invited to an international event, where they will receive the Award Certificate, and an Award Flag. They can then participate in the joint marketing programme. Awarded Destinations can order extra flags and banners, which can be displayed throughout the destination's territory during 24 months.

18 Months after their application the Awarded destination will be encouraged to submit a renewed Application. The assessment of the new application will take into consideration the coherence between the improvements indicated in the previous one and the integration of the suggestions and the recommendations made by the Jury.

### Renewal of the QualityCoast Award: important note

The QualityCoast assessment will take into consideration that earlier scores related to sustainability performance reflect the state of knowledge and experience of previous periods. If no progress is demonstrated in certain indicators, this could result in lower scores. E.g. ambitions and implementation levels in renewable energy use are increasing with time; therefore, a clear progress on this item should be shown within a period of four years. Another example is the assessment of satisfaction of the destination, which should be carried out in periods no longer than two or three years.

The QualityCoast Team, in close collaboration with Green Destinations, is annually improving the indicator set in order to better cover up-to-date considerations about sustainability and relevant criteria, and to increase harmonisation with the global GSTC-D criteria and European ETIS indicators. This is why the score for particular themes can change compared to two years ago even though the situation has not changed.

<sup>2</sup> Certification Status score defines the level of verification the Policy Standard criteria assessment. 15 core criteria expert verified = 4 points; all criteria expert-verified = 8 points; on-site audit = 10 points. QualityCoast on-site assessed applicants receive thus 10 points.

## GENERAL ASSESSMENT & COMMENTS

### Overall Remark

The QualityCoast Jury confirms that there is sufficient evidence to approve the QualityCoast Silver Award 2016, and congratulates Hoek van Holland with this result.

This QualityCoast Award is a recognition for the high level of tourism quality and sustainability, in particular in terms of host community & safety.

### QualityCoast Award: validity and promotion

The validity of this QualityCoast Award is two years (24 months), from the date indicated in the Award Certificate. You are entitled to display the QualityCoast flags, banners and flyers during this period, throughout your territory. The value of the QualityCoast Award for you as a "green" tourism destination will highly increase if you are able to help make the QualityCoast Award better known among your inhabitants and visitors, through the flags, banners and flyers, and in your own publications, and website and social media.

### GENERAL JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to maintain and improve this high level, the Jury would like to make the following general recommendations to all QualityCoast Destinations:

#### Stakeholder Committee

The Jury recommends to establish a local Stakeholder Committee on order to provide a think-tank and discussion platform for sustainable tourism on the implementation of the QualityCoast Jury Recommendations. A local Stakeholder Committee could also help promote synergies between stakeholders and contribute to the prolongation of the QualityCoast Award within two years. Within a next QualityCoast application the Jury would like to see involvement of the Committee and also to see the work of the Committee reported.

Tasks of this Committee could be:

- To help establish a multi-year tourism strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, that considers environmental, economic, social, cultural heritage, quality, health, and safety issues, and was developed with public participation;
- To help develop a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social, and cultural heritage issues;
- To help monitor residents' aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with tourism, to be regularly recorded and publicly reported.

We suggest that this Committee would represent:

- The local government (highest possible level),
- The local business sector;
- Independent expertise or NGO on nature conservation and management;
- Independent expertise or NGO on cultural heritage and landscape interests;
- Independent expertise or NGO on environmental issues.

## Overall QualityCoast Scores

Overall QualityCoast scores are based on the combined Ratings on the Green Destinations Standard (A); Policy Indicators (B1) and Quality Indicators (B2)<sup>3</sup>.

1 Theme >8 = Bronze; 2 themes >8= Silver; 3 or 4 themes >8= Gold; 5 themes >8 = Platinum

OVERALL	Policy	Quality
<b>Total Ratings</b>		
Destination Management	8.1	8.1
Nature & Landscape	6.7	7.3
Environment & Climate	8.3	8.3
Culture & Tradition	7.3	8.8
Socio-Economics	7.9	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.6</b>
Number of themes scoring >8		<b>2</b>
Award level		<b>Silver</b>

## Green Destinations Standard Scores

Below overview indicates compliance to the Green Destinations policy standard.

Theme	Actions	Achievements
0. Kenmerken van de bestemming	16	16
1. Beheer van de bestemming	26	19 3 4
2. Natuur & Landschap	8	7 1
3. Milieu & Klimaat	20	19 1
4. Cultuur & Traditie	5	4 1
5. Maatschappelijk welzijn	22	17 4 1
6. Business involvement	19	8 7 2 2

<b>Green Destinations Standard Compliance Percentage</b>	<b>81%</b>
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The GD Standard Compliance Percentage shows how much of the compulsory criteria of the Green Destinations Standard is fully complied with, and is an indicator how far the destination is from full "Certified" level. "Certified" destinations require 100% compliance with the Green Destinations Standard compulsory criteria, and will receive worldwide recognition through the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) – the body that accredits the Certification process.

<sup>3</sup> See Figure 1 (p 6) for more information



## **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT**

### **CONSIDERATIONS OF WEAK AND STRONG POINTS**

#### **Strong points**

- Since Hoek van Holland lost its status as sub-municipality of the municipality of Rotterdam and became a subarea instead, municipality objectives became centralized. Due to centralized resources management, the municipality of Rotterdam was able to develop a sustainability program for 2015 to 2018. This program includes a sustainability vision and resource allocation for all sub-areas of the municipality of Rotterdam.
- Due to the significance of Hoek van Holland as a tourist destination, a substantial amount of organizations are involved in the management of the destinations on a regular scheduled basis including DCMR, Zuid-Hollands Landschap, Foundation Duinbehoud, Hoogheemraadschap, Delfland and others. The Get Hoekt Foundation is directly responsible for tourism management in Hoek van Holland.
- Through VVV Hoek van Holland, managed by the Get Hoekt Foundation, the HvH Area Commission ("Gebiedscommissie" - the public body governing the destination on behalf of Rotterdam Municipality) and the municipality of Rotterdam have direct contact with the private sector. Examples are VVV campaigns to advice museums and the hospitality sector on 'Green Key' certification, advice on a natural park initiated by Dunea and recycling projects with local private investors.
- HvH has an up-to-date area plan for tourism development (2014-2018) and is currently waiting for approval on a new tourist vision/policy submitted to the municipality of Rotterdam.
- Area Commission HvH, together with the municipality of Rotterdam communicate development plans for the area in a transparent manner (<http://www.rotterdam.nl/hoekvanholland/>). Local inhabitants are involved in the development of HvH during public consultation meetings, organized by VVV HvH and communicated through social media, flyers, posters and the local newspaper.
- The destination is strong in visitor management. VVV HvH registers tourists and visitors and categorizes them. In case visitor control is lost, the municipality deploys experts to win back control as has been shown in the past with local beach events. Also, HvH has a maximum capacity of 6000 car park spots, which is less than the beach capacity. In case the visitor capacity of HvH has been reached, matrix signs are used to warn visitors and redirect them.

#### **Issues for improvement**

- Due to the change of municipality status of Hoek van Holland, the subarea lost control over budgets and depends on decisions by the municipality of Rotterdam. This could cause uncertainty and delay on the progress of sustainability initiatives.
- The municipality of Rotterdam currently does not have a sustainability coordinator devoted to the execution of the sustainability program.

- Currently, HvH does not have a trained dedicated sustainability coordinator or team. Instead, the area committee of HvH consults the DCMR, an environmental organization consisting of thirty municipalities including Rotterdam, when advice is needed on sustainability issues.
- Even though Zuid Holland Landschap, manager of Natura 2000, made a risk-analysis concerning a comprehensive inventory of potential environmental impacts on the South Holland landscape area including HvH, no in-depth risk-analysis on potential environmental risks has been made for HvH.
- The sustainability action plan, "Programma Duurzaam 2015-2018", is currently being executed by the municipality of Rotterdam but does not include a dedicated plan for sustainable tourism development.
- No assessment on the ecologic, social and cultural effects of visitors/tourists, based on the baseline assessment, has been conducted.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY**

- Develop an in-depth risk analysis or "baseline assessment" for HvH. The relevant stakeholders involved have already pledged to complete the QualityCoast tool "Baseline Assessment" by QualityCoast.
- Include a dedicated plan on sustainable tourism development in the sustainability action plan "Programma Duurzaam 2015-2018." It is also recommended to assign a dedicated alderman (or coordinator) to execute and manage tourism in Rotterdam and subarea HvH.
- Conduct an analysis on the ecologic, cultural and social effects of visitors/tourists on the destination, based on the "Baseline Assessment."
- Develop a financial strategy for (sustainable) tourism in HvH. If not possible, a financial strategy for tourism in the municipality of Rotterdam could be developed.

## **NATURE & SCENERY**

### **CONSIDERATIONS OF WEAK AND STRONG POINTS**

#### **Strong points**

- HvH has 257 hectares (18% of total area) of protected nature. These fall under Natura 2000 protected areas. Natura 2000 areas are bound to a six year management plan, managed by Zuid Hollands Landschap, an organization that also monitors the influence of tourism on the nature and landscape in the area.
- In recent years, polders between HvH, Maassluis and the Westland have been changed into 'green open areas,' including spawning grounds for fish
- To protect fresh water sources, a cooperation plan for national park 'Hollandse Duinen', which include HvH, has been developed. The plan is managed by Dunea (waterworks).
- Natura 2000 and other agencies (e.g. Vrienden van de Zeetoren) organize tours for tourists in the nature areas of HvH in order to raise awareness of the diversity of nature the area has to offer.
- In order to check the bird population, bird counts are held on a regular basis and reported. Furthermore, HvH has a bird and hedgehog shelter to support the local animal population.

#### **Issues for improvement**

- No issues for improvement on a policy level could be found.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY**

- HvH has policies in place for nature and landscape protection and manages to execute and monitor these policies. Recommendation are to continue working with the current structure for nature and scenery protection.

## ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

### CONSIDERATIONS OF WEAK AND STRONG POINTS

#### Strong points

- Environmental risks are monitored through DCMR (the environmental services of the Rijnmond region). Complaints or possible environmental risks can be stated on this platform (<http://dcmr.nl/>). This also includes air-, sound- and light pollution, which is also registered by DCMR.
- The destination plan (i.e., gebiedsplan) of HvH regulates which activities in the area are possible, including rules concerning the environment. This plan regulates the total area of Hoek van Holland.
- Drain water and rain water is collected for horticulture purposes. In case of fertilizer mixture with the water, the water is collected and transported to a water purification plant.
- A cycling plan and traffic plan, developed by the municipality of Rotterdam are in place and designed to stimulate sustainable mobility in the HvH area.
- Public transportation for the area is promoted. In 2017-2018, the local train line will be connected to the Rotterdam metro network. The result is a direct connection between Rotterdam and the beach area of HvH. This possibly leads to a reduction of car traffic to the tourist destination.
- The municipality of Rotterdam promotes sustainable energy sources including wind- and solar energy. This includes possibilities for subsidies for property owners. Initiatives to reduce energy usage can be found on <http://www.rotterdamenergiebesparing.nl/>.
- Information for locals, tourist organizations and visitors on climate change are provided through public reports and media. The Flood Defense house (waterkeringshuis) and information center in HvH also provides information on the effects of climate change, specifically flooding. Hoogheemraadschap Delfland also informs locals on emergency situations concerning flooding and reinforcement of the dikes.

#### Issues for improvement

- Even though HvH stimulates cycling and public transport, which should reduce the CO2 footprint as the result of tourists and visitors travelling to the destination, the destination does not monitor the exact CO2 footprint or supports measures to compensate the carbon emissions as a result of tourism arrivals.
- There is no in-depth risk analysis or "baseline assessment" for HvH regarding the impact of its tourism on environment and climate. Without a baseline assessment it is difficult to react effectively and efficiently on climate risks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Include clear methods of CO2 reduction and monitoring in the traffic plan. This include a plan of action to compensate the CO2 emissions produced by tourism arrivals.
- Develop an in-depth risk analysis or “baseline assessment” about the impact of tourism in HvH on the environment and climate change. This baseline assessment could support the climate initiatives of Rijkswaterstaat and Hoogheemraadschap Delfland. See <http://rotterdamclimateinitiative.nl/nl/dossiers/klimaatadaptie/overzicht/>

## **CULTURE & TRADITION**

### **CONSIDERATIONS OF WEAK AND STRONG POINTS**

#### **Strong points**

- Cultural heritage in Hoek van Holland, including preservation, authenticity, aesthetic presentation and experience of cultural heritage (e.g. typical & traditional architecture, city design, city landscapes and archeological sites) is protected by the national heritage law. This law also protects sales, exposition and alienation of historical and archeological objects. See <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/erfgoed/inhoud/erfgoedwet/>.
- Intangible cultural heritage are preserved and protected by the historical society of Hoek van Holland (het Historisch Genootschap Hoek van Holland). This foundation preserves the history of Hoek van Holland. Also, the cluster of City Development Rotterdam conducted an investigation to inventory the intangible (immaterial) cultural heritage of Hoek van Holland in October 2016. An example of preservation of immaterial heritage of HvH is the yearly opening event of the HvH beach (<http://strandopening.hoekvanholland.eu/>).
- HvH supports initiatives to increase the respect for local traditions. One example is museum weekend, where local cultural museums are opened and promoted to tourists and visitors. This initiative is supported by the municipality.

#### **Issues for improvement**

- An issue of improvement, consistent with the 2014 report is the limited offer of local products specific to the area.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY**

- Facilitate the development, marketing and sales of local products
- Include in the in-depth risk analysis or "baseline assessment" for HvH, the monitoring of the effects of tourism on cultural heritage, landscapes and land use.

## SOCIAL WELL-BEING

### CONSIDERATIONS OF WEAK AND STRONG POINTS

#### Strong points

- The area commission of Hoek van Holland, together with occupant participation and occupant initiatives, provide possibilities for the local population to be involved in the city planning. Resident platforms for existing projects are created for every individual project. An example is the connection of the local train line with the metro system of Rotterdam (<http://hoekselijn.mrdh.nl/>).
- Locals are informed on a regular basis on subjects involving tourism. These include discussions on possibilities, challenges and the sustainability of developments in the field of tourism. The area commission of Hoek van Holland, together with local inhabitant participation and local inhabitant initiatives, provide these discussion possibilities for the local population.
- Companies, visitors and locals have the possibility to contribute to social- and sustainable initiatives. See <http://visitwelzijn.nl/site/nl/vrijwilligersorganisaties/>. Examples are the Boskalis Beach Clean Up and Keep it Clean day.
- HvH financially supports civil initiatives and has two business associations (Dorps/ Industrieterrein & business association Strand) to protect the interest of local companies. The HvH area commission facilitates these associations. An example is cooperation between 'Strand' and the area commission to develop overnight tourism.
- During all tourism development projects, the area commission assesses the impact on the local community. See <http://rotterdam.nl/toekomstbadplaatshoekvanholland/>. Also, beach tourism is two kilometers from the center of HvH, guaranteeing a low amount of visitors in the center.
- Health and safety is guaranteed by national laws and local initiatives, including a neighborhood watch and WhatsApp group. Of all fourteen districts in the municipality on Rotterdam, HvH has the best health and safety scores. DCMR and the municipality are responsible for monitoring health, safety and crisis emergency response.

#### Issues for improvement

- The municipality of Rotterdam supports community empowerment programs such as educational initiatives (<http://arminius.nu/>). However, no local initiatives could be found in Hoek van Holland.
- Currently, HvH or the municipality of Rotterdam do not monitor the economic effects of tourism on the local economy.

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Even though HvH informs and involves the local population in projects, overall community empowerment programs, led by the area commission of HvH, could be organized on a regular basis.

- HvH or the municipality of Rotterdam is recommended to include an action plan in their area plan on monitoring the economic effects of tourism in HvH. This monitoring plan should be executed at least once a year and should include visitor expenses, revenue per room per accommodation, employment and investment data.



## BUSINESS & HOSPITALITY

### CONSIDERATIONS OF WEAK AND STRONG POINTS

#### Strong points:

- The local VVV promotes sustainability standards through <http://hoekvanholland.nl/>. Promotion includes QualityCoast, the Blue Flag and Nederland Schoon. Also, Landal Greenparcs, established in HvH, has a Green Key certificate. Promotion of these eco-labels is supported by the VVV and area commission. Companies with these eco-labels are represented on the website.
- Beach entrepreneurs in Hoek van Holland are supported by Roteb (energy company Rotterdam) to separate solid waste. See <http://www.rotterdam.nl/afval>. Currently, the municipality is planning to place extra underground containers in the beach area of Hoek van Holland.
- Companies are encouraged to monitor energy consumption and CO2 emissions as has been stated in the sustainability program (2015-2018) by the municipality of Rotterdam.
- Since eight years, HvH has a plan and strategy for tourist product development, which can be found in the area plan (Gebiedsplan HvH).
- The municipality of Rotterdam and Holland Landschap placed information panels to inform visitors about sensitive sites. These panels can be found in the Van Dixhoorn triangle and are in Dutch. Also, HvH has a dog policy which includes clean-up duty.
- Hoek van Holland is one of the more accessible beaches in the Netherlands for visitors with a handicap. The accessibility includes free to use wheelchairs, toilets for the disabled and an access road along the whole beach for wheelchairs. These facilities are available every year from the first of April till the first of October, seven days a week between 9.00 am till 21.00 pm. Also, museums are accessible for disabled people and the local VVV provides information on wheelchair routes.
- The program 'Sustainability' (Programma Duurzaam 2015-2018) by the municipality of Rotterdam offers a plan of action to prepare companies for the Green Key certificate. A few companies within the HvH area are already Green Key certified.

#### Issues for improvement

- Currently, Hoek van Holland has no initiatives to reduce water usage among (tourism & recreation) companies, only a common policy.
- Information panels to inform and warn visitors about sensitive sites, nature and environment, culture and social subjects including the role of the tourist are only in Dutch.
- Currently, Hoek van Holland does not measure visitor satisfaction. Only local entrepreneurs measure it with social media and review websites.

- Since HvH does not measure visitor satisfaction, no data on sustainability from a visitor perspective could be collected.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY**

- Suggested is that the VVV or the area commission starts an initiative to reduce water usage among companies. Information on this can be provided directly to HvH's business associations or an information evening can be planned.
- Information panels to inform visitors about sensitive sites, nature and environment, culture and social subjects including the role of the tourist should include German and English as languages.
- Visitor satisfaction should be measured once or twice a year. This could be executed by the local VVV in the form of a survey. Another option would be to cooperate with an educational institution in conducting a visitor satisfaction analysis. An example organization is the University of applied sciences InHolland. This institute facilitates a tourism course program. Also, local entrepreneurs could be stimulated to distribute this survey among guests. This survey should include sustainability measures (e.g. beach cleanliness, nature experience etc.)