

QualityCoast Award 2015 Jury Report

Saba

Dutch Caribbean, the Netherlands



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Assessment made in the framework of
the Dutch Green Deal for Sustainable Tourism

by
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Period of Local Assessment: April 2015
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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), 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.

With 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 Application Form.

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 the QualityCoast Award Application Form as well.

QualityCoast certifies tourism sustainability policy

We offer reliable and transparent international Award programmes 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 (<http://www.qualitycoast.info/alldestinations.htm>). Ranking lists are topped by the QualityCoast Policy Award winners that 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 organisations 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-The Netherlands, 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:

- ❖ Has a good overall policy performance in sustainable tourism, mainly according to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria, according to our Standard (<http://qualitycoast.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/qualitycoast-standard-2013.pdf>);
- ❖ Offers a sufficient touristic quality to visitors (mainly measured through the BasiQ indicator set);
- ❖ Provides transparent information to residents and visitors (partly through our communication campaigns);
- ❖ Planning for improvement (according to the Recommendations of the International Award Jury).

The Award Standard is publicly available in www.qualitycoast.info.

The Award programme is considering policy and performance criteria representing five different categories:

- ❖ Nature
- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Local Identity & Cultural Heritage
- ❖ Host Community & Safety
- ❖ Tourism & Business.

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 2015 Policy Award criteria on the page 8.

Definitions of the criteria and a complete list of indicators can be found in the QualityCoast Application Form 2015-'16.

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 Application Form. For many of the policy related indicators the applicant is invited to make a self-assessment by giving the destination a rate from 1 to 5 ("1" meaning absence of any relevant policy for the

indicator, and "5" meaning full availability of policy concerned); and in the case of a rate of 4 or 5 to clarify the rate or give examples. For the GSTC-D indicators even in the case of self-assessment 1, 2 or 3, a clarification of the main obstacles for improvements is requested (not mandatory). It is useful to provide such clarification for the assessment team, but it is also useful for the annual improvement of the criteria. The Application Form lists 88 Core indicators, and 127 optional ("Your Choice") indicators.

Core indicators: in principle all Core indicators need to be taken into consideration. However, destinations can ignore up to 25% of the GSTC-D indicators per criterion, if these are less relevant to them, indicating why they are less relevant. However, destinations are advised only to ignore GSTC-D indicators in case of low performance.

Your Choice indicators: applicants can choose on which of the Your Choice indicators they will provide information, with a minimum of one per criterion. This means that applicants will provide information on an additional 20 indicators only.

All information provided through the Application Form (including the self-assessment rates) is evaluated and assessed by the QC Secretariat. The Secretariat involves (or hires the services of) a local expert, as a 3rd 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.

The Secretariat and the Jury assign scores to all indicators, ranging from 1 to 5; "1" meaning absence of any quality (or no information provided for an indicator); and "5" indicating excellence for an indicator.

The score per criterion is based on the scores and weight factors of its indicators.

The average scores of all 20 criteria will then be calculated. This will be the final score. Applicants scoring '1' in two or more of the 20 criteria will not be eligible for the QualityCoast or QualityDestination Award, regardless the scores in the other criteria.

First time applicants with an average score no less than 5.7 (score threshold) will be granted an Award. Destinations applying for the 2nd time need score 5.8, for the 3rd time 5.9 and for the 4th time 6.0 (minimum).

The Jury will issue a report with a complete list of criteria scores and with suggestions for further improvement.

Some of the indicators measure the quality of policies; others measure the performance (policy implementation) or the visible sustainability status. This is why the QC team is able to produce indexes for sustainability policy and for sustainability status.

For successful applicants the Jury report as well as the above-mentioned indexes will be published.

QualityCoast Award levels

If the Award score threshold is met, the Jury will also check whether the average scores of the individual categories (Nature, Environment, Identity, Tourism & Business and Host Community & Safety) reach a minimum of 8.0 ("excellence").

The following Award levels will be considered:

- Bronze, in case of excellence in one of the five categories;
- Silver, in case of excellence in two of the five categories;
- Gold, in case of excellence in three [but then no other category should be below 5.0] or four categories;
- Platinum, in case of excellence in all five categories.

Successful applicants become QualityCoast Destinations

Applicants who meet the score threshold are invited to the next tourism fair (ITB Berlin, Vakantiebeurs Utrecht, WTM London etc) or a National or Local Award Ceremony, 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 Policy Award 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.

It is also important for applicants to realise that the QualityCoast Team 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 criteria can change compared to two years ago even when the situation hasn't changed.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT & COMMENTS

Comparability with the result from two years ago (for 2nd or 3rd time applicants)

The scores of this year's assessment are not fully comparable with the score of two years ago, because the QualityCoast programme had to adopt many new criteria from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). This was necessary to maintain the support and recognition by large tour operators, which will only help promote certifications and awards that are GSTC compliant.

Conclusion

The QualityCoast Jury confirms that there is sufficient evidence to approved the QualityCoast Award 2015, and congratulates the applicant with the result.

This QualityCoast Award is recognition for the high level of tourism quality and sustainability, in particular in terms of nature and landscape, environment, local identity and cultural heritage.

QualityCoast Award: validity and promotion

The validity of this QualityCoast Award is two years (24 months). 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 sustainable 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:

QualityCoast Committee

The Jury recommends to establish a local QualityCoast Committee on order to provide a think-tank and discussion platform for sustainable tourism on the implementation of the QualityCoast Jury Recommendations. A local QualityCoast 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.

SCORES

	Overall (max. 10)	Sustainability Policy (max. 10)	Visible Sustainability (max. 10)
NATURE	8.6	8.0	9.5
1. NATURE & CONSERVATION	9.5	10.0	9.4
2. ACCESS, INFORMATION & EDUCATION	8.8	8.7	9.3
3. GREEN POLICIES	7.2	7.2	--
4. OPEN LANDSCAPES	9.8	10.0	9.8
ENVIRONMENT	6.8	6.3	8.3
5. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	6.9	6.0	9.0
6. BLUE FLAGS & BEACHES	9.0	--	9.0
7. WATER MANAGEMENT	5.5	5.9	3.0
8. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY	5.0	6.7	5.0
9. WASTE & RECYCLING	7.8	7.8	8.0
10. ENERGY & CLIMATE MITIGATION	4.4	4.4	4.0
11. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION	6.8	4.0	9.5
IDENTITY & CULTURE	8.4	7.8	8.9
12. CULTURAL HERITAGE	8.3	8.4	8.0
13. TERRITORY & TRADITION	7.5	6.0	9.2
14. LOCAL IDENTITY	9.5	--	9.5
TOURISM & BUSINESS	6.7	6.5	8.0
15. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	6.5	6.3	9.0
16. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT	7.0	7.2	4.0
17. HOSPITALITY & SATISFACTION	6.4	5.0	9.1
HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY	7.8	7.5	9.0
18. FREEDOM & JUSTICE	8.0	8.0	8.0
19. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	7.5	7.0	9.0
20. HEALTH & SAFETY	7.5	6.8	9.0
FINAL POINTS & SCORE 2015	7.6	7.1	8.9
Number of categories score 8 or more	2		
QualityCoast Award type	SILVER		

NATURE

Considerations of weak and strong points

Strong points:

- The quality of the natural tourism product above and below the surface is outstanding. With seven different ecosystems the diversity in flora and fauna is enormous. The scenic value of the open landscape is unique.
- The reef and ecosystem of Saba have not been subject to much human impact and degradation as it has been protected since 1987. Saba National Marine Park (SNMP) was established before diving tourism started and has therefore ensured quality for commercial as well as educational, recreational and scientific purposes. 25 years of conservation has kept the ecosystem fairly well intact and the underwater world pristine with a large variety of fish.
- The work and dedication of the Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF, management of the Saba National Park and Marine Park) is strong. The SCF works with various organizations and stakeholder groups for a variety of topics (e.g. outreach, cetacean monitoring). These organizations include local, regional, and international organizations. This includes 28 stakeholder groups which are informally coordinated and 13 of which are fully coordinated. SCF also coordinates well with other Dutch Caribbean sites of which all benefit (e.g. lessons in lionfish, ecosystem tread).
- Availability of interpretive information and environmental guidelines for visitor behaviour at natural and cultural sites and online.

Issues for improvement:

- Biophysical monitoring of the Saba National Marine Park and National Park is not done on a regular and consistent basis. Projects and research programs sporadically take place like shark monitoring and lobster by-catch studies. Consistent monitoring is vital to assess progress towards management objectives and a sustainable Saba. SCF developed a management plan in 1999. It needs updating to comply to current management activities. Zoning is outdated and has become inadequate with the current situation to protect biodiversity. Staff limitations to cover core activities for both terrestrial and marine environments make it difficult to take care of it all and also carry out important studies for a sustainable Saba.
- Sustainable financing. Current funding can only maintain essential administration but not management and monitoring activities. At this stage funding for site management comes mainly from Park fees, "Friends of the Saba Conservation Foundation", and merchandise.
- Regulations and standards for controlling harvesting or capture, display, sale, of plants and animals could be improved. For example still endangered fish like grouper is caught and sold at restaurants (despite efforts from SCF to ban this). Also bycatch is an issue that is not well monitored and clear. Though Saba is taking care of invasive species like the Lionfish, cats and rats, there is no system in place for controlling incoming flights, boats and cargo on invasive species. With cargo coming from Japan, USA, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico it is a major risk that should be addressed better. A species that doesn't belong here could be disastrous for the whole region.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Better monitor the environmental impact of tourism, fishing (including catch data), conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.
- Take a more systemized approach by implementing a management system to monitor impacts and to protect ecosystems, sensitive environments, and species
- Re-assess fishing practices, looking at the methods, seasons, fish size, type and bycatch.
- Re-assess boundaries of the marine reserve, to understand ecological and economic value. Last in-depth assessment is outdated. SCF developed a management plan in 1999, with the input from local stakeholders. It needs updating to comply to current management standards.

ENVIRONMENT

Considerations of weak and strong points

Strong points:

- Clean air, little traffic and noise, little pollution. With the windward revival project (carpark for 53 cars and 7 motors) the current traffic congestion could be solved.
- Saba's waste recycling efforts. The Saba waste recycling program has been implemented named 'Recycle for Saba'; this household waste separation system has been put in place involving the entire community. The community is asked to separate dry recyclables and non-recyclable waste. The dry recycles (glass, paper, plastic, batteries, cans and cardboards) are accordingly separated and processed for recycling at the harbour. This program is very new (2015) and the community still has to get used to the new system. Saba also signed the 'Green Deal, better waste management Caribbean Netherlands' to improve its waste management and increase recycling with expert help from the Netherlands. Waste such as building rubble and soil is being deposited in guts throughout the island. Remaining waste is sorted and stored (steel, concrete). Batteries are stored separately. Solid waste landfill is located at the harbour.
- Educational efforts to increase awareness on the importance of the environment. The SCF has education of school children of the importance of the marine park as a priority. They educate businesses not to put endangered fish on the menu. The Sea & Learn program initiated by Saba dive is very unique initiative to enhance environmental awareness amongst visitors and locals.
- Saba's High volcanic landscape with very few coastal settlements, make Saba resilient to storm surges and hurricanes.

Issues for improvement:

- There is no system in place that identifies environmental risks in the context of destination sustainability. Lack of system to protect sensitive environment and local resources from the impact of tourism. As tourism is fairly small so far it did not have great impact. With rising tourism number this could change if not managed properly.
- Neither a vulnerability study nor a climate change adaptation strategy exist. There appears to be little awareness associated with climate change.
- The island is fully dependent on fossil fuels. There is little to no use of renewable energy. Saba could be more pedestrian friendly, by having less (of more environmentally friendly) cars and by enforcing driving speed. Also in terms of energy saving more can be done.
- A strategy to deal with the high costs (and amount of CO2 per visitor) to reach the destination would be useful.
- Limited infrastructure for yachts (few reliable anchorages/moorings, unprotected, noise from generator, ease of clearance procedure).
- Menus and food. Though Saba Conservation Foundation makes an effort to educate restaurants and visitors about responsible fish choices, endangered fish is still on menus (for example grouper). Awareness amongst fisherman can be improved. In terms of fresh food more could be produced locally and less imported. The supermarket sells items from every continent that has travelled thousands of miles to reach Saba. To a certain extent import is of course necessary but this could be better thought of will Saba really stand out in sustainability.
- The water system could be improved. It is especially an issue in times of drought. There is no centralized water supply system. Saba's topography makes this difficult. In periods of drought water becomes scarce, and water has become expensive. There is no system in place to assist enterprises to effectively treat and reuse wastewater. Back-up tanks, flush savers and plant watering systems could be improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Monitor water resources and ensure that use by tourism related enterprises is compatible with the water requirements of the local community. Enterprises are finding ways to reduce and reduce, for example water from the ice cube machine is reused for shower water. It is recommend to put a specific assistance and awareness program in place and to have more water collection capacity, in a more sustainable way.
- Reduce fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emission. We recommend developing policies and incentives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies. Saba is advised to encourage tourism-related enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, publicly report energy consumption and reduce reliance on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers). Also offering programs to offset transport emission to the destination, at destination level, could increase Saba's sustainability. It is recommended to measure and monitor the energy consumption of accommodation providers. Encourage providers to create more awareness with visitors to conserve energy. With small adaptations, especially with accommodation providers, energy can be saved. For example, no need for new towels each day, light bulbs should all be energy low. Plans exist to put street lightning along every road. It's is strongly recommend to make all these lights on solar and in line with the landscape. Although a solar panel field were in the pipeline, but the plan has been withdrawn. We recommend prioritizing this plan on the agenda. Cars could be more environmentally friendly. Saba could for example have (semi) electrical car policy zero-emission vehicles and put heavy tax on fuel and cars. Also there should be a cap on the number of cars on the island to prevent future congestion. St. Maarten is an example of how it shouldn't be. Saba imports unnecessary goods and products from far distances which we recommend to assess and improve. Attracting day trip tourists (from mainly St. Maarten) from cruise tourism, adds up a lot to the fossil fuel use per visitor. A program could be put in place to offset CO2 emissions, perhaps in a creative and interactive way where visitors learn about the impact of this. Tourist flights can be offset by mandating tourism providers, tour operators and hotels are fiscally responsible for the potential carbon emissions of transport to Saba. Carrier Winair and or the ferry companies can collaborate in this.
- Make sure that noise pollution is not going to increase. From Windwardside and Hell's gate you can hear the planes landing and taking of 5 times per day. Cars going through 'the road' create some noise. As there is not that much traffic it's not a major issue (yet).
- Improve the attractiveness and infrastructure of the harbour. Plans for a boardwalk for the harbour to improve infrastructure and appeal for cruise and yacht visitors seem to be on the table. The jury likes to emphasize recommendation on improving facilities for yachts. With St. Maarten being a yacht hub in the Caribbean the yachting industry is a low-impact niche where can be better catered for. Providing infrastructure (moorings, water taxis, information, and waste disposal facilities) could attract more low impact niche tourism of sailing. Now Saba has improved the waste disposal program this could be a good USP for yachters. Proper waste disposal is difficult to find in the Caribbean.
- Possibilities to process waste on an island remains difficult. More should be done to reduce waste. Plastic and other disposable used in stores and restaurants could be banned. Reusable water bottles can be sold with drink water tap points being provided around the island. A success example is Hawaii that just banned plastic.
- While the current staff of the SCF has adequate skills to manage the site, they are limited in numbers. Additional staff to manage the park is considered a priority. Specifically, enforcement staff and park rangers and research staff so fishery assessment and zoning plan can be carried out.
- Develop a climate change adaptation strategy. This has not been prioritized to date; a more extensive risk assessment is needed on Saba. The harbour has been analysed and assessed for risks and threats to (climate) hazards. Now this needs to be taken forward. The unexpected drought of 2015 could have been dealt better with if adaptation plans had been put in place (for example more water collection facilities). To better deal with future climate events it's important to assess Saba's vulnerability and implement adaptation options and an emergency plan where necessary.

IDENTITY & CULTURE

Considerations of weak and strong points

Strong points:

- Saba's slogan is 'Unspoiled Queen' for a reason. The Sabans are very proud of their heritage and tourism seems to have enhanced their identity by letting them realize they indeed have something to be proud of. Saba's architecture (white houses, green painting, red roofs) and Mt. Scenery, the highest peak (877 m), are distinct and contribute to Saba's unique identity.
- Intangible heritage. Besides its architecture, Saba laces are a unique product. Saba's development story is fantastic and interesting for visitors to learn. The Saba museum is a must for every visitor. Information on Saba's architecture exists. Saba has some unique dishes like goat stew and Saba lobster.
- Saba does quite well all year round because of the medical school students (VFR tourism), Carnival in July, Caribbean holidays in July-August, Sea & Learn event the whole of October, Hells gate triathlon challenge, and attracting niche markets such as diving and gay marriage.
- Tourism Information is widely available in different languages at the tourism bureau, tourist sites, hotels and websites.

Issues for improvement:

- Lack of system to rehabilitate and conserve natural and cultural sites. Saba's identity needs more protection. It's fairly easy for foreigners to settle down and start businesses so if not planned well foreign influences will reduce the local identify.
- The overall scenic and aesthetic of Saba could be an enhanced: cars on the road, garbage bins, power point, power plant, harbour look, noise of the diesel generator...
- Improve products and experiences to enhance Saba's identity. Saba lace, Saba spice, mango, bananas, lemons. Serving local food in restaurants like Saba lobster and goat stew.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Develop a system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve natural and cultural sites, including built heritage and rural and urban scenic views (historic, archaeological, religious, spiritual, wild landscapes). Incorporating elements of Saba's architecture should be mandatory for every new built building. Also it is recommended to increase the scenic of the architecture by improving the appearance of street scene, for example by hiding away the (orange) trash bins, tidy up the power points. It deducts from the beauty of the architectural landscape. Street lightning could be moderated. The harbour area which is a welcome point to Saba could be more attractive.
- Put a program in place to protect and celebrate the intangible cultural heritage of Saba. Try to get UNESCO status for the intangible heritage.
- Increase and promote locally grown food. Making certain foods mandatory and prohibit far imported goods. Promote goat stew, Saba Lobster, as well as the locally grown food like from the organic farm.
- Enhance Saba's identity by creating more awareness about it toward visitors. This could be done by developing more interactive tours, like for example walking tours focusing on the architecture and historical buildings of Saba. There's also potential to develop more diversity in the tourism attractions. Ideas could be regulated camping, zip-lining, rock-climbing, and caving. Architect walking tours.

TOURISM & BUSINESS

Considerations of weak and strong points

Strong points:

- Saba does well all year round and has therefore low seasonal pressure. Main season is Jan-April like in the rest of the Caribbean, VFR visits from medical school students (graduations are every quarter), Carnival in July, Caribbean holidays in July/august, Sea & Learn event the whole of October, Hells gate triathlon challenge, and attracting niches markets such as diving and gay marriage.
- Saba's tourism management is properly sized. There is political commitment to implement the multi-year destination plan and evidence of implementation.
- Saba destination promotion messages are well and respectfully constructed representing Saba.
- Saba has a multi-year destination plan (Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2014) that is publicly available.

Issues for improvement:

- Focus on an overall sustainable tourism strategy / action plan and including the local Business sector involvement in sustainability issues, which is limited. No accommodations or tour operators have a Travelife, Green Key or other eco label which is not essential but could greatly improve the sustainability practices of the businesses.
- There is no spatial plan. There is none for the island, which has been noted as a main challenge. It could improve coordination amongst different stakeholder group. Assessments should be done on what other types of business could enhance its tourism sector. There is no need for more restaurants or supermarkets, but still anyone is allowed to open a new restaurant. A spatial plan could allow for more diversity in the tourism product.
- There is no data on the economic value of tourism of Saba. These statistics could greatly help a proper and more focused management of Saba' (tourism) resources. A better insight in the actual importance of tourism for the economy would be helpful for obtaining funds and support for development and protection of the tourism product. Also is could help getting insight on what niches to focus.
- Insights on visitor satisfaction are lacking.
- Finding qualified staff on the island to fill enforcement positions or positions with specific skills like for example a chef, is difficult. This puts pressure on business and site management.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Improve and update the multi-year destination strategy for sustainable tourism considering environmental, economic, social, cultural heritage, quality, health, safety, and aesthetic issues, to be developed with stakeholder participation.
- Saba is advised to enter into discussion with the local business sector, and especially hotels, campings and others in the tourism sector, to see what common actions can be taken involving the public and private sector, possibly involving the public at large, in the field of:
 - Green energy: e.g. switch to green energy; or generate electricity through solar panels or collectors;
 - Low energy schemes and equipment;
 - Water saving schemes and equipment; an example is designing a towel washing policy in hotels – and make sure it's implemented;
 - Waste reduction;
 - Waste separation to enable better recycling; also by tourists.
 - Accessibility and attractions for guests with disabilities;
 - Buy or use (source) local/regional, sustainable, and/or fair trade goods and services.
- Especially for the first two, green energy and energy conservation, it is recommended to prepare a common action involving government, business sector and residents, which has advantages in cost efficiency, effectiveness and publicity.
- Though a multi stakeholder committee exists, holding occasional meetings, a more coordinated and systematic approach towards a sustainable Saba is needed. An effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism with involvement by the private sector and public sector is recommended, with defined responsibilities for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural heritage issues.
- Regular monitoring and reporting (annually) of direct and indirect contributions of tourism.
- Collection and public reporting of data on visitor satisfaction.
- Strengthen Saba's brand image of pure, green, and safe (a good example is PURE New Zealand).
- Regulate business licenses for types of tourism providers (less restaurants, supermarkets, more nature or culture based activity providers), and making it easier for already existing businesses to get staff so they can develop their business.

HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY

Considerations of weak and strong points

Strong points:

- Saba is very safe.
- There is no structural unemployment and there are job opportunities all year round.
- Saba has programs for enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute donations to community and biodiversity conservation initiatives with for example the snorkel club, clean-ups, hikes, Sea & Learn program, eco immersions, and by passing on nature work to the next generation. Fishermen are involved in decision making process of the Marine Park.
- In 2014 the Saba Development plan that focuses on improving Saba in all policy areas (tourism, environment, waste management, social, infrastructure, water, and vulnerability).
- Since Saba has become a special municipality of the Netherlands healthcare and education has improved.
- Power lines have been put under the ground, which is nicer for the scenic value and safer in the event of a hurricane/storm.

Issues for improvement:

- Lack of skilled and qualified staff.
- Stakeholder collaboration and communication. There is high support from some stakeholders, mainly those who are expatriates living in Saba. However, local support is low as it is perceived that local stakeholders are too busy looking for opportunities to support their livelihoods rather than conservation. There is currently little stakeholder involvement in the Marine Park management other than board representation and dive operators who provide support for enforcement of the sites. There is an effort to have more meetings with fishermen and get them involved in management discussions.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Regularly monitor to what extent visitors are satisfied with their experience in the destination as a whole, and to what extent they are aware of sustainability efforts in the destination. This could perhaps be done together with or through tourist accommodations.
- Monitor residents' aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with tourism, to be regularly recorded and publicly reported. Numerous stakeholders expressed that they would like to be involved more in the decision making process.
- Strengthen collaboration with private and public sector, increase communication so everyone can have their say in a sustainable future for Saba and accordingly act together.