

QualityCoast Award 2016 Jury Report

Bonaire
Dutch Caribbean



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Final Version

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

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

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International QualityCoast Jury

Jury President: Prof F. Taveira Pinto (Portugal)
Vice President: Dr Anton Micallef (Malta)

Jury & Assessment Team members

International:

Juan Pablo Pérez Gómez (Spain)
José Carlos Ferreira (Portugal)
Margarida Nunes (Portugal)
Xenia Loizidou (Cyprus)
Menko Wiersema (Netherlands)
Suzanne van der Veecken (Netherlands)
Luz Paramio Martin (Portugal)

Leiden, the Netherlands:

Albert Salman
Hugo de Jong

Signature on behalf of the QualityCoast Jury



Albert Salman, Secretary, International QualityCoast Jury

Contact details:

Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)
c/o QualityCoast Team
P.O. Box 11232
NL-2301 EE Leiden, The Netherlands
www.eucc.net, www.qualitycoast.net
E-mail: secretariat@qualitycoast.info

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.

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 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 (). 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 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-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.

The Award programme considers 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 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 standard¹, 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 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.

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.

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).

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

The indicator values are scaled (linear or non-linear) 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 score² (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.

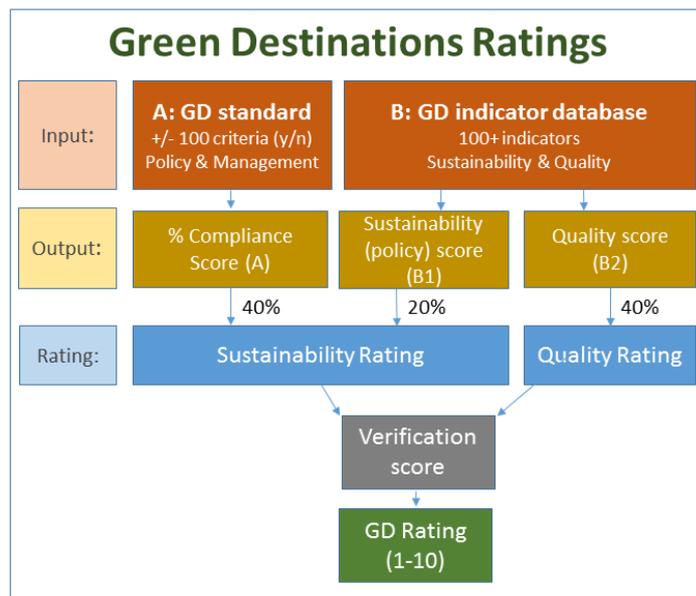


Figure 1 Green Destinations / QualityCoast Ratings

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.

² 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 Award 2016, and congratulates Bonaire with this result.

This QualityCoast Award is a recognition for the high level of tourism quality and sustainability, in particular in terms of nature and landscape and social well-being.

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.

SCORE CARD BONAIRE

| | Overall (max. 10) | Sustainability Policy (max. 10) | Visible Sustainability (max. 10) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| NATURE | 8.1 | 8.0 | 8.2 |
| 1. NATURE & CONSERVATION | 6.9 | 6.0 | 7.3 |
| 2. ACCESS, INFORMATION & EDUCATION | 7.7 | 7.6 | 8.0 |
| 3. GREEN POLICIES | 8.4 | 8.4 | - |
| 4. OPEN LANDSCAPES | 9.7 | 10.0 | 9.5 |
| ENVIRONMENT | 6.3 | 6.0 | 7.4 |
| 5. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT | 7.8 | 7.6 | 8.5 |
| 6. BLUE FLAGS & BEACHES | 8.8 | - | 8.8 |
| 7. WATER MANAGEMENT | 7.4 | 7.6 | 6.3 |
| 8. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY | 3.6 | 3.3 | 4.0 |
| 9. WASTE & RECYCLING | 5.3 | 5.9 | 3.0 |
| 10. ENERGY & CLIMATE MITIGATION | 6.4 | 6.0 | 8.0 |
| 11. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION | 5.8 | 2.0 | 9.0 |
| IDENTITY & CULTURE | 7.8 | 7.1 | 8.3 |
| 12. CULTURAL HERITAGE | 8.0 | 6.5 | 9.8 |
| 13. TERRITORY & TRADITION | 7.0 | 8.0 | 5.5 |
| 14. LOCAL IDENTITY | 8.1 | - | 8.1 |
| TOURISM & BUSINESS | 6.7 | 6.8 | 6.3 |
| 15. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT | 7.5 | 7.3 | 10.0 |
| 16. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT | 6.2 | 6.8 | 3.0 |
| 17. HOSPITALITY & SATISFACTION | 5.5 | 4.3 | 9.1 |
| HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY | 8.2 | 8.0 | 9.3 |
| 18. FREEDOM & JUSTICE | 9.0 | 9.0 | - |
| 19. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION | 7.8 | 6.3 | 9.3 |
| 20. HEALTH & SAFETY | 7.8 | 7.8 | - |
| FINAL POINTS & SCORE 2016 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 7.9 |
| Number of categories score 8 or more | 2 | | |
| QualityCoast Award type | Silver | | |

DETAILED COMMENTS & OPINIONS

NATURE

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**

- Bonaire has a good track record of marine conservation with its Marine Park being the oldest in the Dutch Caribbean; and provides an abundance of opportunities to experience nature in a responsible way.
- The aquatic biodiversity and abundance is of high levels; invasive species such as Lion Fish are very actively addressed via the Lion Fish Hunting Programme in collaboration with Dive operators
- Endangered species such as sea turtles and Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot have been effectively protected after large scale campaigns that engaged the Bonaire inhabitants to change behaviour and refrain from eating sea turtles or catching / keeping parrots as pet animals.
- The marine park clearly indicates and maintains dive sites /mooring buoys and has strict rules about usage; and dive operators are required to brief their clients about responsible diving practices
- The tag system which requires visitors to buy a nature tag (10\$) for swimming, snorkelling and wind/kitesurfing; and a dive tag (25\$) for diving is quite efficient in financing the national park management and provide insight in usage of the natural resources. The allocation of the tag fee is clearly stated on the back of the receipt.
- The Willem Alexander and Maxima marine reserves restrict any access, allowing for a good tourism impact monitoring opportunity about how these areas develop compared to the areas frequented by divers
- On land, tourism is concentrated around Kralendijk, leaving the rest of the island with a rather low impact from tourism
- Strong presence of Conservation NGOs and research stations (STINAPA, STCB, CIEE etc.)
- Local awareness raising is adequate with STINAPA rangers regularly visiting schools, a Summer School Programme, and a Junior Ranger Programme

- **Issues for improvement**

- Roaming animals are impacting the terrestrial and marine environment. Even the Washington/Slagbaai National Park (parts of which are former plantations) has trouble controlling the roaming animals. This endangers the native vegetation and increases desertification and run-off of sediments and nutrients into the ocean.
- Although the Park rangers do a good job enforcing the park regulations and fee collection, a more service oriented approach would be beneficial to engage the tourists more in nature conservation issues. Rangers should be able to explain why certain activities are prohibited.
- Operator instructions – there need to be even more (better) cooperation / instruction towards the boat and dive operators regarding their responsibilities to avoid negative impacts on the marine environment
 - o Some things are going quite well:
 - Mooring only at the buoys
 - Requiring a nature tag
 - Orientation / briefing (needs review; lost strength over time)
 - o Communicate adequately the do's and don'ts to tourists
 - No feeding of any animal (fish, turtles)
 - No gloves are allowed in the park
- Snorkelers do not receive guidelines towards responsible snorkelling when purchasing their tag, and not every snorkeler gets their tag.
- Cruise ship influx is projected to grow during the turtle nesting season (May-December) – potentially affecting turtle nests if this means nesting beaches are more frequented by the cruise passengers.
- Cars still drive on some (turtle nesting) beaches

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Develop / improve guidelines for dive & snorkel operators; re-evaluate the divers' briefings (are they still consequently held by all dive schools; is the content up-to-date)
- Develop and communicate guidelines to tourists (currently the back of the dive tag receipt informs why the tag is needed and what is being done with the funds it generates, but not how tourists can contribute to conservation with their behaviour.
- Review the carrying capacity, especially of the turtle nesting beaches (Klein Bonaire) in relation to the cruise tourist influx, which is projected to grow during the turtle nesting season (May-Dec)
- On land, there is very little action to combat overgrazing by predominantly roaming goats. On Klein Bonaire there are reforestation activities – the outcome of this project could provide good input to the decision whether reforestation can be successful on the main island – to become greener, reduce average temperatures, retain water longer, suffer from less erosion and run-off and higher nature values
- The introduction of new invasive species is not actively combated; it is recommended to develop guidelines and place at airport and port signs about what should be done to prevent potentially invasive species.

ENVIRONMENT

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**

- The island is relatively free from large industries, and large scale environmental risks.
- Increasing awareness about small scale environmental risks (e.g. no batteries, oil, environmental area ("milieustraat"), recycling)
- Bonaire is a relatively clean island with little litter. Waste management by SELIBON is being improved in a number of projects, ranging from recycling to communication.
- Both recreational and drinking water are of high quality standards
- Waste water is collected and treated. Almost all tourist facilities (hotels, operators etc) are connected to the sewage system.
- Renewable energy is produced for 40% of the island's energy needs; harvesting solar energy is piloted and entrepreneurs develop their own projects (e.g. solar farm at Plaza vd Valk hotel)
- The islands' fringing reefs are an important component of the island's climate resilience; the Coral Restoration Foundation's reef rehabilitation project will increase in the long run the climate resilience.

- **Issues for improvement**

- Smaller scale environmental hazards do exist, e.g. from car companies, boat operations and illegal waste dumps
- Water:
 - o Places such as Sorobon do not have the infrastructure and facilities to handle waste water, for the amount of people currently visiting the place
 - o Some areas
- Waste & Recycling:
 - o Plastic and styrofoam is still widely used for packaging
 - o Waste separation facilities are only 2 on the island, this is too low to motivate a critical mass of the community to separate their waste and thereby reduce the landfill
 - o Residual waste is discharged into a landfill; and there are no plans for adequate waste processing (e.g. incineration plant)
 - o Illegal waste dumping and incineration is a problem.
- Low climate resilience:
 - o No policy directed towards increasing resilience (construction projects, buffer zones – e.g. salina at Harbour Village).
 - o Draught is a serious threat but efforts to combat the effects of reduced rainfall seem rather limited. Sedimentation caused by terrestrial run-off is causing stress on the corals, which form a natural buffer against high seas.
- Mobility: although the island is relatively suitable for electric driving (short distances, little, few hills), there is no policy to support electric driving, and there are no pedestrian zones.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- The small-scale environmental risks can be avoided by posing stricter environmental regulations on boat operations (for diving, water taxi), for example about engine maintenance, bilge water, anti-fouling paints.
- Develop stronger mechanisms to avoid, reduce, re-use and recycle waste, for example ban on plastic bags and cups, styrofoam food packaging etc.
- Separate collection of waste from the households and businesses would greatly stimulate waste separation.
- Renewable energy production can be brought to even higher levels.
- Green mobility can be promoted by
 - o facilitating electric driving (charging network); electric cycling

- stimulate sales of clean cars with tax benefits,
- creating pedestrian zones (e.g. Kaya Grandi – this will make the area also much more attractive.)
- Give the good example as government and TCB:
 - Use a clean modes of transport
 - Apply energy efficient street lighting, starting at tourist sites (boulevard etc)
 - Use energy efficient approaches to construction and maintenance of buildings
 - For example in the projected new airport terminal, apply all the concepts of sustainable constructions regarding e.g.
 - Cooling (design, building materials)
 - Energy (solar powered?)
 - Water usage (e.g. waterless urinoirs – see airport Curacao)
 - Waste water (connection with Kloaka system?)
 - Waste recycling and reduction of plastic waste (no plastic bags, food packaging etc)
- Study local effects of climate change and develop policy/strategy towards possible solutions such as managing the free roaming animals, let natural vegetation regenerate and/or actively work on reforestation, protect/restore salinas and manage run-off of sediments (and nutrients) towards coastal coral reefs and mangroves

IDENTITY & CULTURE

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**

- The culture of Bonaire is protected in the Culture Policy Plan.
- Monuments are protected by law (Monuments Ordinance), a foundation of Monuments Care is in charge for the management of the monument list.
- The intangible heritage is being inventorised in the frame of the UNESCO application
- The cultural landscape around Rincon is protected as and initiatives are taken to restore ancient cultural landscape types.
- Mangazina di Rei does an outstanding job, involving residents, tourists and businesses in for example the Knuk lifestyle challenge which teaches children how to grow local crops
- The island's cultural heritage is digitally archived by Mr. Boi Antoine's 'Archivo Bonairu' www.archivoboneiru.com .
- The cultural assets and attractions are well promoted via Bonaire's Tourist TV.

- **Issues for improvement**

- The coordination of cultural tourism development and is little organised
- Despite the protection, a number of monumental buildings has disappeared especially on the seaside, where they have been replaced by modern apartment blocks
- Artefacts and e.g. the indigenous paintings are poorly protected – the cave has no fence and customs at port and airport do not check for artefacts, only nature species and coral
- Traditional dance groups and events have reportedly disappeared in the last couple of years – there used to be e.g. Cibrahacha (folkloristic dance group), Cayena, Tipico Bonairiano; Bonaire nights, Caya Cicilia. Curacao is much ahead in this respect.
- The dress at some of the traditional events is slightly moving towards that of Curacao – more fancy with high heels; but Bonairian traditional Simadan is for the common people with simple clothing. ("It should not become a Carnival!")
- The Bonairian people's interest in local culture is limited, most people are not aware of the value of culture and people are not easily motivated to engage in developing cultural tourism products such as tours.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Although there are several individual initiatives to develop and promote culture and tradition as tourist asset, a more coordinating and facilitating role of the Bonaire Government (/TCB) is likely to strengthen the opportunities to develop a strong cultural tourism product on Bonaire. The island's new action plan is a good opportunity to develop a strategy and prioritise actions to create a more coherent and broadly supported (by inhabitants, government, sector and NGOs) cultural tourism products. Possible actions could include:
 - A revival of the traditional dance groups that used to perform on a more regular basis
 - Develop guidelines to ensure the authenticity of souvenirs, traditional festivities (Simadang)
 - Divers are some days not allowed to dive (e.g. before flying); organise and promote for these days the cultural attractions and products
 - For example organise evening presentations in hotels about Bonairian cultural assets and attractions (Mr Boi Antoine indicated he's eager to train presenters)
- More education (e.g. regular collaboration between schools and NGOs such as Plataforma Kultural en Fundashon Historiko Kultural Boneriano), and general awareness raising about the relevance and importance of Bonairian culture (tangible and intangible) is likely to increase the islander's interest in engaging in cultural tourism.
- Apply the Cultural Archive (Archivo Bonairu) to use in classrooms, for example organise courses for teachers, where they are trained to transfer the cultural heritage to children
- Collaborate with STINAPA to engage the public also in the cultural aspects of natural sites, such as Washington NP which is rather a cultural landscape.

TOURISM & BUSINESS

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**

- Although there is currently no strategic plan for tourism on Bonaire, a participatory planning process of strategic tourism development has been initiated. The jury looks forward to the results of this process.
- With the Green Destinations assessment, a sustainability management system has been initiated allowing Bonaire to monitor and improve on key sustainability issues
- Key stakeholders such as TCB (Destination Management); SELIBON (waste management service), BONHATA (business association), and STINAPA (National Park management) have regular contact and are represented in each other's boards, allowing easy and direct communication and collaboration
- Visitor management is quite well organised:
- STINAPA organises yearly meeting / evaluation of the cruise season's impact
- With yellow painted stones at vulnerable locations the visitors are informed where they can or cannot come (Goto Lake, Lac Bay)
- Visiting the mangroves is strictly regulated with maximum daily amount of visitors
- Kitesurfing is not allowed in Lac Bay (too much impact on the birds and can only be done at Red Slave Beach)
- With new products (Rincon, Bara di Karta) the spread of tourists towards the interior is being stimulated.
- The user fee system for the island's national parks (Nature Tag) has been recognised worldwide as a good practice of direct finance of nature conservation through tourism
- Bonaire has a strong return visit market; and has an Ambassador Programme: on their 10th - 25th return they receive ambassadorship (bronze – gold)
- Bonaire's Tourist TV, available on most cable TVs, is a clever medium to inform tourists and residents about nature, culture, sustainability issues such as nature protection, waste separation, water, electricity etc. E.g. reef clean-ups are promoted, detailed documentaries about reef restoration and cultural assets are shown. It also promotes responsible tourist behaviour: buy your tag; bring home batteries; use tap water instead of bottled water.
- BONHATA has developed guidelines for hotels and included 10 elements from the Travelife standard for hotels, such as water, irrigation, waste separation, etc. Businesses have to comply with 3 of the 10 criteria.

- **Issues for improvement**

- Although there is communication with, and involvement of stakeholders; there is no structural dialogue on tourism development and management with a complete group of stakeholders. There used to be a Bonaire Tourism Stakeholders platform, but this is not active anymore.
- Financing of Destination management through the current system of collecting room and car rental tax is not efficient.
- At some places such as Sorobon and Klein Bonaire, the amount of tourists reaches maximum levels in terms of attractiveness and safety.
- On some busy cruise days, souvenir shops reportedly close their doors because with too many customers in their shops they cannot ensure all goods are adequately paid for.
- Environmental awareness at corporate level is still very low – e.g. many keep ACs at very cold levels or with a window open; waste is not separated or reduced, etc.
- Yet, tourism businesses are not structurally, or specifically targeted to improve their environmental performance by reducing the consumption of water and energy, reducing and recycling waste, and reducing water consumption.
- Currently only 1 hotel has an international ecolabel confirming environmental performance
- Currently, visitor satisfaction is not adequately monitored, but in across BES in collaboration with CBS an exit survey is being developed.
- For disabled visitors there are special trained dive operators, however access at the airport and public spaces such as roads and sidewalks / boulevard is limited

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Establish a structural tourism stakeholder platform or feedback group, with representation of all stakeholder groups (including the Bonaire community at large), which regularly comes together to discuss issues such as (growth of) cruise tourism; kite surfing; and let this serve as input for strategic planning and decision making whilst increasing local support for these decisions
- Review carrying capacity of places such as Sorobon (windsurfing; snorkelers, swimmers) and Klein Bonaire (swimmers, snorkelers, boats) in terms of tourist safety and comfort / attractiveness. Take measures and apply regulations if necessary.
- For example, on Klein Bonaire, STINAPA rangers could be stationed not only to observe safety and comfort and regulations, but also to provide interpretation of the island and reef's natural resources.
- Thoroughly review cruise tourism cost-benefits on Bonaire, before promoting extension of the season and growth of cruise passengers in general. Take into account the perspective of residents, shop owners, dive operators and stay-over tourists: will they come back if cruise passengers have doubled?
- Tourist TV can be promoted more, (e.g. , in-flight entertainment on arriving flights; at the luggage belt when visitors are waiting for their luggage; and in the tourist office on a large screen. Also it would be beneficial to measure its impact and fine-tune the programming
- Promote sustainability standards and recognition of tourist enterprises
- Operate the exit survey in due time

HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**

- There are several initiatives to promote local producers such as the monthly Mangazina di Rei's 'Dia de Rincon'; the Cruise tourist market; and the monthly Taste of Bonaire.
- TCB is quite active providing training to for example guides; taxi drivers and security staff; although this is predominantly in the frame of the Cruise market. Industry organisations (BONHATA, Chamber of Commerce) regularly organise workshops for members about entrepreneurship; labour law, e-marketing etc.; facilitating local residents to set up own businesses.
- Tri-party dialogue between government, employers and employees has been quite successful; e.g. a minimum wage has been defined.
- Bonaire has a considerable and active NGO sector, with 137 NGOs supported by the NGO platform.
- There is adequate health and safety policy, e.g. in relation to crises and disaster management.

- **Issues for improvement**

- The share of local products on the total supply of souvenirs and products offered to tourists can be improved
- There is no structural or coordinated discussion between producers and the tourist industry about exactly what could be beneficial to produce for the tourists.
- The stay-over tourist on Bonaire is very independent. They rent their own cars, do their own island tour. This makes it hard for TCB to influence their behaviour towards responsible tourism products. The hotel front desk staff is of more importance here, but these are usually not well informed about these opportunities.
- The island's educational programmes and work force are not optimally matching the tourism labour market needs. However, there are initiatives that prove this issue is acknowledged and acted against, such as the ROA (Raad Onderwijs Arbeidsmarkt) and regular visits of the sector stakeholders to educational institutes to promote working in the tourism industry.
- Accessibility: there are a few good initiatives such as private dive operators that have been trained to serve disabled divers; and wheelchairs at some beaches. But in general accessibility of the streets and other public spaces is poor.
- Although some incidental research has been done, there is no structural measuring or monitoring of impacts from tourism towards the Bonaire community.
- Measuring and monitoring key data such as community participation in the private sector is hard because people are very reluctant to share information such as turnover.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Endeavour to measure and monitor the socio-economic impacts of tourism.
- Organise in a more structured way familiarisation trips to inland and cultural attractions, such as Bara di Karta and Rincon, for hotel front office staff and inbound tour operator staff.
- Increase the share of locally produced souvenirs in the total amount of souvenirs by:
- Thoroughly researching market potential to identify products with highest potential
- Train local producers to make the products, and sales persons to make and sell the products
- Organise, or coordinate organisation of, the production of local arts & crafts, goods and services, regional products etc. For example goat and iguana meat;
- Continue to improve the connection between educational programmes and labour market needs, as already initiated with ROA and the tourism sector.