

# QualityCoast Award 2015 Jury Report

## Pafos District

### Cyprus



May 2016

### Final Report

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



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

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QC Jury & GD Assessments

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Signature on behalf of the QualityCoast Jury



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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.

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](http://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 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.

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

### Conclusion

The QualityCoast Jury confirms that there is sufficient evidence to approve the QualityCoast Award 2016, 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.

### 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.

### 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.

## SCORE CARD PAFOS DISTRICT, CYPRUS

	Overall (max. 10)	Sustainability Policy (max. 10)	Visible Sustainability (max. 10)
<b>NATURE</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.4</b>
1. NATURE & CONSERVATION	8.4	8.5	8.4
2. ACCESS, INFORMATION & EDUCATION	8.8	8.9	8.3
3. GREEN POLICIES	8.6	8.6	-
4. OPEN LANDSCAPES	8.2	8.0	8.3
NATURE GENERAL	8.8	8.8	-
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>8.6</b>
5. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	8.7	8.6	9.0
6. WATERFRONTS & SAFE BATHING	9.4	-	9.4
7. WATER MANAGEMENT	8.7	8.6	9.3
8. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY	7.4	8.0	6.9
9. WASTE & RECYCLING	6.6	6.5	7.0
10. ENERGY & CLIMATE MITIGATION	6.0	6.0	6.0
11. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION	8.4	7.3	9.3
ENVIRONMENT GENERAL	-	-	-
<b>IDENTITY &amp; CULTURE</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.9</b>
12. CULTURAL HERITAGE	9.2	8.7	9.8
13. TERRITORY & TRADITION	7.3	7.3	7.2
14. LOCAL IDENTITY	8.8	-	8.8
IDENTITY & CULTURE GENERAL	9.3	9.3	-
<b>TOURISM &amp; BUSINESS</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.9</b>
15. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	7.6	7.7	6.7
16. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT	7.7	7.6	8.0
17. HOSPITALITY & SATISFACTION	8.0	7.8	8.5
TOURISM & BUSINESS GENERAL	8.8	8.8	-
<b>HOST COMMUNITY &amp; SAFETY</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>
18. FREEDOM & JUSTICE	8.9	8.9	-
19. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	8.7	8.0	9.3
20. HEALTH & SAFETY	8.6	8.4	9.5
HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY GENERAL	8.3	8.3	-
<b>FINAL POINTS &amp; SCORE 2016</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Number of categories score 8 or more	4		
QualityCoast Award type	<b>GOLD</b>		

## NATURE

### Consideration of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**
  - 75% of the territory is legally protected nature area. This percentage includes Natura 2000 and UNESCO World Heritage sites.
  - National policy in accordance with local authorities promotes studies, structures and works in order to avoid landscape degradation. Coastal protection of public beaches is already constructed in Polis Bay. The coastal area of Paphos District has also been studied in order to promote suggestions for better citizen's protection and environmental management.
  - The first artificial reef has been constructed in Pafos (Moulia area), which is managed as a new habitat for marine life. This is very important for supporting the oligotrophic marine environment of Cyprus.
  
- **Weak points:**
  - Nature protection and conservation is not embedded as an important parameter when local authorities plan development strategies and policies. The usual attitude is to find ways to overcome the "problems" that are created from environmental considerations. If an area is not strictly protected by law, then it is almost certain that there will be constructions soon. This is a behavioural problem that should be treated and changed.
  
- **Issues for improvement:**
  - Awareness raising of Local Decision Makers and Stakeholders on the importance of nature as a parameter for development. Green policies: learn how to reach consensus and how to implement effectively.
  - Existing guidelines for interpretation and codes of behavior for visits to ecologically sensitive sites to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment are neither easily accessed nor specifically distribute.
  - Availability of information and interpretation of the natural surroundings as well as visitor behavior when visiting nature sensitive sites in various languages.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

The local authorities of Pafos are advised:

- To launch capacity building trainings for local decision makers and stakeholders, in order to promote the importance of nature conservation as a parameter for development and the necessity to shift into a sustainable development pattern. Cooperate with NGOs, don't launch procurements for this.
- To provide interpretative information about key natural sites, e.g. in the format of a flyer (or app) describing a walk or on info panels, preferably in various languages;
- To include recommendations or guidelines for visitor behavior to minimize the impact of visitors on these key sites.
- Green policies need definitely to be boosted and implemented.
- Proceed in implementing the existing guides (from Department of Antiquities and/or locate relevant guides in internet and do an adaptation (Don't launch dedicated projects for this).
- Proceed in pilot applications/ tourist information in the major environmental sites.
- Incorporate monitoring indicators to assess the level of awareness of visitors, involve young unemployed graduates to these campaigns.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Consideration of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**

- 100 % of bathing water points within the destination with the status "Excellent".
- Municipalities and Communities operate a special cleaning deptment for the beaches. Especially for all public beaches during high season (April-November), dedicated employees with sand cleaning equipment are cleaning the beaches twice a day. In addition, volunteers and other groups very often organise the campaigns in several areas adding to the efforts of keeping the area clean.
- Since last year, there is a connection of Pafos Airport with Larnaka Airport with regular bus services, and this is a strong improvement, that was pending for more than 15 years! A very strong point for this year's assessment.

- **Issues for improvement:**

- Transportation is a very weak point. Use of bicycle is not effectively promoted.
- Lack of system to protect sensitive environment and local resources from the impact of tourism.
- An overall climate change local strategy and awareness associated with climate change is lacking.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY**

- Identify and monitor the key environmental issues connected with the peak tourism season, to minimise negative effects of tourism on the local community on the touristic attractiveness (water shortage, sanitation, waste, litter, pollution, energy, etc.), and improve the system to adress them.
- The Municipalities/ local councils are advised to create an effective system to promote energy conservation, measure energy consumption , and reduce reliance on fossil fuel. The destination encourages tourism- related enterprises to conserve energy and use renewable energy technologies.
- Public transport is needed to be readjusted within the Pafos District.
- Promote use of bicycle (there are bicycle lanes but the use of bicycle is still very low among locals and tourists)

## IDENTITY & CULTURE

### Consideration of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**

- Pafos is the European Capital of Culture for 2017. This fact, gave an important boost to the cultural activities of the area, the creation of cultural infrastructure, the promotion of local identity. The participation of public during the preparation period (from 2014 to 2017) is very important, since Pafos incorporated the “open factory Concept”.
- Rich local history and cultural tradition.
- **Codes of behavior for visits to culturally sensitive sites.** The government of Cyprus, through the department of Antiquities is following several policies and regulations for the interpretation and codes of behavior for visits. Visits and condition of the cultural sites is closely monitored and managed.  
Rules and legislations have been created for tour operators who incorporate archaeological sites in their tour packages, for tour guides who lead people through the sites, and for site managers charged with the maintenance and protection of sites. Some of those rules are available on site, in the internet or even on noticed boards on sites.

- **Issues for improvement**

- Issues on environment and nature could be more boosted within the framework of Pafos 2017 events, by Local Authorities of Pafos, as significant part of identity and culture

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY

- Identify specific activities related with local culture and environmental conservation and promote them, such as:
  - Search for cooperation with organic farmers. Support organic products through dedicated open markets, without charging the farmers for using them and other initiatives towards the farmers. Use organic products in Municipal events (e.g. for catering).
  - Relate history, archeology and nature (e.g. within the archaeological sites, where the endemic flora is protected and conserved)
  - Marine Archaeology together with diving and marine biology to form diving destinations

## TOURISM & BUSINESS

### Consideration of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**

- There is a long hospitality tradition in the area of Pafos, so locals are spontaneously very friendly and supportive to tourists and visitors
- Most of the hotels and restaurants establishments have achieved quality certifications such as HACCP, ISO 9001, ISO 14000.
- Tourists' satisfaction, perceptions, behaviour and concerns play a major role for the tourism strategy plan implementation of Pafos region. There is a program to measure and report those results throughout frequent surveys. Surveys and measures are done by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation and Government department of Statics. In addition, the hoteliers are also providing questioners to their clients getting an important feedback. Monthly ratings from tour operators are providing good indications on satisfaction rate, perception, likes and dislikes.

- **Issues for improvement:**

- Accessibility: Infrastructure and facilities for access to the key tourist attraction sites to people with special needs are very poor in the area.
- An overall sustainable tourism strategy / action plan is lacking.
- Local Business sector involvement in sustainability issues is very limited.
- Prices in restaurants and other services (such as taxis) should be monitor and more care should be given to avoid profiteering over visitors.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY**

- Pafos Local Authorities should invest in improving the accessibility of their areas to people with problems
- Profiteering should be under control. Cooperation with tourist industry is necessary.
- To create an up-to-date, publicly available inventory of its key tourism assets and attractions including natural, historical, archaeological, religious, spiritual, and cultural sites.
- To prepare a multi-year strategy for sustainable tourism 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
- Local Authorities are advised to enter into discussion with the local business sector, especially hotels, camp sites 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;
  - Equal opportunities for men vs. women;
  - Accessibility 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 the municipality, business sector and residents, which has advantages in cost efficiency, effectiveness and publicity.
- Local Authorities are advised to monitor how many (%) tourism enterprises are involved in the above actions, apart from those having a broadly recognized eco-label (Travelife, Green Key).
- Cooperate with companies that can invest through their social corporate responsibility and have funding to implement facilities for access to the key tourist attraction sites to people with special needs.

## HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY

### Consideration of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**
  - On March 2015, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation took the initiative to create the “Tourism and Safety Stakeholder Platform”, which resulted in Action Plans that have been implemented since summer 2015. Pafos Local Authorities participate in the platform as well as the Tourism Board of the area and they strongly support all activities to improve safety
  - Pafos is a safe destination. Crime and accidents are very low.
  
- **Issues for improvement:**
  - Public transport
  - Price/ profiteering monitoring

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Local Authorities should be more strict to punish profiteering
  
- Identify and monitor the key environmental issues connected with the peak tourism season, to minimise negative effects of tourism on the local community on the touristic attractiveness (water shortage, sanitation, waste, litter, pollution, energy, etc.), and improve the system to adress them.
  
- Public transport is needed to be readjusted within the Pafos District, to provide visitors with safe, efficient and value for money transport possibility.