

Sustainable Tourism at the Rainforest Alliance:

Global Partnerships Benefit Economies and Ecosystems in Latin America

New York, NY

June 2007

Rainforest Alliance Mission

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior.



Collaborating with Industries to Achieve Conservation and Social Well-being



**Forestry and
non-timber
forest products**



Agriculture:
*Coffee, Citrus,
Bananas, Cacao,
Ferns & Flowers*

**Sustainable
Tourism**



Tourism: One of the Largest Industries

Developing countries received **292.6 million** tourists in 2000 (95% more than in 1990).

Tourism in the Americas:

- **Overall annual growth: 6%**
 - The Caribbean: 5%
 - Central America: 14%
 - South America: 13%
- Home to **104** UNESCO World Heritage sites



Sources: UNWTO, TIES

Nature Tourism



Worldwide

- In 1992, between 40% - 60% of tourists participated in nature tourism activities.
- In 2004, nature tourism grew **3 times faster** than the industry as a whole.
- Tourism to **biodiversity hotspot countries** has increased by more than **100%** between 1990 and 2000.

Nature Tourism

In the Americas

- Belize, 1999 → **87%** of tourists visit cayes and reefs
- Galapagos, 2000 → **+60,000 tourists**
- Peru, 1990-99 → **250%** increase in visits to natural areas
- Brazil, 1998 → **70%** of tourists visit national parks
- Costa Rica → **7 out of 10** tourists visit protected areas



Sources: TIES, MINAE

From Mexico to the Patagonia: Nature and Culture Based Tourism is being Promoted

- **Guatemala:** "... Soul of the Earth"
- **Belize:** "Mother Nature's Best Kept Secret"
- **Costa Rica:** "No artificial ingredients"
- **Panama:** "...the path less traveled"
- **Peru:** "Land of the Inkas"
- **Ecuador:** "Life at its purest"
- **Chile:** "Nature that moves your soul"
- **Uruguay:** "A natural country"



Tourism in Developing Countries

- Tourism is a principle foreign exchange earner for **83% of developing countries**, and the leading export for 1/3 of poorest countries.
- For the world's **40 poorest countries**, tourism is the **2nd** most important source of foreign exchange.
- Over last decade, tourism has been “the only large sector of international trade in services where poor countries have consistently posted a surplus.”



Partnerships - Donors



Belize

Costa Rica

Guatemala

Ecuador



Belize

Ecuador



Nicaragua



Ecuador

Sustainable Tourism Objectives



- 1) **Help the tourism industry protect the environment and provide sustainable livelihoods.**
- 2) **Build travelers demand for sustainable tourism and enable them to travel responsibly.**
- 3) **Facilitate the development of regional and global sustainable tourism standards, and increase credibility and market support for sustainable tourism certification.**

Belize



Ecuador



Guatemala



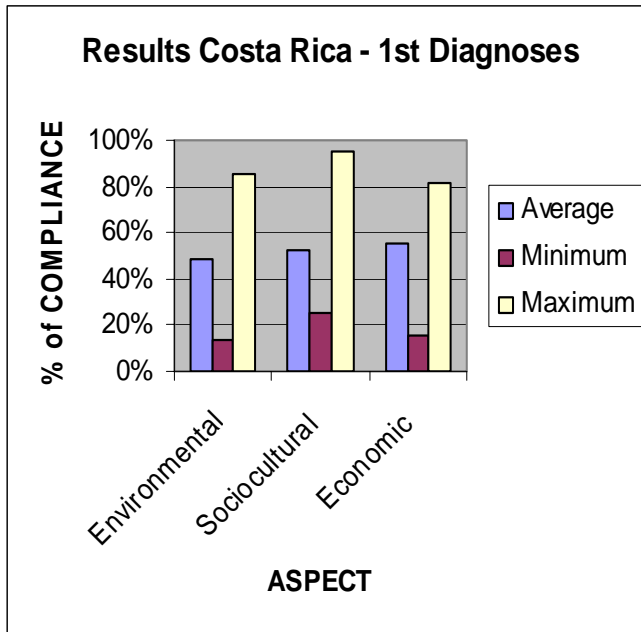
Nicaragua



Costa Rica



Results of Initial Sustainability Diagnoses - Costa Rica



- 80 businesses analyzed in 8 regions.
- On average, the businesses comply with half of the requirements to be certified.
- About 30% of these businesses comply with less than 25% of these requirements.
- 7 hotels achieved an 85%+ score.
- Businesses could benefit from training on managing water usage, monitoring water quality, protecting ecosystems, etc.



Sustainable Tourism Objectives

1) Help the tourism industry protect the environment and provide sustainable livelihoods.

- **SmartStep:** Train tourism operations in sustainable practices and help them achieve certification.
- **SmartSource:** Encourage and enable tour operators and tourism internet providers to source from sustainable operations



Partnerships - Local NGOs



SmartStep - Training

Since August 2003:

- **4,000+** introduced to best management practices through seminars.
- **1,578 entrepreneurs** trained in best management practices in **4 countries**.
- **70 trainers and advisors** on best management practices in **4 countries**.
- **16 auditors** from **7 certification programs** participated in joint audits.



SmartStep - Technical Assistance

- **150+** tourism enterprises from Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Guatemala working on best management practices and aiming at certification.
- Businesses from Nicaragua and Peru will soon join the list.



SmartSource – Greening the Supply Chain



**Outbound
Tour Operators**



Certification
Program



Suppliers



**Inbound
Tour Operators**



Partnerships with Inbound Tour Operators



Belize (2)
Costa Rica (10)
Guatemala (5)
Ecuador (7)
Nicaragua (12)

TOTAL: 36

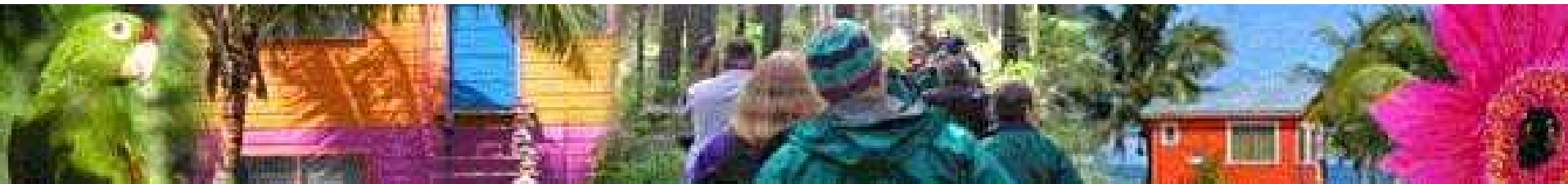


Our Partner Tour Operators in Costa Rica got Certified!



International Tourism Day, Sept. 2006

Partnerships with International Outbound Operators



SmartSource - Results

- **Reaching an estimated 420,000** travelers per year through **our 40+** partnerships with inbound and outbound tour operators.
- **320** tourism businesses that are either certified and/or in our best management practices program benefit from our marketing work.



Eco-Index Sustainable Tourism

www.eco-index.org/tourism

Statistics:

- 150% increase in visits in a 12 month period.
- 120 businesses in 14 countries.
- Over 30 articles in Central and North America.

Comments:

"Everything looks wonderful. It is an honor to be included in the Eco-Index of Sustainable Tourism. Thank you very much."

-Jack Ewing, Hacienda Baru, Costa Rica

"So far this month we have received 20 visits to our Web site from the Eco-Index, many thanks!"

-Joxan Obando, Green Hotels, Costa Rica



The screenshot shows the website's header with the title "ECO-INDEX TURISMO SOSTENIBLE" and a scenic background image. Below the header is a main article titled "Una invitación de Rainforest Alliance: disfrute una vacación divertida y también haga una diferencia." followed by introductory text. The page features several content blocks: "BÚSCUDA DE NEGOCIOS TURÍSTICOS" with a bird icon, "BOLETÍN MENSUAL" with a flower icon, "HACIENDO LA DIFERENCIA" with a plant icon, and "NOTICIAS RESERVADAS PARA TURISTAS SENSIBLES" with a butterfly icon. A sidebar on the right contains a search bar, a list of menu items, and a subscription form. The footer includes the Rainforest Alliance logo and the Eco-Index logo.

Educating Travelers – Marketing

Sustainable Tourism with TA and RA in Latin America



**Rainforest
Alliance**

ecologically and socially responsible tourism in [Latin America](#).

Ecological Adventure and Cooperation in the Tropics - In your travels with us, you've experienced some of the finest ecotourism in the world - the close contact with nature and local people only a small, environmentally sensitive lodge can provide. Recently, the Rainforest Alliance, a leading international conservation organization, has been looking to align themselves with adventure tour companies committed to

The members of Trusted Adventures have long been dedicated to these concepts in our selection of lodging and [adventure and cultural activities](#) for our trips, making the signing of a cooperative agreement between TA - the first alliance of its kind to sign such a pact - and the Rainforest Alliance a very natural way to better promote sustainable tourism throughout the world.

"We presented the project to TA and invited them to join our efforts," says Ronald Sanabria, director of Sustainable Tourism for the Rainforest Alliance. "We're convinced that this type of agreement is an excellent way to promote communication between the private sector and non-government organizations such as ourselves," Sanabria explains. "This allows us to transmit the knowledge that we have accumulated in a way that benefits tour operators like Trusted Adventures, while they provide the valuable support of continuing to help travelers plan trips using the most responsible local tourism businesses, something TA members have been doing for over 30 years."

Read more about the [Rainforest Alliance agreement](#)

Find Trips to sustainable ecotourism in [Central America](#) and [South America](#)

Annual Observatory - Featured Lodge



A Trusted
Adventures Company

[Tour Operator](#)
[Trusted Adventures, USA](#)

Educating Travelers – Marketing



Tour Operator Camino Travel
brochure, Costa Rica

Educating Travelers – Marketing



TERMAS PAPALLACTA
E C U A D O R

English | Spanish

- Quince Bienes
- Reservas
- Comidas
- Tarjetas
- Travesía Ecuador
- Reservar

Salud, recreación,
aventura
y descanso

Termas de Papallacta SPA, Resort y Centro de Convenciones, está localizado a 45 millas de Quito, capital de Ecuador en América del Sur, en un valle alto andino puerta de entrada a la selva amazónica ecuatoriana. Este Resort especializado en termalismo, ofrece a los turistas, salud, recreación, aventura y descanso en sus instalaciones: Baños termales en el balneario; diversos tratamientos en el health-SPA; alojamiento en habitaciones o cabanas del hotel; aventura en el rancho del Cañón; o la Reserva Ecológica Cayambe-Coca. Varios restaurantes complementan la oferta de servicios.

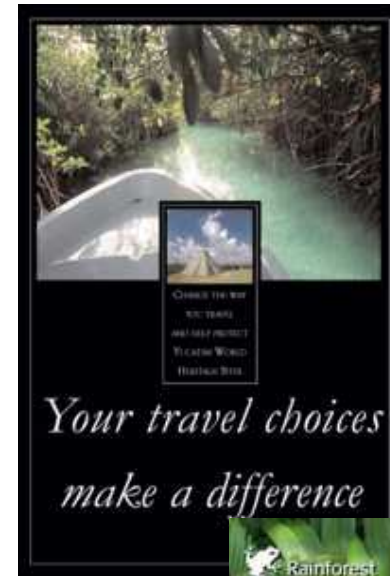
  

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[Resort and Spa](#)
[Termas de Papallacta, Ecuador](#)

Educating Travelers – Marketing

- **Increase demand** for sustainable tourism
- **Educate travelers** about how their travel choice can make a difference.



Educating Travelers – Media



Comings and Goings
By HILARY HOWARD
Published: December 3, 2006

A coup d'hôtel is set to take place today. The **Catalina Hotel and Beach Club** in **Miami** (www.catalinahotel.com) will be checking its guests out, dismantling its rooms and calling in moving trucks to transport furniture to the beach. The hotel, which has been converted into a convention center, is being replaced by a new hotel, the **Tommy Motels**, which will be converted into a private ski resort. The new hotel will be up to five people. **Bangkok** operators are planning a treatment room for the **Chao Phraya** river. **Sustainable** Rainforest Alliance is including hot spots in its list of sustainable destinations.

Budget Travel Online.
Travel Deals • Vacation Packages • Trip Planning • Expert Advice • Travel Tools

On Ecotourism
The term has become meaningless—so how can you tell which hotels are the correct shade of green?
Dan Oso
Tuesday, May 23, 2006

The basics of ecotourism are fairly easy to grasp. Businesses that cater to tourists follow special policies to protect the environment, and the local community, and educate travelers.

But considering there's no universal set of standards, and nearly 100 groups offer various "eco" certifications and memberships, doing the right thing is a bit more complicated than one would hope.

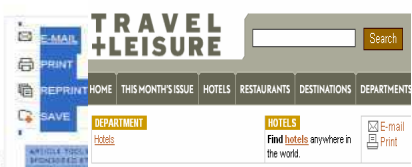
A vacationer looking to spend environmentally conscious manner might run across names such as Sustainable Travel International, Conservation International, Rainforest Alliance, The International Ecotourism Society, Green Hotels Association, and Eco-Club, as well as regional associations like Ecotourism Australia and Travel Green Wisconsin. Each has the same idea at heart, but good values can be put into action in very different ways. Ecotourism Australia awards attractions, tours, and accommodations three categories of certificates: Nature Tourism, Ecotourism, and something called Advanced Ecotourism. The Costa Rica Tourism Board tabulates the results of questionnaires and on-site visits to rate eco-lodges on a scale of 0 to 5 green leaves. The Green Hotels Association sends members a 156-page booklet with info about noise control, composting and other environmental issues, but the only real qualification to join is payment of an annual fee of \$100-\$350.

Partners
• Kayak Travel Search
• TripAdvisor Reviews
• FaceClass: Cheap Airfare

Special Ad Section
travel marketplace
CLICK HERE for vacation deals & packages

Advertisement
WIN A TREE

Adding to the confusion are operations that eschew official recognition yet stick to rigorous environmental guidelines, such as the adventure outfit Mountain Travel Sobek.



How Green is My Hotel?
Finding a legitimately green hotel can require a little legwork. Below, a primer on how to evaluate a property and a look at some of the most popular eco-certification programs

By David Proppson

More than 100 certification programs worldwide currently compete for travelers' attention. Dozens of countries have created their own certification systems, along with several American states. Other labels include those of industry groups (U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification) or government agencies (the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star). And those are only the reputable ones.

To add to the confusion, there's no guarantee that a hotel with a stamp of approval is much better than one without any. Some programs don't audit their participants, relying instead on the honor code, a practice that Jorge Rivera, a professor of strategic management and public policy at Washington, D.C.'s George Washington University, says is actually one of the most prominent methods of greenwashing. In addition, many hotels that have high environmental standards never bother to get accredited.

That means you'll have to do some homework, as well as decide what's important to you. Travelers don't care about all environmental issues equally, and most don't want to think about them at all. But traveling sustainably means wanting to know—and being willing to ask.

On Ecotourism
• Eco-Friendly Travel
• Staying at an Ecodge
• Repair the Wilderness

JUNE 2006 ISSUE
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• Secret Hotels of the French Riviera
• Testing our Cruise Tips
• Road Trip: Eastern Kansas
• Trip Coach: Japan
• 40 Best Vacations

Also within this article:
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• [Worldwide Green Hotel Certification Programs](#)



BusinessWeek.com

Press clips

- 2004 - 72
 - 2005 - 73
 - 2006 - 151
- Throughout North, Central and South America, Europe.
 - Newspapers, radio, TV, Internet and specialized publications.

Partnerships - Airlines



An Alliance For Sustainable Tourism

Left and right photos courtesy of Rainforest Alliance.

We begin this new year with good news, particularly for tourists and passengers traveling with NatureAir who are interested in contributing to the conservation of the rich biodiversity that characterizes Central America. This airline has recently consolidated its commitment to sustainable practices by signing an agreement with Rainforest Alliance, an international organization dedicated to conservation, with the goal of strengthening sustainable tourism. NatureAir will now provide to all interested parties the necessary information to choose eco-friendly lodging during their travels.

As part of the agreement, Rainforest Alliance will train NatureAir personnel, introducing them to techniques that support and uphold the best tourism practices. Based on a series of simple actions, it is hoped that these practices will enrich the relationship between the airline and local communities and reduce the negative impact that all tourist activity practices on the natural environment.

The coming together of forces will allow NatureAir's social and conservation projects to achieve greater visibility through international forums, major tourism fairs and other events in which both entities participate. NatureAir material, including its magazine, *Nature Landings*, will be distributed at Rainforest Alliance booths during these events.

Tourists can also share in these conservation efforts thanks to a catalogue created by Rainforest Alliance that provides information about certified businesses and hotels that form part of the Best Practices Program. It is hoped that having this information readily available will allow passengers to choose lodging establishments that support and maintain sustainable practices.

In search of opportunities

Created by Rainforest Alliance, the Best Practices Program's main objective is the strict sustainable tourism methods. Rainforest supports those businesses that wish to certify their status from the Certification Sustainable Tourism of the Americas. 73 participating organizations involve tourism in 25 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Rainforest Alliance's support of tourists upholding sustainability methods also marketing opportunities available to themselves. Their support serves as a catalyst for both consolidating business sustainability competitiveness between businesses.

To support these efforts, agreement and local tour operation have been reached so that they include in their price participating in the Best Practices Program. Furthermore, a virtual database, the Tourism Eco Index (www.caiicoindex.com) recently been put into use. Only hotels upholding sustainable practices are listed, making it quick and easy for any responsible lodging.

Although transporting passengers to their dream destinations remains NatureAir's primary goal, it is hoped that these agreements and commitments will provide passengers with an experience even more profound: the ability to contribute to the conservation of these beautiful locations so that they exist for generations to come.

Nature Air Makes Good on its Name

How can tourism be environmentally friendly if just one international flight contributes more to global warming than the daily activities of two middle-class people during an entire year?

Aex Khajavi, president of the regional airline Nature Air, believes there is a solution to that dilemma. His company, which operates in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama, is the world's first and only airline to completely compensate for its carbon emissions.

In 2005, Nature Air compensated for the emission of 4,650 tons of carbon, the equivalent of the 470,000 gallons of fuel it used in 2004. Through Costa Rica's Ministry of the Environment and Energy's National Financing Fund, the company sponsored the conservation of 494 acres (200 hectares) of rainforest in the Osa Peninsula, on the country's southern Pacific Coast.

According to Khajavi, Nature Air wants to be a catalyst for change throughout the industry.



Nature Air™

Public/Private Partnerships



WHY DO WE ALWAYS PACK A CAMERA?

We love in search of new experiences. It's only nature we want to record them, to share in our memories that transcend points and places from in our mind forever.

We have to answer these moments, yet by doing so, we threaten to undermine the very spaces we seek. That's the paradox of enlightened travel in Ecuador: we recognize this, and are taking steps to preserve our natural beauty.

That's why we've partnered with the Rainforest Alliance. Together we are working to protect Ecuador's natural resources and cultures while providing the adventure traveler with a journey that will remain for a lifetime.

Our country is blessed with an unmatched diversity of nature, culture and scenery. From the legendary biodiversity of the Galapagos, to the historic facilities of the Coast, to the busy valleys of the Andes and the indigenous peoples and adventures of the Amazon rainforest, Ecuador offers an infinite variety of exciting authentic experiences.

We're proud to have joined with the Rainforest Alliance to share and preserve our natural treasures with visitors who have through the spirit with their eyes, ears, and minds wide open. If this is why you travel, we welcome you to Ecuador.

www.ecuador.com



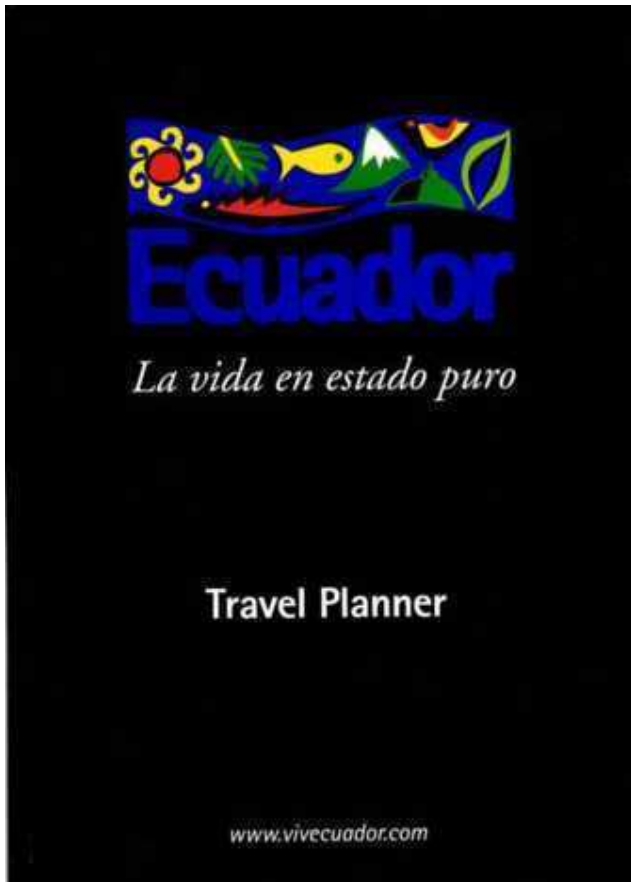
Ecuador

Fondo Mixto de Promoción Turística

Nicaragua

INTUR (Nat'l Tourism Institute)

Partnership – Official Marketing Campaign



Ecoturismo y turismo rural

El turismo ecuatoriano responde al reto de la sostenibilidad

Las redes de la sostenibilidad se extienden cada día más, para fortuna del turismo y la naturaleza; y, en los últimos dos años un importante grupo de empresas turísticas ecuatorianas se han sumado a ellas. La decisión les abrió la posibilidad de recibir asistencia en el manejo de operaciones social y ambiental-mente responsables, como parte del Programa de Buenas Prácticas y Certificación Turística Sostenible.

El apoyo para la implementación de las buenas prácticas lo reciben de la organización conserva-cionista internacional Rainforest Alliance (Alianza para Bosques), gracias al respaldo financiero del Fondo Multilateral de Inversiones del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, la Fundación Overbrook, Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional, el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial/Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente, la Fundación Citigroup y la Asociación de Tour Operadores Internacionales de Galápagos.

Definitivamente, la práctica de un turismo sin planificación puede ser contraproducente tanto para el ambiente como para las comunidades en que se da la actividad. Por ello, el objetivo es que las empresas mejoren su competitividad a través de su participación en un programa de buenas prácticas y en sistemas de certificación de turismo sostenible internacionalmente reconocidos.

Para la ejecución del trabajo en Ecuador, Rainforest Alliance cuenta con la colaboración de sus dos socios locales: la Asociación Ecuatoriana de Ecoturismo, Conservación y Desarrollo – y su programa certificador SmartVoyager – y la oficina local de Conservación Internacional.

Metodología

Se inicia el proceso impartiendo talleres y seminarios de capacitación sobre buenas prácticas de manejo, certificación, gestión empresarial, mercadeo, seguimiento y evaluación. Para garantizar la calidad del entrenamiento y dar la opción de profundizarlo, se cuenta con la Guía de Buenas Prácticas de Manejo, un manual que nos introduce al tema, explicando los beneficios que aporta el aplicar este tipo de acciones y cómo hacerlo. La versión electrónica del manual, en español e inglés, está disponible, sin costo en: www.rainforest-alliance.org/toolkit

Programa de Buenas Prácticas de Rainforest Alliance



Tierra del Volcán, conjunto de tres haciendas que operan en la zona del Cotacachi, el volcán activo más alto del mundo. Está comprometido con la conservación del ambiente y la cultura local, a través de procesos sostenibles.
www.tierradelvolcan.com

Hacienda Mantales ubicada a 21 km de Baños, entre los Parques Nacionales Sangay y Llanganates; la actividad turística ha permitido la protección de un importante remanente de bosque andino de transición, rico en biodiversidad.
www.haciendamantales.com



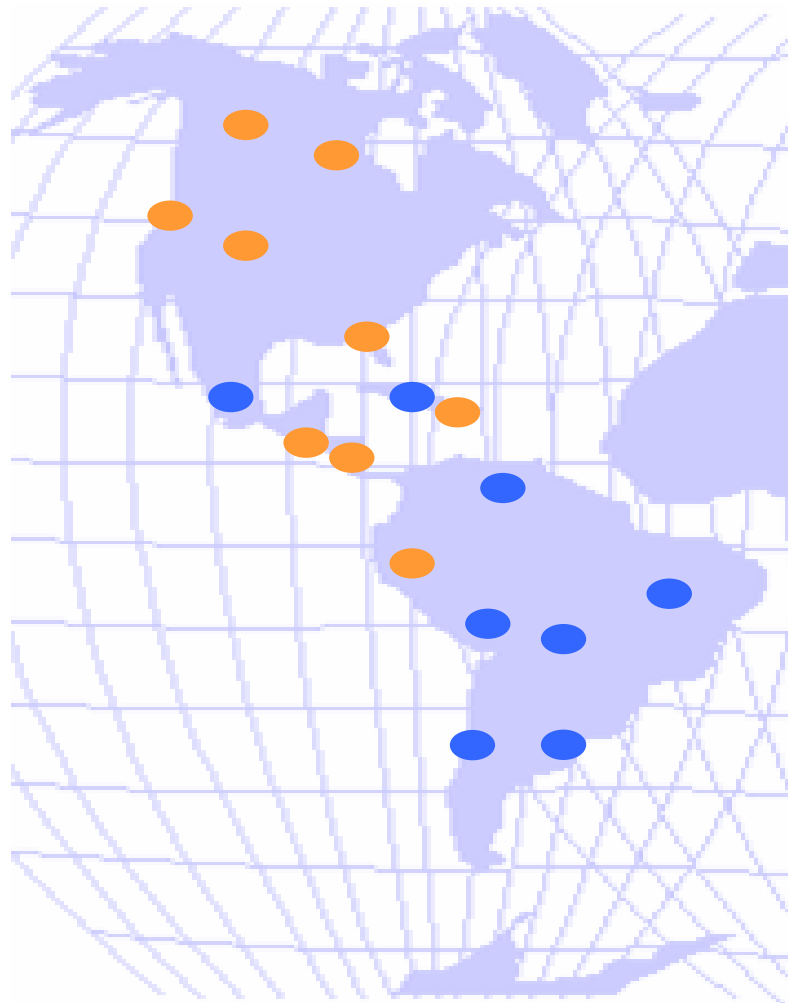
www.purecuador.com

Supporting Standards and Certification

Facilitate the development of regional and global sustainable tourism standards, and increase credibility and market support for sustainable tourism certification.

- Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas
- Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council

Certification Programs in the Americas



- Consolidated
- In development

Network's Baseline Criteria

- Compliance with legislation
- Resource consumption (water, energy)
- Waste disposal / pollution
- Biodiversity conservation
- "Green" and local purchasing
- Community development
- Respect local cultures
- Working conditions
- Environmental education
- Responsible marketing



Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC)

Mission

The core mission of the STSC is to enhance the sustainability of tourism operations by ensuring better environmental and social performance, and improved economic benefits to local communities and to certified businesses worldwide.



5 Year Targets

Ensure that natural resource-based products and services are sustainably managed:

- Work in at least **50 tourism destinations** covering more than 60 million acres of land and marine areas are protected against unsustainable tourism.
- **5% of tourism enterprises** in target sites benefiting directly or indirectly.
- At least **1,000 businesses** receiving training and/or assistance on best management practices.
- **5% of the tourism businesses** in our sustainable tourism program applying for third-party certification.

5 Year Targets

Educate the consumer by providing information on sustainable tourism choices to increase demand

- Recruit 100 inbound tour operators representing, an estimated 1 million travelers and approximately 2,000 suppliers of tourism services to develop a sustainable supply chain
- 50% min. of tour operators' suppliers have adopted sustainable tourism practices.
- Partner with at least 50 outbound tour operators.
- Establish a minimum of 20 high visibility marketing alliances.
- Work with Internet travel services to recommend sustainable operations and educate travelers.

5 Year Targets

Mainstream sustainability into the global market system:

- Strengthen sustainable tourism certification programs in the Americas and support communication and collaboration among programs worldwide to increase transparency and reciprocity
- International sustainable tourism standards are developed through the STSC and certification programs in the Americas are prepared for STSC accreditation.
- Influence policy makers in at least 12 national or regional agencies to include sustainable tourism principles in policy development.
- Establish alliances or execute projects with at least 6 multilateral and international agencies that support tourism efforts through financing or policy (e.g. UNWTO, WB, CBD, IDB, UNEP, UNDP).

Promoting Sustainable Tourism: Best Management Practices and Certification

- Tells the project's story- justification, history and logic behind it.
- Documents experiences.
- Describes in detail the components, activities, products and results.
- Shares lessons learned.
- Highlights points of success and challenges.
- Shows the effect of regional tourism efforts.
- Recommends next steps.





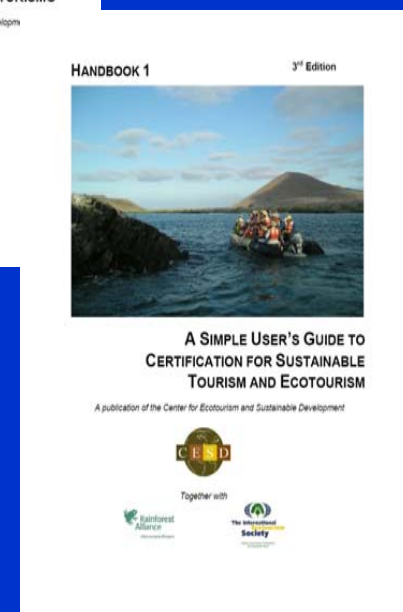
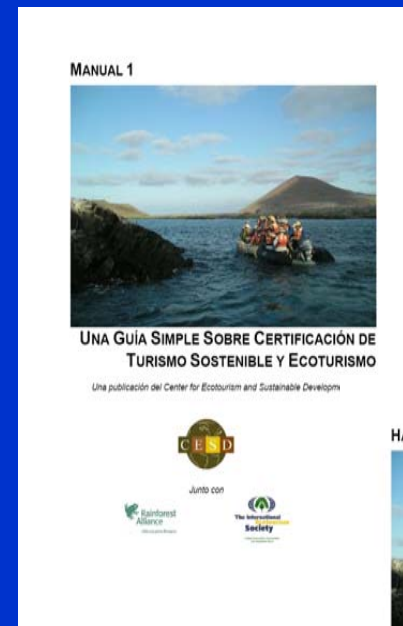
Research & Reports



- How to successfully market certified businesses and certification programs?
- How to make certification applicable to SMEs and indigenous ecotourism businesses?
- What are the mechanisms for funding certification programs?
- What monitoring and evaluation (M&E) criteria should be used to measure certified accommodations?

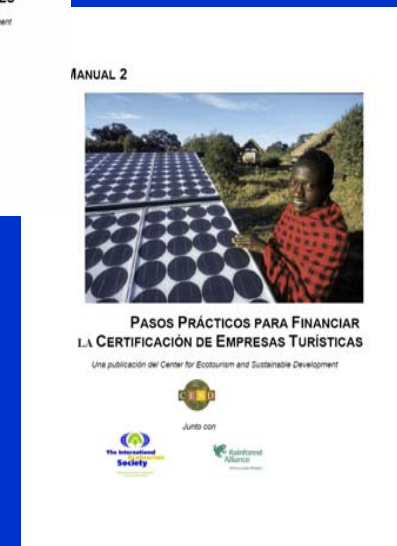
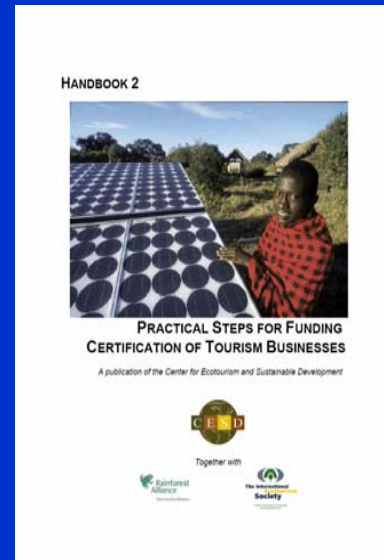
#1 User's Guide to Certification

- What is certification?
- Why is certification important?
- How to choose an appropriate certification program?
- How to get certified?
- Where to find certification programs



#2 Funding Certification of Businesses

- What type of funding is needed?
- Funding vehicles
Grants, loans, in-kind, PES, conservation finance
- Funding players
Foundations, governments, NGOs, businesses, development agencies
- Steps to obtaining funds



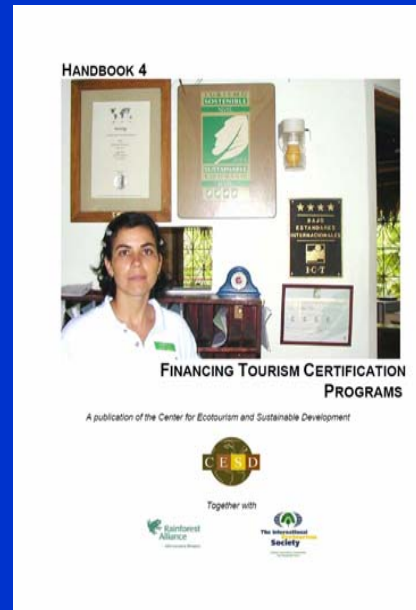
#3 Steps for Marketing

- **Consumer demand takes time to build**
- **Market to intermediaries**
Tour operators, Internet, guidebooks, media
- **Incorporate health & safety standards**
- **Marketing includes 4 Ps:**
Product, Price, Promotion, Placement



#4 Financing Certification Programs

- **Costs of 3 Phases:**
 - Start-up
 - Operation
 - Consolidation
- **Revenue streams:**
 - Fees
 - Services, Products
 - Government funding
 - Private industry groups
Utilities, banks, media,
other 'green' businesses



Questions & Answers



Sustainable Tourism
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