

C

Certification in Tourism



Josefa García Mestanza¹ and
Raquel García Revilla²

¹University of Malaga, Malaga, Spain

²Madrid Open University, Collado Villalba, Spain

Certification is the accreditation of an independent institution which establishes that an organization, product, process, or service complies with the requirements defined in a series of regulations or standardized specifications. There are three basic pillars to certification: the metrology (the science and engineering of measurement in charge of the study which provides the basis for accurate measurements), the accepted performance (of which can then be written into international standards), and the standardization and conformity assessment (<https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/store/en/PUB100031.pdf>).

In tourism, certification can cover a variety of areas such as quality, environmental commitment, corporate social responsibility, and/or sustainability. The corresponding certificates are normally issued by public or private institutions. Many countries have their own unification criteria and develop standards that have been redesigned regionally and internationally. For example, the International Organization for Standardization, such as ISO 9000, has been developed in accordance with several national norms of different countries. Moreover, there are specific

certifications for different aspects of tourism. That is, different places and/or tourism products can apply for certification that is relevant to its offering, for instance, sustainable tourism, ecotourism, beach, and destination certifications (Jamal et al. 2006).

There is no legal imperative that requires certifying a company, a product, or a destination. However, the number of certifications in the world has increased because certification contributes to improving quality, competitiveness, and the image of its products/services, guarantees compliance with a series of requirements, and generates trust among customers. In this way, the certification implies several positive effects: financial (increased sales, increased market share), operational (better supplier relationships, reduced costs and compliance, timely delivery), customer satisfaction (fewer complaints, higher satisfaction), employee satisfaction (improved health and safety in the workplace, less absenteeism, greater staff participation), and social reputation (respect for the environment, conservation of local and national heritage) (Molina-Murillo 2019).

However, studies show that the results of certified tourism companies cause an expanding industry (Alonso-Almeida et al. 2012; Geerts 2014). In addition, the implementation of certifications can help to mitigate the negative environmental impacts of tourism and social externalities. Likewise, preventing and betting on sustainable strategies ensures the certification of its products

and/or services. Future research in the field of sustainable tourism, sustainable strategies, and specific certifications is crucial. It is important to achieve a unification of the various criteria related to the different dimensions of sustainability. Once research advances, the public can and should make use of it.

See Also

- ▶ [Corporate Social Responsibility](#)
- ▶ [Rule and Regulation](#)
- ▶ [Service Quality](#)
- ▶ [Sustainability](#)

References

- Alonso-Almeida, M., J. Rodríguez-Antón, and L. Rubio-Andrada. 2012. Reasons for implementing certified quality systems and impact on performance. *The Service Industries Journal* 32: 919–936.
- Geerts, W. 2014. Environmental certification schemes: Hotel managers' views and perceptions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 39: 87–96.
- Jamal, T., M. Borges, and A. Stronza. 2006. The institutionalization of ecotourism: Certification, cultural equity and praxis. *Journal of Ecotourism* 5 (3): 145–175.
- Molina-Murillo, S. 2019. Sustainable tourism certification and its perceived socio-economic impacts in Costa Rican hotels. *PASOS: Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural* 17 (2): 363–372.