



Evaluation of the environmental, economic and cultural impacts resulting from the application in Trentino of the EU Ecolabel for tourism

[November 2015] The environmental, economic and cultural evaluation of the application in Trentino of the EU Ecolabel for tourist accommodation service is part of a more comprehensive evaluation commissioned by the autonomous Province of Trento and carried out by APPA (Agenzia Provinciale per la Protezione dell’Ambiente - Provincial Environmental Protection Agency), which included other two eco-labels: “Ecoristorazione Trentino” (for restaurants) and “Ecoacquisti Trentino” (for shops and retail channels).

The study was carried out using on-line surveys and interviews targeting accommodation services which were awarded the EU Ecolabel and a set of “standard” accommodation services that were not awarded the EU Ecolabel. The standard accommodation services were used for comparison.

An aggregated sustainability index was made to capture the overall performance of the accommodation services with regards to waste management, CO₂ emissions, energy management and water management. The aggregated index highlighted that EU Ecolabel accommodation services, on a scale from 0 (worst performance) to 100 (best performance), score 22 points more than standard accommodation services (73 points against 51 points).

The score gap is spread across the four mentioned areas; however the more noticeable difference lies in the area of waste management. When compared with the standard accommodation services, the EU Ecolabel accommodation services perform better in waste separation management (on average, one additional waste fraction sorted by the accommodation service and two additional waste fractions sorted by the guests) and in the avoidance of disposable products and single dose packaging (which results in 0,62 kg of avoided waste every 100 customers).

EU Ecolabel accommodation services perform better compared to the standard ones in all areas: reduction of unsorted waste produced (-0,49 kg/ m²/year), CO₂ emissions (-37,79 kg/ m²/year), thermal and electric energy consumed (overall -12,69 kWh/ m² /year), and water consumption (-3,33 cum/ m² /year).

Better environmental performances positively impact the economic efficiency of the EU Ecolabel accommodation services: the average saving against a standard accommodation



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service is 10,51 €/m²/year or 200,90 € every 100 customers. Taking into account the average number of visitors in a hotel in Trentino, the estimated annual saving is about 15.000 € for each accommodation service, which equals to about 23 million euro in the province of Trentino. The economic efficiency of the EU-Ecolabel accommodation services is less affected by the strong commitment in waste management: although EU Ecolabel accommodation services produce 20% less waste for mq compared to standard accommodation services, the related saving (fixed costs and variable costs) is only 7,15% less.

The cultural evaluation showed that 91,9% of the tourists maintain that it is important that accommodation services engage in good sustainability practices. However, “only” 39,8% of the tourists state that good sustainability practices from accommodation services affect their choices.

Tourists expect an environmentally aware accommodation service to engage in the following three good practices (chosen among those required by the EU Ecolabel criteria): magnetic key cards that allow automatic off-switch for the lights, electronic devices and systems in the rooms; highly insulated windows; and facilitations for customers who arrive with public transportation. With regards to these practices, the EU Ecolabel accommodation services show better performances compared to the standard ones (+2% magnetic key cards, +43% insulated windows, +17% of accommodation structures that offer facilitations for those who arrive with public transportation). In fact, 60,5% of the guests who visited an EU Ecolabel hotel have stated their appreciation for the certification and the good practices connected to it. Meanwhile, accommodation service managers maintain that only 22,5% of the guests appreciate the certification.

An explanation for these mismatching perceptions could lie in the opinion that managers have of the EU Ecolabel brand. Only 27,5% of the managers are fully satisfied with EU Ecolabel, 50% states that there was no economic benefit in being awarded and 35% did not find any benefit concerning the innovation of their hotels. Dissatisfaction with the brand is also causing lack of marketing actions connected to the Ecolabel targeting customers or local stakeholders: in fact, 70% of the stakeholders are not aware of the presence of EU Ecolabel-awarded structures in their area.

Study carried out by

Autonomous Province of Trento - Provincial Environmental Protection Agency

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