



# EMAS in the tourism sector

EMAS. performance – credibility – transparency.

## Why use EMAS in tourism?

*Tourism is the third largest economic activity in the EU<sup>1</sup> and the sector continues to grow. Although it has a broadly positive impact on economic growth and employment, it is also a resource-intensive industry that leaves a big footprint on the environment.*

*Apart from tourism's substantial contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, major challenges for the sector include excessive water consumption, discharge of untreated water, generation of waste, degradation of land and ecosystems, and damage to local terrestrial and marine biodiversity.*

*But with strategic environmental management systems, tour operators, destinations and accommodation facilities are becoming increasingly sustainable. Already about 300 hotels, camping grounds, nature reserves and other leisure and accommodation facilities in Europe are using EMAS to improve their environmental performance. Among them are such prestigious names as the Ritz Carlton and Scandic hotels in Berlin and educational tours operator Studiosus. Protecting the natural resources and biodiversity that are the basis for most tourism products and services pays financially, ensures the long-term success of tourism operations and is an indispensable marketing tool nowadays.*



## EMAS 5 key benefits for tourism operators

### 1. Be attractive:

Sustain the quality of your destination's environmental attractions. More than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of travellers favour environmentally-friendly tourism and are willing to pay up to 40% more for this experience .

### 2. Be profitable:

Save money by using less resources, electricity, heating, water, etc. A recent study on hotels in Spain showed that those that have Environmental Management Systems in place are more profitable than those that do not.

### 3. Be credible:

Use the most robust environmental management instrument worldwide. The proliferation of voluntary initiatives for sustainable tourism has made customers insecure about whom they can trust. EMAS is recognized by authorities and the business community as the most credible system. Systematic documentation, verification by an independent environmental verifier and annual publication of the environmental review make EMAS transparent and credible.

### 4. Be strategic:

You can only improve what you can measure! EMAS gives you a set of core indicators to systematically track your environmental performance. This is very useful for chains: The EMAS system that is developed at one site can easily be adapted to the whole group.

### 5. Be responsible: Improve your indirect environmental impacts.

Tourism businesses interact with many actors outside their own organisation, such as suppliers, subcontractors and of course guests. Their behaviour is part of your environmental footprint! EMAS helps you select and positively influence your partners according to environmental criteria.

1 European Commission (2010): Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe. P 3.

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## Focus: Customer Involvement

Tourism operators' environmental performance shapes and is shaped significantly by the behaviour of their customers. So bring your guests on board and get them to support your environmental efforts - boosting your environmental performance in the process! For example, the EMAS registered Belgian hotel chain Martin's Hotels has developed some simple and effective offers that their guests can easily take up: a voucher programme that rewards guests for little 'eco actions' like switching off appliances or not having their rooms cleaned every day, a bike rental and Zero Carbon conferences for business clients.

EMAS registered educational tour operator Studiosus includes excursions to local environmental projects in its itineraries to raise guests' awareness about the ecosystem that they are visiting. Studiosus also asks its customers for feedback and improvement suggestions regarding sustainability actions.

## Getting started

The implementation of EMAS can be tailored to the needs and resources of small and large organisations. You can find many helpful guidance documents, detailing the steps you need to take to acquire EMAS, under *additional information*. EMAS is very much about involving everyone's expertise, inside and outside your business, and working together to find the best solutions. Here is a spotlight on two interactive measures that are particularly beneficial for tourism operators when implementing EMAS:

### Get stakeholder support

Tourism is very closely bound up with the communities that it operates in. So consider initiating an 'environmental roundtable' with local authorities, NGOs, community representatives and other tourism organisations, working together to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy for your destination. You might also want to contact local environmental or research organisations to support you when assessing your indirect environmental impacts on the surrounding ecosystem (through your buildings, waste and use of resources).

### Involve your employees

Your staff are the direct interface with your guests and the local community. They are the backbone of EMAS in your organisation! Sensitise your employees about environmental issues. Use their experience on the ground to identify effective solutions to environmental management challenges and viable ways of including guests in your environmental actions. Frequently inform your staff about your organisation's environmental achievements to turn them into enthusiastic environmental ambassadors vis à vis guests, suppliers and local stakeholders!

## **i** Additional Information:

EMAS online [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm)

EMASeasy methodology for small and medium-sized organisations <http://www.emaseasy.de/>

ECOCAMPING EMAS for camping sites <http://www.ecocamping.net/>

EMAS Sectoral Reference Document on Best Environmental Management Practice in the Tourism Sector  
[http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/documents/TOURISM\\_BP\\_REF\\_DOC\\_2012j.pdf](http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/documents/TOURISM_BP_REF_DOC_2012j.pdf)

European Tourism Indicator System Toolkit for Sustainable Destinations  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index_en.htm)

EU policies on sustainable tourism [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_en.htm)

Business and Biodiversity Campaign <http://www.business-biodiversity.eu/>

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Additional information is available on the EMAS website

[www.emas.eu](http://www.emas.eu) or through the EMAS helpdesk [emas@biois.com](mailto:emas@biois.com)

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