

# Study Results on Sustainable Tourism in German Tourism Destinations (March 2015)

## Introduction

Tourism destination development worldwide is increasingly guided by the principle of sustainable development. In the past, policymakers, destinations and companies have taken a variety of steps to make tourism development in Germany more sustainable.

So what exactly can we say about the current state of sustainable tourism in Germany? What is understood by sustainability and which importance is given to the topic at the moment and in the future? Where do positive approaches exist and which barriers need to be overcome?

In a nationwide, exclusive online survey conducted by mascontour GmbH in cooperation with ITB Berlin sustainable tourism in German tourism destinations was analysed for the first time. Destination management organisations of all federal states of Germany, tourism regions and local tourism associations and cities with a population of over 100,000 were included in the survey. In total 430 German tourism destinations were contacted, 134 participated in the study. This represents a response rate of 31.2%. Both the sample size and its repartition according to different destination types (federal states, tourism regions and cities) make it a representative survey.

## 10 Key Results

1. The German tourism destinations have a clear and comprehensive understanding of what sustainable tourism means.
2. Sustainability does not yet play a major role for German tourism destinations, but in their own view, this is going to change significantly in the next few years.
3. It is believed that policymakers should bear most of the responsibility for sustainable tourism development in Germany, and that consumers/ guests should play only a minor role.
4. According to the destinations, tourism associations and marketing companies show the highest level of commitment to the implementation of sustainable tourism, while tour operators contribute very little to it.
5. The steps German destinations have taken in the area of sustainable tourism are focused primarily on the conservation and promotion of traditions, customs and cultural identities and on the responsible use of cultural heritage and attractions.
6. On the whole, there is believed to be urgent need to act with regard to the implementation of sustainable tourism. There have been some achievements, but there is still a lot to do.
7. The introduction of binding environmental and social standards in tourism is considered to be more important than voluntary commitment to such standards. Certification is considered to be important but not a top priority.

8. While education and training, as well as funding, are regarded as essential areas of focus for the future, climate protection, adaptation to climate change, awareness raising and monitoring are also considered to be key areas for the implementation of sustainable tourism.
9. The destinations are united in rejecting the introduction of taxes and fees for consumers/guests to provide funding for sustainable tourism.
10. Sustainable tourism is considered to be of little importance to consumers/guests at this point.

**The full study results as well as a summary presentation can be found via the following link:**  
[www.mascontour.info/befragung/](http://www.mascontour.info/befragung/)

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