

Journal of Ecotourism

ISSN: 1472-4049 (Print) 1747-7638 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/reco20

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To cite this article: Wineaster Anderson (2009) Promoting ecotourism through networks: case studies in the Balearic Islands, Journal of Ecotourism, 8:1, 51-69, DOI: 10.1080/14724040802140584

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14724040802140584

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Journal of Ecotourism
Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2009, 51–69

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Promoting ecotourism through networks: case studies in the Balearic Islands

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(*Received 13 March 2006; final version received 1 November 2008*)

For over four decades, the Balearic Archipelago has experienced excessive pressure from tourism activities on its resource. Using a case approach, this article focuses on three networks that promote ecotourism in the Balearics. Alcúdia Network is recognised for its actions on environmental education and training programmes, management of wastes, and traffic and noise control. Similarly, the Network of Sustainable Hotels of the Balearic promotes green environments in the hotel establishments and serves as an engine of sustainable development. Network of Calvià focuses on indigenous development through ensuring active participation of hosts, control of tourism quality, and sustainable use of resources. The study also identifies the measures used to promote ecotourism in the Balearics including special laws for Natural Areas of Special Interest and Rural Areas of Landscape Interest, taxes, green cards, and sustainable discounts. Yet, ecotourism as a primary product in these Islands has not been in high demand. Ecotourism operations could spread throughout if the networks could be formed all over the Islands. However, developing networks costs time and material resources, but makes the destination more attractive; therefore, stakeholders should look at the resources incurred as investment. Finally, ecotourism can be practical if stakeholders avoid politicising the ecological policies.

Keywords: ecotourism; networks; Balearic Islands; Mallorca

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Introduction

Background

For over four decades, the Balearic Archipelago has experienced extreme pressure from tourism activities on its resources. The tourism boom of 1955–73 saw a rapid growth of tourist demand and intense developments of tourism infrastructures and facilities in the archipelago (Meaurio & Murray, 2001; Rullan-Salamanca, 1999). Overcrowded beaches (with less than 6 m^2 of beach surface per person) and ribbon development has led to a depletion of 19.6% of rocky coasts, which is equivalent to 560.7 km of the Balearic land (Garcia & Servera, 2003). Covering the total area of 5.014 km^2, the Archipelago receives an average of 10 million tourists annually (Hoti, Mcaleer, & Sansó, 2005); with a population of 1,008,938 (2005 estimates). Together, they create an excessive demand of resources and tons of wastes. According to the European Environmental Agency (2001), for instance, water consumption in rural areas amounts to 140 l/person/day, in urban areas 250 l/person/day; but for the average tourist, consumption is 440 l/person/ day, or even 880 l/person/day in case of luxury enterprises. Due to the

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ISSN 1472-4049 print/ISSN 1747-7638 online
© 2009 Taylor & Francis
DOI: 10.1080/14724040802140584
http://www.informaworld.com

environmental impacts of tourism, the concept of 'ecotourism' entered the community circles in the Archipelago in the 1990s as the means of achieving sustainability in tourism development (Altaba & Ponsell, 2000; Cantallop, 2004; Westwood, 2002). Some tourisiers have even shifted the emphasis away from the 4Ss (sun, sand, sex, and sangria) to incorporate the model of ecotourism (Blamey, 1997).

According to Blamey (1997), to be ecotourism-oriented, the attractions offered should primarily involve the natural environment, with associated cultural elements constituting a secondary component; also the interaction between the tourists and the environmental attraction should be based on education, learning, and appreciation; ecotourism should be environmentally, socio-culturally, and economically sustainable. To combat negative externalities rising from tourism activities, several actors in many destinations have been working individually using policies and monetary tools. The tourism industry in the Balearic Islands, like in other mass tourism destinations, involves numerous actors; hence, neither of these tools works well, especially when those externalities result from actions of the actors themselves. Instead, as suggested by Tyler and Dinan (2001) and Dredge (2006), networking among actors is a useful mechanism to facilitate and push tourism planning and activities at any destination. According to Dredge (2006), through networking, many interests and groups are empowered, in which sustainable developmental ideals get easily enhanced. To gain momentum to solve environmental problems brought by tourism, some stakeholders in the Archipelago have recognised that and have begun to collaborate through launching ecotourism networks. These networks involve actors from the tourism specific sector or sectors plus government and non-government organisations (NGOs), the host community, and academia.

However, the joint roles being played by these multiple actors in order to develop ecotourism in the Balearics have received scant attention from academic researchers. Neither have they analysed the way these networks operate including their nature, actors involved, and their success or weak factors (Fadeeva et al., 2001). So this article intends to contribute to this body of knowledge. The article determines the roles of networks in promoting ecotourism, as well as investigating other measures undertaken to implement ecotourism in the Balearic Islands. The study results would be useful to different actors at the destination. Performance evaluation of the existing networks would enable respective actors to improve the necessary areas for the betterment of ecotourism activities. Municipalities without networks would be acquainted with the knowledge of developing and managing the useful ones. According to Robinson (1999), collaboration between destination actors and appreciation of host activities encourage trends in the process of tourism development. Therefore, tourism management and policy makers at any destination can use the study results to delineate sound ecotourism policies which conserve destination environments that are more vulnerable to massive tourism activities.

Literature review

Ecotourism concept

Ecotourism initially was promoted by Hetzer (1965) who endorsed 'ecological tourism' by identifying four criteria to measure ecotourism activities: minimising environmental impacts, respecting host cultures, maximising benefits to hosts, and maximising tourist satisfaction. Following its invention, early definitions emphasised mainly the nature-based elements of ecotourism (Blamey, 2001). Now ecotourism has various definitions and synonyms such as green, sustainable, nature-based, alternative, and adventure tourism; others include elements of environmental education (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1987). Ceballos-Lascurain defines ecotourism as travelling to relatively uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals and any cultural manifestations (both past and

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present) found in these areas. Considering the essential of networks, Björk (1997) describes ecotourism as an activity where authorities, tourisiers, and hosts co-operate to make it possible for tourists to travel to genuine areas in order to admire, study, and enjoy nature and culture in a way that does not exploit resources, but contributes to sustainable development.

However, many tourism-specialised economies fear that ecotourism may endanger the inflow of cash from mass-tourism, but Cater (1994) argues that ecotourism achieves two-in-one: providing direct economic benefits and minimising negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts. One of the essential elements of true ecotourism according to various scholars is the participation and involvement of local stakeholders (Boo, 1993; Brandon, 1993; Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996; Drake, 1991; Wallace & Pierce, 1996). In view of that Wallace and Pierce (1996) refer to ecotourism as a type of tourism that 'maximizes the early and long-term participation of local people in the decision making process that determines the kind and amount of tourism that should occur'.

Dujon (1999) stresses two sets of issues to focus upon when developing ecotourism policies: one is balancing income generation and maintaining the ecological sustainability of the natural resources and second is stressing the responsibility for management of natural resources and the corresponding distribution of the income generated. Hence, ecotourism aims to conserve biodiversity, sustains the well being of local people, includes learning experience, involves responsible action on the part of tourists and the tourism industry, requires lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources, and stresses local participation, ownership, and business opportunities, particularly for rural people.

Figure 1 shows the components of ecotourism among six types of holidays. Ecotourism is the part of sustainable tourism which is made up of cultural, rural, and nature tourism. Cultural tourism involves movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs (Kerr, 1992; Richards & Bonink, 1995). Rural tourism takes place where rural locations are the main attractions (Schmidt, 2002) and is based on accommodation service which is complemented by additional facilities relying on the rural social, cultural, and natural resources, which in turn are exploited according to the principles of sustainable development. Nature tourism on the other hand refers to an ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas (Schmidt, 2002); it concentrates more on enjoying and respecting the wildlife and the environment without the educational element present in ecotourism.

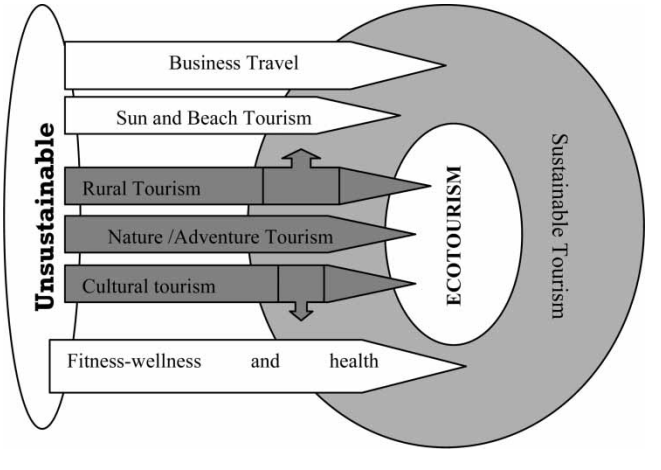


Figure 1. Ecotourism concept. Modified from Strasdas (2001).

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Networks perspective

The origin of network theory has continuously been an issue to debate. From a marketing perspective, the interest of networks in tourism was triggered by the invention of 'relationship marketing', in which all marketing activities are directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges (Wulf & Odekerken-Schroder, 2001). The ecotourism agents have therefore adopted the three roles of 'establishing', 'developing', and 'maintaining' relationships between themselves to deal with the issues in questions. Another stance attributes the network theory to the invention of the 'iron triangle' in the US, which was meant to minimise the influence of outsiders over the policies made by three groups of actors in a defined political–geographical area: interest groups, congressional committees, and governmental agencies (Dredge, 2006). For that, Dredge (2006) interprets the sense of network theory as relationships between government, business, and civil society and how these relationships shape issue identification, communication, resource sharing, and collective action.

Selin and Chavez (1995) defined networks as mechanisms for the pooling of resources among two or more stakeholders to solve a problem or create an opportunity that neither can address individually. According to Gray (1989), a network is a process of joint decision-making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain. Gray identifies five characteristics critical to the networking process: stakeholders are interdependent, solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences, joint ownership of decisions, stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain, and the network is an emergent process.

Different scholars have used network theory in different settings. Jamal and Getz (1995) for example, used the theory to provide a prescriptive approach for facilitating community-based tourism planning using stakeholder involvement and propose five steps for a successful collaboration process: a high degree of interdependence, the recognition of mutual benefits, that decisions arrived at will be implemented and therefore legitimised, that all stakeholder groups need to be involved, and the introduction of a formal strategic planning process. Also, Mason and Moore (1998) used a network approach to assess the influence of the Sorensen Network on the ecotourism activities in two marine environments in Australia. They, thus, agree that the network provides a useful mechanism to describe the potential effects of ecotourism activities.

The point of departure is to bring in the concepts of issue-based network (Brito, 1997) and the embeddedness (Törnroos, 1997) as borrowed from the industrial network approach. The *issue-based net* is created through relationships among actors who are interested in a particular issue, through either common or conflicting interests (Araujo & Brito, 1998; Brito, 1997; Dredge, 2006; Håkansson & Johansson, 1992). In most cases, majority members of the net do not take active participation in the collective actions of the net (Araujo & Brito, 1998; Brito, 1997). In principle, tourism and its related sectors belong to different local and product-based nets which, for their part, form the municipal tourism network. We describe the municipal ecotourism network as a network of issue-based nets, which are based on municipal administration, and the common goal of which is to promote ecotourism in the municipality. The actors in the net are mainly tourism enterprises, representatives of public administration, different organisations, NGOs, associations, and local population.

Network embeddedness refers to the extent to which a dyad's mutual contacts are connected to one another, with these aggregated patterns acting as social cohesion (Granovetter, 1992). These linkages bring different groups together, allowing the flow of information and common understandings across group boundaries. According to Törnroos (1997), embeddedness in the networks involves an inner circle, a network context, an outer limit, and network actions. The *inner circle* of the network constitutes the core actors who collectively make decisions in order to start, maintain,

increase or possibly end certain relationships. The *core* of the network describes other key actors. These core actors vary in the network, depending, for instance, on the actions that take place within the network. The *network context* is the industry where the actors operate (Törnroos, 1997), in this case, ecotourism. The *outer limits* of the network comprise actors who are outside the core activities but who have the opportunity to directly or indirectly influence the actions of the core of the network, for example, sponsors, political decision-makers, or nature conservationists. The *outer environment* covers the remaining environment of actions, which is outside the interrelated business relations of the network. If one of the actors is left out, the actions of issue-based networks are prone to fail.

The *actions* refers to the events in which the actors combine, develop, or create resources by taking advantage of the joint human and material resources of the network (Håkansson & Johansson, 1992). In ecotourism networks, for example, host population, NGOs, business communities, and government sectors may jointly set policy, plan, and make decisions. Business sectors can set green policy and conduct green tourism in their businesses. Finally, when tourists visit the area, they put into action the plans by the authorities and follow the rules imposed by the network.

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Methodology

The Balearic Archipelago is made up of the islands of Mallorca, Minorca, Ibiza and Formentera. This study has involved Mallorca, which was the first island in the archipelago to develop its tourism industry (Meaurio & Murray, 2001) and where the biggest airport for international ecotourists to the Balearics, Palma de Mallorca, is located (Conselleria de Turisme, 2005). Mallorca is considered as one of the most visited destinations in Europe (Wachaviak & Neumann, 2007) and a home for natural environments, hosting the largest part of natural areas of the Balearics (Zapke-Gründemann, 2000). Also, the main institutions and offices responsible for tourism development and management for the whole archipelago and, above all, the ecotourism network models of the Mediterranean basin are all based in Mallorca (Bruce, Jackson, & Cantallop, 2001).

The study utilises a case study approach, based on exploratory design. Exploratory research is suitable where little prior knowledge is known about the phenomenon; therefore, it can be used for familiarisation of the phenomenon, clarification of concepts, developing but not testing 'if then' statements, and for establishing priorities for further research (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2002). The area of ecotourism in the Balearics is under-researched. Therefore, the choice was made to apply qualitative research methodology based on the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The grounded theory approach was employed to let the conceptions of ecotourism emerge from the data. To carry out the objective of the study, an extensive literature review was done to identify cases in the Balearics where policies for ecotourism have been implemented. After identification of the cases, the primary data were gathered using informal interviews with the key actors involved. In August and September of 2005, interviews were conducted that involved the Institute of Tourist Strategy of the Balearic Islands (INESTUR); the Balearic Group of Ornithology and Defense of Nature (GOB);[1] and the ecotourism networks of Calvià, Alcúdia and Sustainable Hotels of the Balearics.

Thus, every case was represented by one respondent during the interviews. Box 1 presents the items that guided the discussions. Specifically, issues that were discussed cover a wide area of ecotourism and networks. To INESTUR, for example, the leading questions include: is there such a thing 'Ecotourism' in the Balearic Islands?; list the ecotourism activities and tools involved in the Balearics; what are the key factors needed for successful ecotourism operations; in your own opinion what could have been done to successfully promote ecotourism in the Balearics, and so forth. The issues considered in the interviews with the network actors include: the

nature of the networks between these members; who is involved in these networks; what is the role of these networks, particularly, in promoting ecotourism; how do they operate? (value added); comment on the operations (strengths and weaknesses if any) and benefits accrued from networks. Other issues include: structure of the network; aims, goals, and main activities of the network; related activities, tools and schemes to achieve them; activities related to the natural environment; rationale/reasons/motives for environmental actions; collaborators in tourism and environment area; influences of national and international policies and stakeholders on environment-related activities; opinion about tourism development; other local similar organisations/other local organisations aiming at similar goals; barriers to environmental activities; and suggestions for environmental improvements.

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Box 1. Sample questions that led the discussions.

To Government Officials:

A. ECOTOURISM

1.1 Is there such a thing 'Ecotourism' in Balearic Islands?
1.1.1 List the Ecotourism Activities in the IB
1.1.2 List the Ecotourism Attractions in the IB
1.2 What are the key factors needed for successful ecotourism operations (in your own opinion, what could have been done to successfully promote ecotourism in IB?)?

B. NETWORKS

Networks (relationships, partnerships, or linkages between ecotourism actors in the IB)
2.1 Members (companies, individuals, etc.) involved in ecotourism development and marketing in IB:
2.1.1 Are there networks/partnerships/relationships/ between these members?
2.2 Who are involved in these networks?
2.3 What is the role of these networks, particularly, in promoting ecotourism?
2.3.1 How do they operate? (value added)
2.3.2 Comment on the operations (strengths and weaknesses if any)
2.4 Benefits accrued from networks?

To the actors in network:

a) Structure of the organisation
b) Structure of the network
c) Aims, goals, and main activities of the network
d) Related activities, tools, and schemes to achieve them
e) Activities related to the natural environment
f) Rationale/reasons/motives for environmental actions
g) Collaborators in tourism and environment area
h) Influences of national/international policies and stakeholders on environment-related activities
i) Opinion about tourism development
j) Other local similar organisations/other local organisations aiming at similar goals
k) Barriers to environmental activities
l) Suggestions for environmental improvements

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Findings

Ecotourism measures

The Balearic Archipelago has developed a number of ecotourism instruments, policies, and laws. The first step for its ecotourism endeavour was a 1991 Law of Natural Areas which aims to protect the areas affected by tourism and to conserve the islands' soils, flora, and fauna. This law preserves the land from build-up and sets a 'Natural Area of Special Interest (NASI)' and a 'Rural Area of Landscape Interest' as shown in Figure 2. However, the natural landscape in the archipelago has only grown by 0.27% for the period of at least two decades, which implies that the law might have been overlooked by tourism agents. Further, in 1996, the European Union issued a special directive (79/409/EEC) to conserve some areas in the European territories in reference to special conservation measures concerning bird habitats (Heredia, 1996; Zapke-Grundemann, 2000). Among these was the Special Protected Zone for Birds (SPAs) in Mallorca as in Figure 3. Interestingly, the said areas are still in promising shape even after a decade.

Later in 1997, the eco-auditing of tourism enterprises (ECOTUR) was launched as an additional effort to stimulate environmental consciousness among tourism actors, through environmental audits and conformity to ISO 14000. The participating enterprises were awarded an 'eco label' to show their environmental friendliness as according to the Balearic Government (1998). However, not all actors welcome the initiative, as most of the ECOTUR programmes showed the lack of interest of lodging companies in the islands. Other prior programmes to boost the tourism quality and territorial planning agenda in the islands including I Cladera Decree (1984), II Cladera Decree (1987), the Global Sanitation Plan (1989), the Plan to Embellish Tourism Resorts (1990), Hotel Accommodation Modernization Plan (1990), Modernization of the Complementary Tourism Supply (1996), the Off-Peak Tourism Plan (1997), and Plan Mirall (1997) were launched. The focus of each programme is described in Table 1.

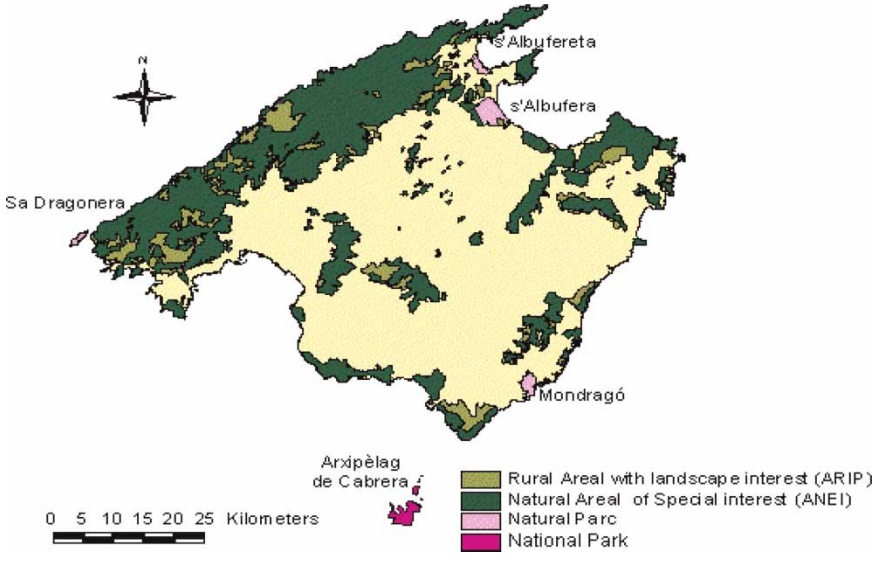


Figure 2. Natural areas protected by 1991 laws in Mallorca Islands.
Source: Zapke-Gründemann (2000).

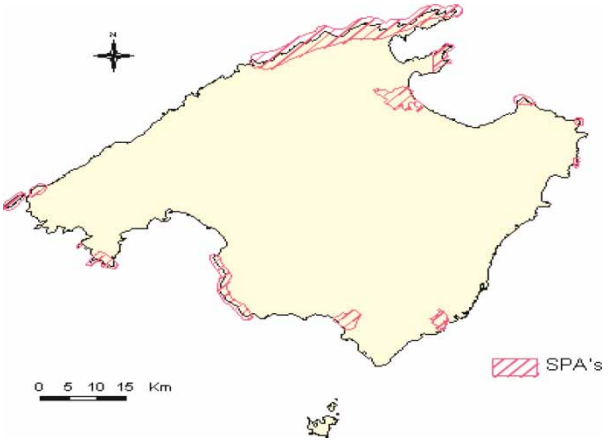


Figure 3. SPAs in Mallorca.
Source: Zapke-Gründemann (2000).

Table 1. Programme for the planning and the quality aspects of tourism in Balearic Islands.

Programme	Focus
I Cladera Decree, 1984	Planning initiative: allowing 30 m^2 of land per bed
II Cladera Decree, 1987	Planning initiative: allowing 60 m^2 of land per bed
Global Sanitation Plan, 1989	Quality initiative: to build sewage plans and monitor the water quality
Plan to Embellish Tourism Resorts, 1990	Quality initiative: to build the tourism infrastructure along the coast zone
Hotel Accommodation Modernization Plan, 1990	Quality initiative: the modernisation plan of around 1200 hotel units
Modernization of the Complementary Tourism Supply, 1996	Quality initiative: the modernisation plan of the catering establishments
Off-Peak Tourism Plan, 1997	Planning initiative: the assessment of minimising seasonality
Plan Mirall, 1997	Quality initiative: restore the historic monuments and cultural attractions

Source: Balearic Government (1997, 1998).

Another approach under the INESTUR initiatives was to reduce the tourist impact by reducing the number of visitors in high season and to spread the number of arrivals throughout the year to avoid the seasonality and short-time tourism traffics. The outcomes are, unfortunately, not promising, as until today, tourism continues being a seasonal activity, peaking every year between May and September as shown in Figure 4.

Moreover, in 2001, the government of the Balearics introduced an ecotax, which was later enforced in May 2002. The revenue was earmarked to improve the ecological condition: upgrading footpaths and cycle routes, restoring old windmills and dry-stone walls, and planting native species of olive and almond trees on land previously reserved for tourist development. Minors of up to 12 years were exempted from the ecotax, which was up to 2€ per guest per day for every stay in a tourist accommodation, depending on the hotel class (an average of 1€ per day). The tax applied to both Balearic residents and visitors as long as one stayed in a tourist accommodation.

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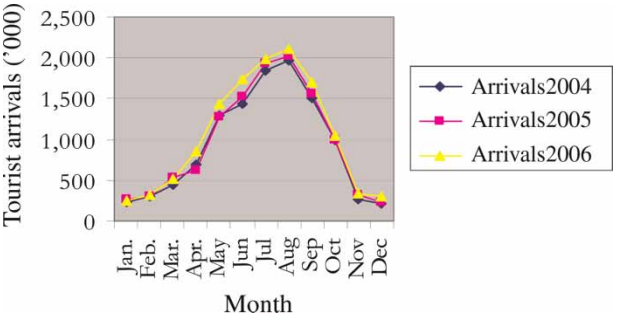


Figure 4. Monthly tourist arrivals in the Balearics.
Source: Conselleria de Turisme (2004, 2005, 2006).

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In the first year of its operation (2001), the raised funds amounted to 45 million euros. The tax got strong support from the locals and outsiders (the ecotax received Globe award from the British Guild of Travel Writers) because they believed that the ecotax was necessary to protect the region's ecosystem and vital resources such as water.

However, later it received a mixture of reactions from tourisiers. Small and medium-sized hoteliers showed a more neutral position compared with the biggest multinational operators. The opponents of the ecotax believed that the measure was not neutral to all tourisiers because tourists staying in unregulated accommodation such as villas and apartments were not subject to payment of the tax. Worse enough, its first 8 months evidenced a decline in tourist arrivals by 10% which led to strong resistance to the tax by big tourisiers, who finally challenged it in Spanish Constitutional Court. Tourism management believed that the decline in tourist arrivals was caused by the economic problems in Europe and post-September 11 worries (Daily Express, 2003). In the court, it was held that the tax could continue, although it turned out to be a political debate, instead of an economic tool. The ecotax was used during the 2003 political campaigns; finally, as one of the political promises, it was removed by the new elected government.

Additional measures

After the death of the ecotax, the new government attempted to replace it by introducing other soft measures to deal with green tourism. So it came up with green cards and sustainable discounts. The green cards (in Spanish, *targeta verde*) were introduced by the Commission of Transport and Tourism of the Parliament in order to balance between the tourist industry development and protecting the environment. So from mid-2005, the government started selling the green card to tourists and residents at airports, hotels, car hire, and airline offices, and shopping centres like Eroski-SYP. Each card costs 10€, of which 1€ goes to international cooperation for charities, 4€ to costs of associated materials accompanying the green cards, such as tracts, maps, and so forth, and the rest (50%) finances the projects developed by the Foundation for Sustainable Development in the Balearics. Currently, four projects are funded: a solar-powered cruise tour of Palma harbour; a multi-media historical experience at Sant Nicolau Castle in Cuitadella, Minorca; and a World of Salt Works in Ibiza at the new Interpretation Centre in the old San Francesco Church in Ibiza town and visitor facilities improvements at the Albufera Natural Park in Mallorca. The green card entitles the user to a discount at museums, shopping centres, the tourist bus, golf courses, and other amenities where the initial costs recovery depends on card uses. Table 2 shows some of the attractions and discounts offered to a card holder.

Table 2. Discounts for holders of the green card in the Balearic Islands.

Area of use (attractions)	Offer/discount
Parc Natural de S'Albufera	Special service for card holders
Son Real	Special price or gift
Guided cultural tours in Palma and Valldemossa	25% off
Museo Diocesà	50% off
Casa-Museu J.Torrens Lladó	15% off
Can Marques	16% off
Palau March	10% off
Museu Es Baluard	Special price or gift
Castell de Bellver	Special price or gift
Fundación Miró	Special price or gift
Museu de ses Jueuetes	15% off
Museu de Mallorca	Special price or gift
Museu de la Catedral	16% off
Miramar	16% off
Fundación Yannick y Ben Jakober	10% off at shop 15% off exhibition
Museu de Lluc	50% off
Museu de Son Fornes	20% off
Museu de sa jugueta antiga	33% off
Museu d'art contemporani	33% off
Museu Monografic de Pollentia	25% off
Ciutat Romana de Pollentia	25% off
Observatori Astronomic de Mallorca	20% off
Museu Sant Antoni i Dimoni	33% off
Museu des Vidre	100 %
Jardin Botanic de Soller	40% off
Museu Etnologic de Muro	Special price or gift
Castell de Capdepera	25% off
Palma tourist bus	10% off
Mallorca Balloons	20% off
Hidropark Alcúdia	25% off
Aquapark/Aquacity/Marineland	20% off
Nemo Submarine	10% off
Western Park	5 % off
Cinemas and bowling	Wednesday discounts
Mar de Mallorca	20% off
Parking in Palma	10% off
Golf green fees	10% off
Beach facilities (check locations)	10% off
Mallorca railway	Special price or gift
Els Calderers	Special price or gift
Natura Park	15% off
Costa Nord Cultural Centre	Special price or gift
For cinemas, bowling and beaches	Depends on the pack at the participating locations.

Source: Majorca Daily Bulletin (2005).

As one of the efforts towards promoting rural tourism in the Balearics, the Association of Agro-tourism Establishments of the Balearics puts into practice 10% discounts known as 'sustainable discounts' in all bookings of agro-tourism houses and rural tourism hotels. In practice, hosts invite tourists who prefer rural lives, where they participate in agricultural activities and learn the hosts' culture. The Federation of Tour Operators reports for 1994 identify critical limits of carrying capacity for four indicators and recommended Mallorca to improve the quality and

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Table 3. Sustainable conventions in the Mediterranean.

Declarations	Venue
Charter for Sustainable development	Lanzarote, 1995
Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean	Barcelona 1996
European Island Agenda	Menorca 1997
Calvià Declaration of Tourism Development in the Mediterranean	Mallorca 1997

Source: Balearic Government (1997, 1998).

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environmental aspects of its tourism industry. As a response, various projects have been carried out for the Balearics to enhance tourism quality (Balearic Islands 1998). Some declarations are listed in Table 3.

However, it is important to mention that, while all the activities are taking place, there is no specific unit under the tourism ministry that deals with ecotourism operations at the destination. So one can imagine how vulnerable it would be for any environmental policy that was out of favour for tourisiers at the destination.

Ecotourism networks in Mallorca

Networks that promote ecotourism in Mallorca involve actors from public and private sectors ranging from the sectoral to the industry level. The networks of Alcúdia and Sustainable Hotels of the Balearic Islands are typically local (located in Mallorca with the same management and administrative zone, following the same regulative rules, and sharing the same infrastructure), whereas that of Calvià goes beyond national boundaries.

The case of Alcúdia network

Alcúdia Municipality is one of the typical 'sun and beach' destinations. To improve the quality standards in hotels and restaurants and protect the natural and cultural environments in this locality, in 1993, the municipality in partnership with Alcúdiás Association for Hotels declared the municipality of Alcúdia as an eco-friendly tourist township, 'Municipio Ecoturistico'. The eco-friendly tourist township initiative which involves the active participation of actors within the Balearic Island was launched. From 1994, Alcúdia Council started to implement the award of an Environmental Quality Label (EQL), to encourage the tourism industry to support ecotourism and promote the environmental sustainability in the area. The EQL was recognised in the whole industry and tourist-related scales; so to obtain it, the tourist establishments must fulfil a series of quality programmes including: reduce wastes, to do a selective rubbish collection, to use recycled material and ecological products, to reduce electrical consumption, to eliminate noise, and to show environmental, cultural, and linguistic respect.

In 1996, the Board of Tourism was created with the representation of all local business associations to advice the City Council and to collaborate with the 'ECOTUR Destins' programme, the initiative of the Balearic Government to evaluate the environmental situation of the destination and design an action plan for environmental improvement. The City Council coordinates most of the activities through its Environmental Department. The technician of the Environmental Department has designed the ecolabel regulation and is responsible for controlling its applications and giving technical advice about environmentally friendly cleaning agents, and often organises environmental trainings for entrepreneurs. In early 1998, the Ecotourist Municipality formed an 'Ecotourist plaque' for hotels, which was extended to restaurants and bars. The Plaque Committee

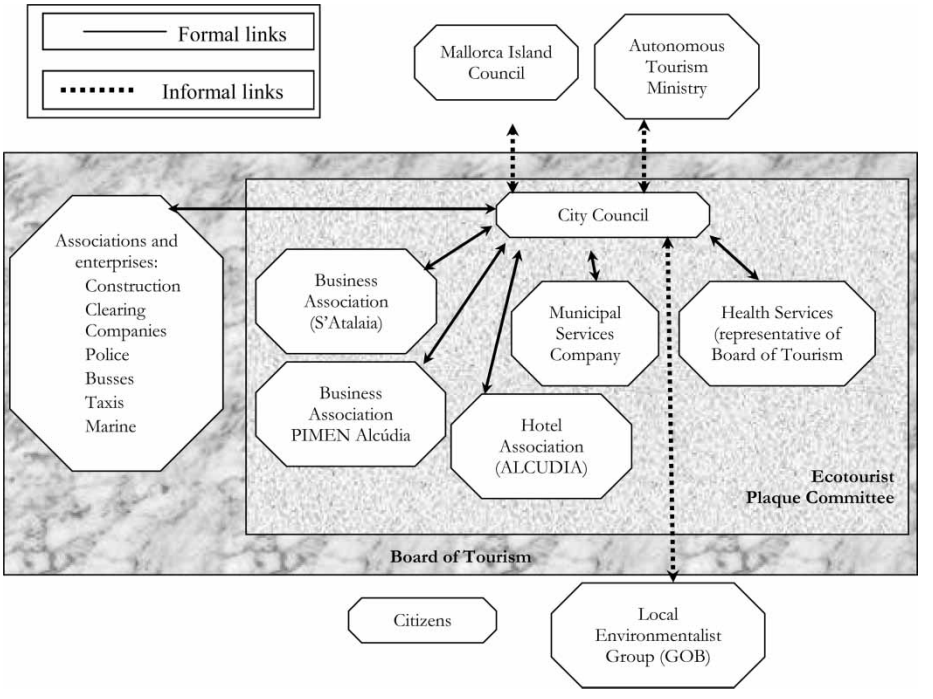


Figure 5. Local ecotourism network in Alcúdia.

includes the director of the municipal services company and representatives of the Board of Tourism, the environmental delegate, council technicians, the local hotel committee, and two local business associations (PIMEN Alcúdia and S'Atalaia). The Plaque decides on the application of the ecolabel and issues related to the prevention of environmental impacts from tourism development.

The objectives of the Alcudia network, which is presented in Figure 5, include promoting environmentally friendly tourism through concrete actions concerning the management of wastes, traffic and noise control, environmental regulations, and training and information strategies. Some of the tasks include the renovation of the old city centre; embellishing of streets and avenues; recovery of monuments with historical interest (city walls of Alcúdia, Roman City of Pollentia); edition of brochures and leaflets on natural and cultural heritage of Alcúdia; improving the municipality's tourist image by multimedia and website (Projects TURINGER; CICERO); conducting a study of the Walled Towns Project;[2] reducing energy in public lighting; selective waste collection of tins, scrap metal and batteries; municipal waste collection regulation; selective waste collection (glass, paper, used clothes, tins, batteries, old household goods); campaigns against dumping wastes into water bodies; environmental audit for industrial activities; waste management, product recycling; waste water treatment; daily cleaning of beaches; weekly analysis of seawater and sand; and training courses on 'Tourism and Environment' for tourism entrepreneurs. Others are the creation of parks and gardens, municipal regulation on noise, enactment of green police, introducing pedestrian areas and cycling routes, and enlargement of the waste treatment plant.

The Plaque Committee was happy with the network performance, although its outer limit was not. Feedback mechanisms were strongly criticised by the actors involved in the Board of Tourism. Most of them were disappointed with the little feedback received from the local

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authorities and see few possibilities of influencing the municipal decision-making process on environmental issues. GOB's critical argument was that Alcudia's commitment to become an Ecotourist Municipality is mainly a marketing strategy and that most of the municipal actions are not in accordance with the stated goals. Hotel Association Alcúdia, which works closely on the issues related to the Ecotourist plaque, is the only actor that seems to have improved its co-operation with the City Council. This association, for instance, organises environmental trainings for the hoteliers and assists on issues regarding applications for the ecolabel. However, the Alcúdia network has received recognition from many outsiders. In 1997, it was awarded the National Waste Management Award for municipalities (El barrendero ecológico) by the FUCI (Federación de Usuarios-Consumidores Independientes). During 2001 and 2004, it was honoured in the Green Flag for Sustainability (Bandera Verde-Ciudad Sostenible), the awards granted by the FUCI. Also in 2004, the Alcúdia network was granted the Best Practice Certificate granted by the Dubai International Award.

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The case of Calvià network

Calvià is a municipality in Mallorca that receives one-third of inbound tourists to the Balearics. In order to counter short-term massive developments, the Calvià Municipality followed the lead of Agenda 21 in November 1995 to assist the sustainable development of its tourism sector with two major focuses: environmental education and community involvement in implementation of sustainable tourism development. Before it undertook the Agenda, Calvià experienced an advanced level of breakdown of public and private facilities and equipment, with a high degree of environmental impact, especially on the coastal area. Given new outlooks and tourist demands, it was noted that there was evident uncertainty about the future through the loss of its competitiveness and its tourist attraction. As a response, a Citizen Forum was formed within the network, comprising 150–160 members, including environmentalist groups, hotel associations, trade unions, neighbourhood associations, and others.

The council technicians and external experts conducted an exhaustive study on selected key themes, whereby interested citizens could join Thematic Committees to discuss the results of the analysis with the experts. The management committee took a leading role after drafting the philosophy and procedures for the Agenda. The Municipality coordinates the environmental management of tourism pressures exerted on the environment. The Town Council Management Committee plays the nucleus role within the Local Agenda and co-ordinates the municipal actions with private institutions and other administrations. The Town Council collaborates intensively with other authorities on the national and autonomous levels (Mallorca Island Council, Balearic Autonomous Government, and National Government) and on the European level with the European Commission. The co-ordinator of Local Agenda 21 is also responsible to seek European-funded projects (LIFE, TERRA, Integrated Management of Coastal zones), and currently, Calvià is collaborating in several European projects (Figure 6).

The concrete actions of the network include waste and water strategic management plans, ecoregulations, local energy-saving plans, and nature conservation plans. They established 15 immediate interventions, 40 initiatives, and 10 strategic action lines for the development of a desirable scenario of local development. At the same time, representatives of one chosen area of Calvià (Palma Nova) collaborated with the 'ECOTUR Destins' programme. The most important aspect of the strategy of the Local Agenda is that it counts on the widest possible voluntary support of the population. The relationship with the five hotel associations of Calvià has initiated some pilot projects on waste management. Also the bars and restaurant shop entrepreneurs have shown a willingness to participate, although they have not initiated any concrete actions. Environmentalist groups such as Greenpeace and GOB are participating intensively, although

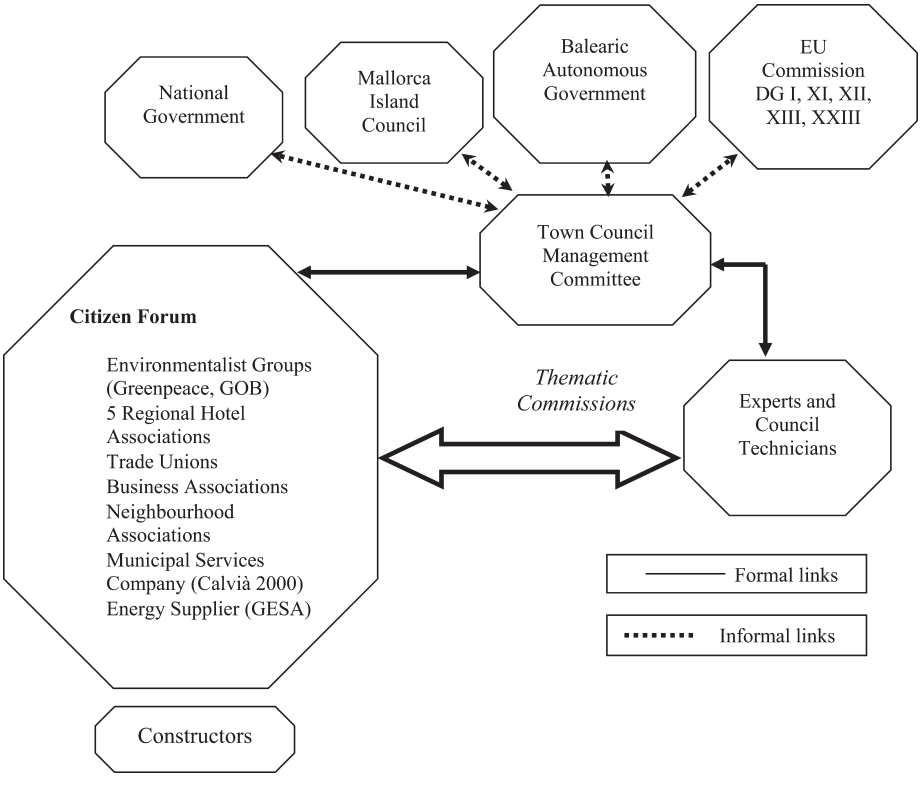


Figure 6. Local ecotourism network in Calvià.

they continue to maintain a critical position. Interestingly, trade unions are supporting the Local Agenda process and most of the decided actions. However, the construction sector refused to join because of a fear of losing control over their activities. The conflict appeared when Calvià opposed a traditional building activity, a gesture that has alienated the building sector.

Some of the achieved objectives include: indigenous development; the sustainable use of available resources, high quality services, and an appropriate bed night capacity; a ban on new development on 1700 acres; active participation of the residents in community life; environmental management of municipality buildings, waste recycling, reduction on electricity, and use of environmentally friendly materials for office use; integrated management of coastal areas; pilot actions for the natural conservation of the beaches; 5 years moratorium for important works on the coastline; and a strategic urban waste management plan (awareness and saving campaigns, composting plant). Tables 4 and 5 present some of these achievements.

However, the Calvià process is still overly managed through the municipality council, and as such, when the government changes, the structure and actions of the network are likely to change. The government still shows a green image, although information on concrete actions has not been updated, which endangers concrete environmental policy and actions. In the previous governments, the local council has implemented policy aimed at modernising, improving, and diversifying the local tourist industry and stakeholders, including the local population. The government is currently using the already existing foundation to promote the image of this destination. Network actors are also dealing with sustainability in a fragmented way depending on the existing or pressing problems and on their awareness level.

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Table 4. Demolition of buildings through Calvià network.

Year	Building	Converted into
1993	Bar and terraces Son Maties	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1993	Apartments, shop premises	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1993	Beach bar	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1993	Storage area	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1993	Beach bar	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1993	Mini-golf café	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1994	Store area & stairway	Son Maties Maritime Esplanade
1994	Parking area, restaurant, etc.	Palma nova Maritime Esplanade
1994	Santa Ponça beach front bar	Santa Ponça Maritime Esplanade
1994	Las Velas Restaurant	Santa Ponça Maritime Esplanade
1995	Playa Palma nova Hotel	Green belt & Maritime Esplanade
1996	Atlantic Hotel	Green belt
1996	Haiti Hotel	Parking zone
1999	Reina Peguera Hotel annex	Square & parking area
2000	Mimosa Hostel, Paguera	Green belt
2001	Montecarlo Bar, Santa Ponça	Improvement to Ramon de Montcada Street
2002	Apartments Ditos, Cas Català	To improve the beach
Total surface area of demolished buildings: 13,559.14 m^2. Total surface area of plots of land: 25,716.39 m^2		

Table 5. Preventive building clearance in Calvià.

Year	Plot	Converted to
1992	Illetes passage	Parking and green belt
1993	Duque de Extremera Street	Green belt & Maritime Esplanade
1993	Duque de Extremera Street	Green belt & Maritime Esplanade
1994	Plots Es Castellot	Green belt
1995	Costa & Llobera Street, Palma nova	Public parking area
1995	Marroig Point, Palma nova	Beauty spot
1995	Park Club, Santa Ponça	Public parking area
1996	Park Club, Santa Ponça	Access to parking area
1996	Park Club, Santa Ponça	Parking and garden areas
1996	Jaime I Street, Palma nova	Parking area
1999	Monte Street, Peguera	Parking area
1999	Eucaliptus Street, Peguera	Parking area
2000	Plot, Santa Ponça	Beauty spot & green belt
2000	Cala Fornells	Green belt
2001	Plots Nova Santa Ponça	Beauty spot
Total: 50,788 $m^2$of building land saved from further construction		

The case of network of sustainable hotels of the Balearic

The Network of Sustainable Hotels of the Balearics (NSH), which was founded in 2005, represents the sector-specific networks, which deal with ecotourism operations in the Balearic Islands. As the name suggests, all NSH actors are located in the Balearic Islands, with the same management, currently chaired by the Grupotel chain (one of the leading hotel enterprises on the Balearic Islands). As a professional association, NSH is made up of tourist hotels with the following principle objectives: to protect the natural environment in their firms and to be a factor in the sustainable development of the Islands; to gradually make activities more environmentally friendly, with particular emphasis on measures to improve care for hotel surroundings; to optimise

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efficiency in the use of energy and other resources; to encourage replacement of products and services that decrease the quality of life that customers and neighbours enjoy.

NSH demonstrates how environmental quality standards can be put into practice and how this brings about associated economic and environmental benefits to boost customer satisfaction. For example, per annum, every NSH member issues annual reports on the measures implemented to protect nature and the environment in the islands. So far, more than 60% of the participating hotel complexes had implemented corresponding systems and had been internally audited for 2005 ISO 14001 certifications and or Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS); also ISO 9002 certifications were already done for all member hotels. The number was expected to increase to 100 hotels in 2006. Also in cooperation with the government of the Balearics, the hotel companies have launched a project designed to achieve a systematic integration of environmental quality, hygiene, and health as well as safety at work.

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Discussion and conclusion

This article determines the roles of networks in promoting ecotourism, as well as investigating other measures undertaken to implement ecotourism in the Balearics. Network is a mechanism of joint decision-making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain. Five characteristics critical to the networking process include: interdependence between stakeholders; emergence of solutions through dealing constructively with differences; joint ownership of decisions; stakeholders' assumption of collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain; and network as an emergent process. Ecotourism on the other hand involves the process by which authorities, tourisiers, and hosts cooperate to make it possible for tourists to travel to genuine areas in order to admire, study, and enjoy nature and culture in a way that does not exploit the resources, but contributes to sustainable development. Ecotourism is that part of sustainable tourism which is made up of cultural, rural, and nature tourism.

The Balearic Archipelago is experiencing pressure from tourism activities on its resources. In order to solve environmental problems brought by tourism, different stakeholders have recognised the power of networking and have already come up with three networks in Mallorca. These networks involve actors from specific sectors or sectors plus government and NGOs, community, and academia. The Alcúdia Network is recognised for its concrete actions regarding environmental education and training programmes, management of wastes, and traffic and noise control. Similarly, the NSH promotes green environments in their establishments and serves as an engine of sustainable development. The Calvià network focuses on indigenous development through ensuring active participation of hosts, control of tourism quality, and sustainable use of resources.

Apart from the networking mechanism, the Balearic Archipelago has taken a number of initiatives in developing and promoting ecotourism in the area, including the 1991 Law of Natural areas, special directive (79/409/EEC) for the SPAs, the 1997 Eco-auditing of Tourism Enterprises and Seasonality controls. Other prior programmes to boost the tourism quality and territorial planning agenda in the islands include the I Cladera Decree (1984), the II Cladera Decree (1987), the Global Sanitation Plan (1989), the Plan to Embellish Tourism Resorts (1990), the Hotel Accommodation Modernization Plan (1990), the Modernization of the Complementary Tourism Supply (1996), the Off-Peak Tourism Plan (1997), and the Plan Mirall (1997). Additional measures include the use of 2001/2003 Ecotax, green cards, and sustainable discounts and taking part in several sustainable conventions, including the Charter for Sustainable development, the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, the European Island Agenda, and the Calvià Declaration of Tourism Development in the Mediterranean. However, even with efforts shown, ecotourism as a primary product in the Balearics has not had a high

demand from the clientele. Most ecotourists visiting the islands tend to be of an occasional nature, that is, they are engaged in other forms of tourism in addition to ecotourism.

Some of the ecotourism instruments have received mixed perceptions from the actors, perhaps partly due to a lack of centralised operations. As a result, some folks take advantage of that flaw in the political arenas, e.g. the case of the ecotax. Explicitly, if any destination wants to promote ecotourism as its alternative product, there is a need to have an office (whose activities are independent from politics) that should be responsible for ecotourism actions, including designing, development, and marketing. Although the ecotax is no longer, it left a lesson that environmental policies should not be politicised today at the expense of future generations. With regard to the sales of green cards, 'maximising the welfare of the hosts' could be justifiable if the resulting funds pay high levels of compensation to those whose lifestyle is in any way damaged by the trade, rather than to the public pool as a 'green eye' policy. However, the basis for setting the price of 10€ per card is still unjustified. The WTP could have been a useful mechanism for setting the cost because different persons assign different values to the environment.

Moreover, because there is no evidence to support the need for the associated materials accompanying the green cards, the running costs of the green card could instead be used to finance the environmental activities, which is the focus. It is reasonable to say that, networks are very powerful but require lots of resources to develop; thus, network plans should be incorporated into a destination management plan along with other activities that generate business in the shorter term and take the resources incurred as investment. Also, quality information between actors participating in the networks is fundamental for the survival of the network because it increases trust and commitment between network members. It is not possible to serve two lords equitably and simultaneously. The Balearic Archipelago with gigantic tourism traffic promotes conflicting policies, longing for ecotourism on the one hand and attracting massive numbers of tourists, with associated massive facilities on the other.

For researchers, SWOT analysis of the studied networks will be fundamental in the future to give the picture and direction of the physical impact of these networks on the destination's ecotourism. Also a comparative study that covers both the municipalities with networks and the ones without should be done to gain full confidence of the observed results. There is no study that has looked into the impact of the composition, nature and structure of networks on the activities of ecotourism either in Calvià or Alcúdia. We advocate future research to fill this gap. Demand is the focus in any destination as the actions of networks aim at sustaining the ecotourism market. It is rational, therefore, to study the profile of ecotourists, their motivations, and their attitudes towards ecotourism in the Balearics. Lastly, academics and researchers are influential in many societies; therefore, they should investigate the impacts of politicising the ecological well-being on destination ecosystems and give technical recommendations.

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Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to the Department of Applied Economics, University of Balearic Islands, for the financial support. To the anonymous referees, she extends her appreciation for their constructive comments.

Notes

1. GOB is an NGO founded in 1973, with the main objective of environmental conservation, and the study and dissemination of nature and the environment of the Balearics. INESTUR, which is a public institution, works through the Institute of Tourist Quality (IQT), Research and Tourist Technologies (CITTIB), and Investments for the Improvement of the Tourist Environment (IMET) to regulate and oversee tourism quality and quantity in the Archipelago.
2. European Historic Walled Town projects involved Chepstow and Conwy (Wales), Naarden (Holland), and Alcúdia (Mallorca). See Bruce *et al.* (2001).

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