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Titel:

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NATIONAL PARKS – THE IMPACT OF THE PEAK DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MARK

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Abbreviations

- AA - Automobile Association (UK)
- B&B - Bed and Breakfast
- DCMS - Department of Culture, Media and Sport
- DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- ENPAA - English National Parks Authorities Association
- EPIS - Environmental Product Information Schemes
- EQM - Environmental Quality Mark
- EU - European Union
- FSC - Forest Stewardship Council
- GTBS - Green Tourism Business Scheme
- ICRT - International Centre for Responsible Tourism
- IDBR - Inter-departmental Business Register (UK)
- IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
- NNR - National Nature Reserve (UK)
- NPA - National Park Authority
- NPS - National Park Service (US)
- PDCA - Plan - Do - Check - Act (management approach)
- PDEQM - Peak District Environmental Quality Mark
- PDNPA - Peak District National Park Authority
- PMLA - Product marketing, labelling and accreditation
- SCNP - Standing Committee on National Parks
- sdf - Sustainable development fund (UK)
- SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest (UK)
- UK - United Kingdom
- UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme
- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNWTO - World Tourism Organization
- USP - Unique selling proposition or unique selling point (marketing)

1. Introduction

“One of the greatest misconceptions of our time is the idea that there is somehow a choice between economic development and sustaining nature.”

- Tony Juniper, 9th of January 2013 (JUNIPER 2013)

One of the greatest challenges of our time is undoubtedly the reconciliation of economic development and thus sustaining of communities' livelihoods and the preserving of nature for future generations and in the past, the sustaining of nature often had to give way to economic development. Since the first national parks in England and Wales were founded in the 1950s, they have played an important role in the conservation of cultural and natural landscapes. Additionally to providing the conservation of the specific environment of the protected areas and to averting negative influences from the communities in the protected areas, the national parks have to provide for the communities' livelihoods as well. This form of protected areas, that offer sustainable development opportunities besides nature conservation, are currently receiving an increased interest by research and produce projects and schemes that could prove beneficial for the whole of Europe.

One form of making a living for communities in a national park is the tourism market and since the national parks are “Britain’s breathing spaces” (NATIONAL PARKS 2013a) they are well loved as tourism regions, with all 13 parks receiving a total of over 60 million visitors every year (NATIONAL PARKS 2013b). Especially the Lake District (15,8 million), Yorkshire Dales (9,5 million) and Peak District (8,4 million) National Parks receive very high amounts of visitors who put a substantial strain on the environment and natural resources in these areas. As being one of the top three national parks in the UK, the Peak District National Park is a great research subject for examining projects and schemes to encourage sustainable development.

In order to fulfil the national parks objectives of “conserv[ing] and enhanc[ing] the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage”, “promot[ing] opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the Public” and additionally “seek[ing] to foster the economic and social wellbeing [sic] of local communities within the National Parks” (NATIONAL PARKS 2013c), national parks have developed various schemes to support businesses in carrying out sustainable business practices. One of these options, which is gathering much attention by research, is

establishing an ecolabel that promotes sustainable development including and especially emphasising environmentally sound business management. In 2001 the Peak District National Park Authority created a “place-based, cross-sectoral environmental accreditation scheme” (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3) for businesses in and around the Peak District - the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM). The PDEQM scheme is focusing on environmental and social benefits from desired forms of sustainable business practice and is a tool to boost the economic success of the business and thus is considered to be a sustainability label (see PRINCE 2010, pp. 11f).

In this thesis the impact of the PDEQM is examined looking at the supply side of the tourism market by trying to understand why accommodation businesses participate in and how they benefit from the PDEQM scheme. The results of this case study can lead to a deeper understanding of the inner workings of participants’ decision to take part in an ecolabel scheme and factors that influence the satisfaction of members with such schemes in general. This is especially interesting as often research focuses on determining whether there is (or will be) a marketing advantage through consumer attention for companies that get certified by an eco- or sustainability label. Often these studies cannot precisely determine how the intent of being interested in certified products and services that is often expressed by interviewees translates into increased business for certified firms. That being the case, in this study the supply side of the market will be analysed instead of the demand side to try to determine whether there is a marketing advantage in the PDEQM membership and/or other benefits from the participating firms’ perspective. In other words: What do businesses expect from eco- and sustainability labels and what are the problems in delivering these expectations for the labels?

Additionally, current problems of the PDEQM scheme are discussed concerning their influence on the members’ experiences with the scheme and recommendation for the future development of the scheme are given.

The supply side of the market in this thesis is concentrated on the accommodation sector as one of the business sectors in tourism with the highest impact on the natural environment and resources of the host destination (WEAVER 2006, p. 84). It has been examined using a half standardised questionnaire to interview all 29 current PDEQM award holders that run businesses falling into the category of offering overnight

accommodation for guests. Additionally, there have been two expert interviews with persons closely engaged with the PDEQM scheme throughout its development until now, that offered closer insight and understanding about the inner workings of the scheme.

This thesis is not intended to examine the sustainability of the criteria of the label or even the sustainability of the businesses taking part in it, as that would exceed the scope of the paper.

The thesis is commenced with a short introduction to the themes of sustainability, tourism and sustainable tourism (chapter 2), what is followed by a chapter about environmental management and ecolabelling (chapter 3) and a chapter concerning the national parks in England and Wales and their role in promoting sustainable development (chapter 4). Following that, there is a chapter introducing the Peak District National Park as the spatial frame for the present survey (chapter 5) and the researched ecolabel Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (chapter 6). After a presentation of the used methods (chapter 7), the results will be presented (chapter 8). In the discussion of the results (chapter 9) various research in the area of sustainability, ecotourism and eco- and sustainability labelling is taken into account and compared to the results of this survey. In the concluding chapter (chapter 19) the main findings of the study are condensed and some recommendation for the future development of the PDEQM are given.

2. Sustainability, Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

This chapter is dedicated to the definition and explanation of the terms sustainability and tourism and their combination according to their relevance in this thesis. In the first part of this chapter both single terms will be defined and their historic development shortly summarised. In the following, the term sustainable tourism will be examined, providing the broader background for later chapters that will concentrate on sustainable tourism in the context of the PDEQM in the Peak District National Park.

2. 1 Sustainability

The first emergence of the idea of sustainability can be traced to the 1800s' New England transcendentalist movement's appraisal of the human connections with nature that led to eloquent spokesmen like John Muir advocating the idea of preserving America's natural areas (EDWARDS 2005, pp. 12f). As a result, Yellowstone National Park, the first national park in America, was established in 1872 and started a worldwide national park movement (NPS 2013). Through the years the conservationist movement's ideas evolved into the notion of nature being an ecosystem on which the existence of human life was directly relying, which was championed by Aldo Leopold who promoted respect for the environment in the 1940s (EDWARDS 2005, p. 13).

One of the most famous mile stones of the modern understanding of sustainability was the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 that turned into a phenomenon and encouraged a re-evaluation of the limits of ecosystems by the general public as well as government bodies (EDWARDS 2005, p. 14). Moving on from that landmark unmasking of modern societies' impact on the environment, many conservationist and protest movements emerged and lead to the establishment of institutions like *Earth Day*, that takes place each year on the 22nd of April since 1970 (EARTH DAY 2013). Another pivotal point in the conservation movement was the United Nation Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, that "internationalized [sic] the concerns of the American Earth Day events and focused on the regional pollution, especially the acid rain problems, of northern Europe" (EDWARDS 2005, p. 15). As a result, a number of national environmental protection agencies were established and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was founded (EDWARDS 2005, p. 15).

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In 1987 the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development prominently defined the term sustainable development in the report “Our Common Future”, better known as the Brundtland Report. In this document the term sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (BRUNDTLAND REPORT 1987).

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, also known as Rio Earth Summit, agreed on 27 principles for environment and development including the principle of sustainable development. In *principle 3* the declaration defined that “the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations” (RIO DECLARATION 1992).

DALAL-CLAYTON et al. (1994) define sustainable development as “achieving a quality of life that can be maintained for many generations, because it is:

- socially desirable, fulfilling people’s cultural, material and spiritual needs in equitable ways[,]
- economically viable, paying for itself, with costs not exceeding income, and
- ecologically sustainable, maintaining the long-term viability of supporting ecosystems” (DALAL-CLAYTON et al. 1994, p.4).

Along with the development of the sustainable development idea, there formed two main economical interpretation directions for what sustainability and sustainable development actually mean. These two main theories are called “weak” sustainability (one of the main representatives being SOLOW, see for example SOLOW 1991) and “strong” sustainability (one of the main representatives being DALY, see for example GOODLAND & DALY 1996).. While both approaches aim to secure the best possible future for the whole world’s society, they differ diametrically in their core assumptions (STEURER 2010).

The theory of “weak” sustainability is based on the view that economically one can replace natural capital with man-made capital, so that basically all natural resources can be substituted and are not essential for human life and activity as long as the total value of all capital remains steady or increases. As this view does not include an

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inherently limited fundament, it is in favour of economic growth that is theoretically infinite and is championed by neo-classical economists (STEURER 2010).

“Strong” sustainability on the other hand is an approach based on the fundamental view that natural capital is limited and essential for human life on the planet. This means natural capital is irreplaceable by man-made capital and therefore limits human activity and economic growth. This eco-centric approach that is championed by ecological economists, supports an economic model that is based on sufficiency and efficiency rather than growth (STEURER 2010).

As both of these positions are rather extreme and not really applicable for the modern economy, there formed various middle paths of “balanced” sustainability that postulate that natural capital can partially be replaced by man-made capital. This approach claims that economic growth and natural capital are reconcilable and follows the strategic path of efficiency through ecological consistency by means of policy and market (STEURER 2010).

Today, the most common representation of sustainable development is the three pillar model that indicates to take environmental, economic and social aspects into consideration when planning sustainable development. In addition to the *sustainability triangle* and other forms of visualisation, one often used form of the three pillar model visualisation is a Venn diagram that shows the relationship between the different aspects of sustainability (figure 1). There are many critics and sceptics of the applicability of this model as it can lead to an approach that lacks the needed integration of the three objectives from the start (see for example GIBSON 2006), but it still is the most used basic visual representation of the concept of sustainable development or sustainability.

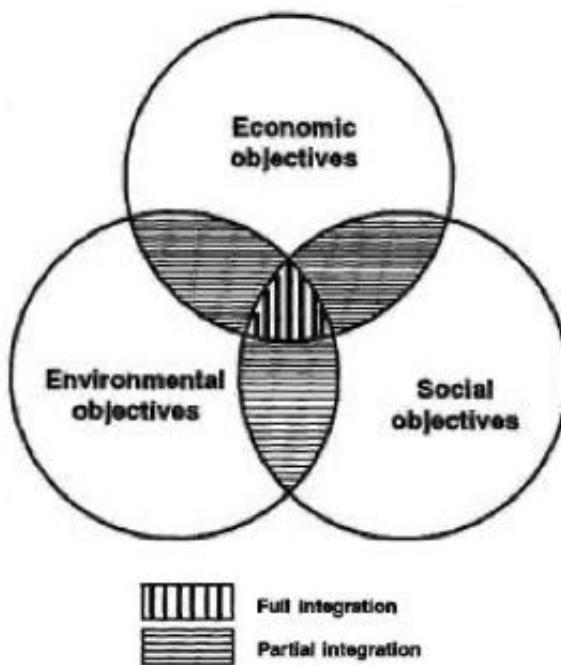


Figure 1: The Venn diagram of the three pillars of sustainability (source: adapted from DALAL-DALAL-CLAYTON et al. 1994, p. 5).

2. 2 Tourism

The United Nations World Tourism Organization defines tourism as follows: "Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes" (UNWTO 2013a). GYR (2010) suggests to differentiate travelling for a specific purpose like migration, war, religion and trade from "travelling as an end in itself in the encoded sense of tourism" that includes leisure, education, sociability and relaxation".

Travelling for recreational purposes in Europe started as early as the classical age (for Africa even under the pharaohs in Egypt) and typically involved only the most privileged groups of the population, who visited monuments like places of cult or sport events like the early Olympic Games. In Roman times travelling was facilitated by the expansion of infrastructure in the Roman Empire that allowed a much swifter transportation of both goods and people (GYR 2010). There even existed an early form of a tourism industry that organised journeys for individuals and groups (LUDWIG 1990,

p. 31). After the fall of the Roman Empire the degradation of roads made travelling increasingly difficult again (GYR 2010).

In the Middle Ages many different forms of travel existed that were tailored to the needs of diverse groups of people like merchants, pilgrims, soldiers and students. Especially travelling for educational purposes was on the rise since the 12th century and began to get attributed the connotation of self-discovery and a means of personal growth and development. Another important aspect of travelling in the Middle Ages were the journeyman years of trainee craftsmen that, in the 16th century, became often compulsory in guilds for a time period of three to four years (GYR 2010).

Between the 16th and 18th century the *Grand Tour* undertaken by young nobles emerged as a precursor of modern tourism. It was intended to educate, broaden the horizon and polish the social graces, was planned to the last detail and took between one and three years. Starting from England for example, France and the classical sites of Italy, as the focal point of the tour, were visited as well as big European cities like London, Paris, Vienna, Munich, Amsterdam and Prague. During these tours, the nobles would only come into contact with members of their own class, what increased communication and strengthened the role of aristocracy in the hierarchy of the time (GYR 2010).

From the Enlightenment to the 19th century, these *Bildungsreisen* ("educational journeys") were no longer only reserved for aristocracy but attainable for members of the (upper) middle class as well, what moved the development of tourism forward an important step. Now, next to journeys for educational enrichment, shorter journeys were increasingly popular and often were aimed at certain interests like nature, culture, art, industry or technology. In this stage of tourism development, pleasure and relaxation steadily grew in importance while the educational purposes slowly took a back seat (GYR 2010).

The industrial revolution and increasingly fast methods of transportation facilitated journeying and, along with industrial advancements, demographic changes, urbanisation, more labour rights and rising income, shaped an increasing demand for tourism in Europe (SPATT 1975, p.44 in GYR 2010). From the 1860s tourism

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experienced a certain popularisation and offered an opportunity for relaxation in an increasingly industrialised and urbanised society (GYR 2010).

The first organised touristic endeavour at a fixed price for travel and food took place in England as an excursion by train from Leicester to Loughborough eleven miles away for about 500 temperance campaigners in 1841. This excursion was arranged by Thomas Cook, who expanded excursions of this kind - especially inexpensive all-inclusive holidays to foreign destinations aimed at middle-class echelons that were a great success - and founded the company Thomas Cook that is still operating today as one of the major tourism firms of the world (THOMAS COOK 2013 and GYR 2010).

The 19th century also brought on the opening of the Alps to tourists, who were influenced by the Enlightenment's and Romanticism's tendencies of sentimentalising nature and especially mountains. This new interest in mountaineering of aristocracy and middle-class inspired an increasing presence of British pioneers in Switzerland and thus the development of touristic infrastructure in the Alps. The interest in mountaineering then underwent a phase of "proletarianisation" at the dawn of the 20th century (GYR 2010).

The steady increase of demand in the tourism industry was interrupted by the First World War and underwent a "developmental phase" between 1915 and 1945 in which more and more lower social classes like lower middle class and workers gained access to holiday making and tourism (FREYER 2006, p. 14). After the First World War, the first holiday rights were established in law and allowed more people access to touristic opportunities. In the 1920s summer retreats for families were popular, either at the sea or in the countryside – especially in the Alps for continental Europeans. In the 1930s the National Socialist Regime in Germany increasingly promoted holiday practices for the masses that were intended to democratise holidays. Holiday and tourism activities then got mostly suspended again by the Second World War from 1939 to 1945 (GYR 2010).

The "High Phase" of modern tourism started with the economic boom after the Second World War with its implications of higher income, more time for leisure and increasingly efficient transportation and communication facilities (FREYER 2006, p. 15). Through the last decades, tourism offers became increasingly inexpensive and thus were available

to more and more parts of the population (GYR 2010). This development is still moving forward today and marks the modern form of tourism as *mass tourism* or *organised or institutionalised tourism* (FREYER 2006, p. 15).

In the year 2012 the number of worldwide international tourist arrivals reached more than one billion after an increase of 39 million arrivals in comparison to the year 2011 with more than half of the tourists travelling to Europe (UNWTO 2013b, p. 7). These numbers and the expectation of increasing touristic activity in the year 2013 (UNWTO 2013b, p. 8) highlight the global need for tourism to adapt practices to safeguard the environment, natural resources and livelihoods and social structures of host communities in order to preserve its own basis as well as needs of future generations.

2. 3 Sustainable Tourism

The first publication focussing on the negative implications of mass tourism that had been on the rise since the 1950s was *Die Landschaftsfresser* by JOST KRIPPENDORF from 1975 and starting from there, the criticism concerning the effects and impacts of mass tourism on the environment, economy and social structure of holiday destinations steadily increased.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the idea of creating an alternative form of tourism (for example the idea of *soft tourism* (JUNGK 1980)) gained momentum and contributed to an emerging discussion about sustainable development and sustainable tourism. In 1993 the first issue of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism was published, indicating the growing attention for and interest of researchers in the topic (TAYLOR & FRANCIS ONLINE 2013).

1996 the World Tourism Organisation, the Earth Council and the World Travel and Tourism Council developed an action plan that was based on the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit results - The “Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development”. In this document recommendations for creating a more sustainable form of tourism were given to all kinds of stakeholders in the tourism industry and were intended to be implemented by the year 2005 (UNWTO 2002).

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In the “Guide for Policy Makers”, published in 2005 and intended to make tourism more sustainable, the UNEP and UNWTO identified twelve aims for sustainable tourism, that are integral parts of ensuring to “minimi[se] the negative impacts of tourism on society and the environment; and maximi[se] tourism’s positive contribution to local economies, the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the quality of life of hosts and visitors” (UNEP & UNWTO 2005, p. 18).

- *“Economic Viability - To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.*
- *Local Prosperity - To maximize the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.*
- *Employment Quality - To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.*
- *Social Equity - To seek a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.*
- *Visitor Fulfillment [sic] - To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.*
- *Local Control - To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.*
- *Community Wellbeing - To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.*
- *Cultural Richness - To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.*
- *Physical Integrity - To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.*
- *Biological Diversity - To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.*

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- *Resource Efficiency - To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.*
- *Environmental Purity - To minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.” (UNEP & UNWTO 2005, pp. 18f)*

The specific sustainability related challenges of the tourism industry that have to be addressed in order to develop sustainable tourism as identified in the background paper “Tourism in the Green Economy” by the UNEP and UNWTO (2012) are:

- (1) *“energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission;*
- (2) *water consumption;*
- (3) *waste management;*
- (4) *loss of biological diversity;*
- (5) *effective management of built and cultural heritage; and*
- (6) *planning and governance” (UNEP & UNWTO 2012, p. 3).*

According to the European Union which is planning to introduce a charter on sustainable tourism later in the year, the competitiveness of European tourism is dependent on its sustainability due to the direct link of the quality of destinations to their natural environment, cultural heritage and integration in the communities. To achieve a sustainable tourism in Europe economic, socio-cultural and environmental demands have to be balanced and reconciled. The European Union recognises the following key challenges for sustainable tourism in Europe:

- *“preserving natural and cultural resources*
- *limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations, including use of natural resources and waste production*
- *promoting the wellbeing of the local community*
- *reducing the seasonality of demand*
- *limiting the environmental impact of tourism related transport*
- *making tourism accessible to all*
- *improving the quality of tourism jobs” (EUROPEAN UNION 2013).*

To meet these challenges some principles were laid down to follow by the Commission of the European Communities that published an “Agenda for sustainable and

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competitive European tourism" in 2007 (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2007). These principles are as follows:

- *taking a holistic, integrated approach*
- *planning for the long term*
- *adopting an appropriate pace of development*
- *involving all stakeholders*
- *using the best available knowledge*
- *minimising and managing risk*
- *reflecting impacts in costs*
- *setting and respecting limits*
- *practicing continuous monitoring" (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2007).*

One main point of criticism in the field of sustainable tourism today is that while sustainability encompasses ecology, economy and social aspects, often the focus still lies on economic viability. In the future efforts in the field of sustainable tourism should stress a balance of these different fields (NEWSOME et al. 2013, p. 387).

To further the sustainable development in the UK, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published a framework for action in the area of sustainable tourism in England in 2009 that details the key challenges for the UK:

- *"Minimise resource use*
- *Address the impact of tourism transport*
- *Improve quality and make holidays accessible to all*
- *Improve the quality of tourism jobs*
- *Maintain and enhance community prosperity and quality of life*
- *Reduce the seasonality of demand" (DCMS 2009, p. 10).*

3. Environmental Management and Ecolabels

One part of sustainability and one of its most explored and institutionalised aspects is the implementation of environmental management in businesses. There are some international standards, most prominently the DIN EN ISO 14000 family, that are recognised as the benchmark and are often used in eco- and sustainability label schemes. In the first part of this chapter the ISO 14001 and the ISO 14020's standards for environmental management and environmental labelling and declarations will be examined to an extent in balance with the scope of this thesis and in such detail to allow a classification of the PDEQM scheme in chapter 6. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to a short introduction to ecolabels and some examples to help put the following information about the PDEQM into perspective.

3. 1 Environmental Management and Ecolabelling: the ISO 14000 Family

3. 1. 1 ISO 14001

Internationally, the DIN EN ISO 14001 is the most important standard for environmental management in businesses that provides the basis for many eco- and sustainability label standards in the tourism sector as well as other business sectors. The ISO 14001 had been published for the first time in 1996, received a revision in 2005 and states the requirements for the implementation of an environmental management system in businesses and how this management system should be structured. The environmental management system is organised in a PDCA (Plan - Do - Check - Act¹) management model that evolves continuously and can be implemented at any organisation regardless of its size (FINKBEINER 2012, pp. 18ff).

A visual representation of the PDCA cycle is shown in figure 2.

¹ sometimes "Review" instead of "Act"

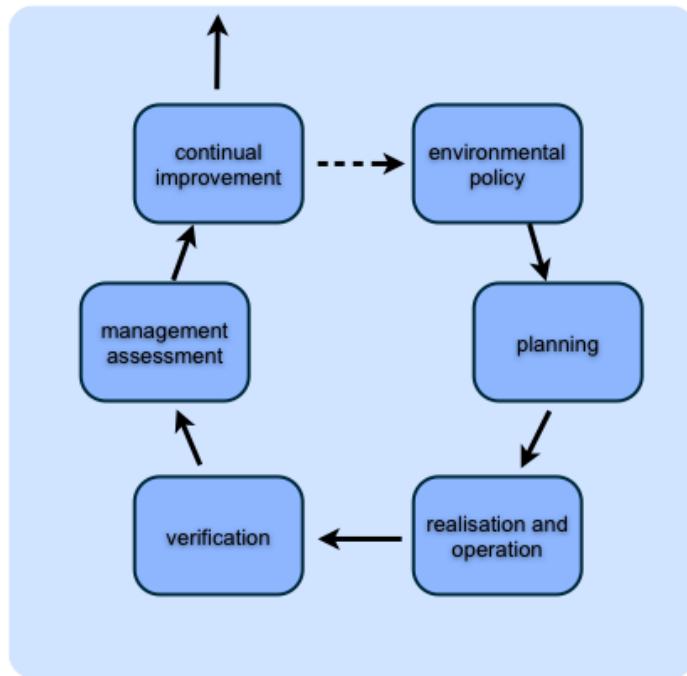


Figure 2: The PDCA cycle (translated from FINKBEINER 2010, p. 21).

The planning stage involves realising the legal requirements from environmental policy for the business and adhering to them, identifying environmental impacts of the business, developing environmental objectives and action plans to reach these goals and developing and devising performance figures to monitor achievements. The realisation and operation stage is about implementing the plans in the management structures of the business (or developing these management structures first) by delegation of tasks, allocation of resources, education of personnel, development of internal and external communication processes, organisation and maintaining suitable documentation practices among others. In the verification stage the realisation and operation should be continuously assessed, the adherence to legal requirements monitored, documentation managed, internal audits executed and deviation from plans recognised and correctional measures taken. In the last step (management assessment and continual improvement in figure 2) the management should be assessed for effectiveness and potential for improvement should be found and acted upon (FINKBEINER 2012, pp. 21f).

In order to communicate that the business follows the ISO 14001 standard it can either get certified by an external organisation, do a self-declaration, get their conformity checked by an outside body with investment in the business (for example customers)

or verify their self-declaration by an independent body. These various opportunities to implement the ISO 14001 are intended to ensure that all businesses can afford committing to environmental management regardless of their size (FINKBEINER 2012, p.19).

3. 1. 2 ISO 14020s

The DIN EN ISO 14020s are norms that regulate the environmental labelling and declaration of products and services. The norms ISO 14021, ISO 14024 and ISO 14025 manage regulation of distribution of environmental information about products, processes and services to third parties and lay down the commonly used types of environmental labelling, while the ISO 14020 contributes general principles of environmental labelling and declaration (FINKBEINER 2012, p. 29).

The ISO 14020 series is intended to set international standards to enable businesses to communicate the environmental benefits of their product or service to the customer through environmental labelling. Thus, the business can implement their efforts to comply with rising demand for more environmentally sound business practice into their marketing strategy. Whether there is significant commercial value in these “claims and marks” is an object of ongoing discussion, especially in the area of scientific reliability of claims and customer trust in the accuracy of environmental claims (ISO 2012, HORNE 2009, BRATT et al. 2011).

The objective of environmental labelling and declaration in accordance to ISO 14020 is to “promote demand and supply of products that cause less environmental stress by communication of verifiable, exact and not misleading environmental information about these products and through that encourage market-driven continuous environmental improvement” (own translation from FINKBEINER 2012, p. 29).

According to ISO regulations there are three types of voluntary environmental labelling (FINKBEINER 2012, pp. 29f):

- Type I (ISO 14024) focuses on private (and commercial) end-consumers and is based upon significant environmental aspects of the life-cycle and is assessed by third-party bodies.

- Type II (ISO 14021) encompasses self-declared environmental claims that are not verified by an outside body.
- Type III (ISO 14025) declarations are aimed at commerce and industry due to the specificity and extent of information that are based on eco-balance and other environmental information.

RUBIK et al. (2005) suggest to differentiate Type I labels into two groups: the *classical ISO Type I*, like the Blue Angel or the EU Flower (as seen in figure 3) and *ISO Type I-like* labels like Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) (also figure 3). *Classical ISO Type I* labels are defined as “third-party labels referring - explicitly or implicitly - to the standard and/ or meeting most of the requirements stipulated therein”, while *ISO Type I-like* labels are defined as “third-party labels containing not most but major elements of the ISO Type I standard” (RUBIK et al. 2005, p. 33).



Figure 3: The EU Flower logo (source: EU FLOWER 2013), the Blue Angel logo (source: BLUE ANGEL 2013) and the Forest Stewardship Council logo (source: FSC 2013).

3. 2 Ecolabels

Ecolabels or sustainability labels are a means of achieving accreditation for businesses that are committed to ecology and/or sustainability and are a tool to inform the customer about the environmental or sustainable performance and properties of services or products. Ecolabels and to an extent sustainability labels fall under the category of environmental product information schemes (EPIS) that are “used to award and promote environmentally superior goods and services and offer information on quality and performance with respect to consumer health, resource consumption and so on” (RUBIK 2005, p. 9).

In the UK there are some well-known examples for eco- and sustainability labels and awards that are outlined in the following in order to create insight into the most commonly known eco- and sustainability labels and to be able to relate the PDEQM to other labels (see chapter 6).

Green Globe.



Figure 4: The Green Globe logo
(source: BLOG CONCORDE BERLIN 2013).

Green Globe is a global certification scheme for sustainable tourism whose standards are based on "Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism Criteria, Baseline Criteria of the Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas, Agenda 21 and principles for Sustainable Development endorsed by 182 governments at the United Nations Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 and ISO 9001 / 14001 / 19011" (GREEN GLOBE 2013a). The scheme's logo is depicted in figure 4.

The Green Globe Standard assesses the sustainability performance of travel and tourism businesses and their supply-chain partners, certification is provided by a third-party independent auditor who works on-site with the clients. Its criteria comprise of 337 compliance indicators sub-sectioned in 41 individual sustainability criteria (GREEN GLOBE 2013a) that are summarised under the main aspects *sustainable management, social/economic, cultural heritage and environmental* (GREEN GLOBE 2013b). A summary of the standard criteria and indicators can be found in the appendix (13. 2).

A Green Globe membership offers many benefits for a business, as it is one of the most recognised sustainability labels in the world and uses reliable standards for sustainable business performance. It also integrates members into a far reaching promotion network, what enables them to reach an audience of about one billion consumers due to the marketing activities of Green Globe Marketing (GREEN GLOBE 2013c).

Green Tourism.



Figure 5: The Green Tourism logo (source: MEKONG TOURISM 2013).

The Green Tourism Programme or Green Tourism Business Scheme GTBS is a label operating in the UK, Ireland and Canada that was founded in 1997 and now has over 2,200 members across all three countries. It is recognised in the UK as an important part of the country's aim to develop a more sustainable tourism and is validated independently by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) (GREEN TOURISM 2013a). The scheme's logo is depicted in figure 5.

“GTBS provides excellent value for money to a wide range of tourism firms with first class environmental advice and auditing. Satisfaction rates of certified firms are very high and drop out rates low, both for the smallest of tourism firms and increasingly at corporate level.”

Xavier Font, ICRT (GREEN TOURISM 2013a)



Figure 6: The three tiers of Green Tourism in the UK (source: VISIT LANCASHIRE 2013).

The Green Tourism Scheme operates at a multi-tier basis, the three levels that can be reached by the businesses being bronze, silver and gold, as seen in figure 6. Currently, 45% of the businesses are graded in the silver level, while 38% reach the gold and only 17% are not graded higher than the bronze level (GREEN TOURISM 2013b). Compulsory measures for businesses who want to fulfil the minimum standards of the Green Tourism scheme are “commitment to sustainability, minimum standards and risk management, annual performance information and green policy” (GREEN TOURISM 2013c).

The underlying principles of the Green Tourism scheme are based on the ISO 14001 standard of integrating an environmental management system into a business and focus on constant improvement and identifying the most important aspects of impact of the business. The criteria and grading are based on business performance and evidence that the measures in place are indeed increasing sustainability in the firm (GREEN TOURISM 2013b).

Members are assessed once in two years by an employee of Green Business, who holds an environmental qualification and received additional initial training from the firm and also regularly receive on-going training (GREEN TOURISM 2013b).

A study conducted by Visit England in 2009 ascertained that there are three main reasons for businesses to join the Green Tourism scheme. More than 90% reported they joined because of a personal commitment to the environment, what could be interpreted as a moral incentive or because of wanting to reduce resource use and costs for the business. 84% said they joined the scheme in order to have access to the marketing advantage of having a green grading and more than 80% joined in order to reduce their running costs (GREEN TOURISM 2013b).

David Bellamy Conservation Award.



**Figure 7: The David Bellamy Conservation Award logo
(source: BELLAMY PARKS 2013).**

The David Bellamy Conservation Award is an award scheme for holiday, camping and caravanning parks that operates in the UK since 1996. In the year 2013/14 610 holiday parks received an award in one of the three tiers of Gold, Silver and Bronze, as seen in figure 8 (BELLAMY AWARD 2013a). The scheme's logo is depicted in figure 7.

3. Environmental Management and Ecolabels



Figure 8: The David Bellamy Conservation Award in Gold, Silver and Bronze (source: Haven 2013).

All parks that take part in the scheme are regularly judged by assessors from local wildlife trusts and other conservation bodies, as awarding holiday parks contributing to wildlife conservation was the first intention of the award. However, there has been a major revision of the judging criteria in the years 2007/08 in order to acknowledge the rising importance of sustainability. As of now, the judging criteria are centred around the measures the parks take to “manage their land as a haven for wildlife; reduce their use of energy, water and other resources; reduce, reuse and recycle the waste they produce [and] support their local communities” (BELLAMY AWARD 2013a) and are evaluated by the assessors taking into consideration any comments from members of the public (BELLAMY AWARD 2013b).

The website of the David Bellamy Conservation Award also encourages tourists to behave as sustainably as possible by providing the “top ten eco-travel tips” (BELLAMY AWARD 2013b) to use public transport instead of coming by private car, if that is not possible to “drive green”, to turn water and electrical facilities off as often as possible, to recycle the waste they produce, eat local food that is produced near the holiday park you are visiting, visit local nature reserves to learn about the countryside you are visiting, feeding birds, keep your dogs and cats under control, buy green or organic products and support local nature reserves or projects that are supported by the park you are visiting (BELLAMY AWARD 2013b).

4. National Parks in England and Wales

This chapter will focus on the explanation of the unique position of the national parks in England and Wales, since they do not fit into the category National Park as defined by the IUCN category II National Park but in category V Protected Landscape/ Seascapes (IUCN 2013).

4. 1 History of the National Parks

The turn towards the beauty of nature and the merits of experiencing nature emerged in Great Britain in the early 19th century that was marked by heavy industrial development throughout the country. Since the Romantic Movement, with poets like Byron and Wordsworth praising the countryside as a source of inspiration and catharsis, the interest in nature and enjoyment of countryside was on the rise during the 19th century. It culminated in 1884 with James Bryce introducing the first Freedom to Roam Bill to parliament. The failing of the bill did not stop the movement campaigning for over 100 years for public access to the countryside. From the early 20th century on, the public took interest in the campaign and supported the idea to allow everyone the enjoyment and reprieve of nature by freeing access to the countryside which was heavily restricted at the time. The main factor giving the movement momentum were the ongoing industrialisation and decreasing living quality accompanying the rising health risks of living in the cities. The demand for access to the countryside caused severe conflicts between land owners, who wanted to enclose their lands for sporting and farming purposes, and the public. The conflict cumulated famously in the Kinder Scout Trespass of 1932 where a mass of people trespassed on private land in the Peak District and five of them were imprisoned for it. This happened one year after an inquiry of the government recommended to create a “National Park Authority” that should be put in charge of finding suitable areas for designation as national parks. As the proceedings were slow, diverse nature conservation and leisure activity groups formed a Standing Committee on National Parks (SCNP) that worked to pressure the government into acting in 1936. After the temporary end of advancement of the case that was caused by the Second World War, the government finally introduced a committee that prepared national park legislation in Great Britain (EVANS 1992).

In 1949 the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act was passed (NATIONAL PARKS 2013d). It presented the legislation for the establishment of national parks to “conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage” in the National Parks and to “promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public” (NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1949).

The first ten national parks were designated in the 1950s, starting with the Peak District as the first in 1951. The Lake District, Snowdonia, Dartmoor, Pembrokeshire Coast, North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales, Exmoor, Northumberland and Brecon Beacons National Parks followed during the same decade. The SCNP that was founded in 1936 became the Council for National Parks (CNP) in 1977 and is now called the Campaign for National Parks. It is a charitable organisation that campaigns for the further protection and enhancement of the national parks. By separate legislation, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads received a status that is equivalent to a national park in 1988. In 1995 the Environmental Act renewed the purposes of national parks and puts the National Park Authorities in charge of fostering the economic and social wellbeing of local communities in the National Park as the planning authority (ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995). With New Forest (2005) and South Downs (2010) the national park “family” gained two further members recently. Today, there are 13 national parks in England and Wales that are represented by the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) (NATIONAL PARKS 2013d).

4. 2 Aims and Purposes of English and Welsh National Parks

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 defined the aims and purposes of national parks in England and Wales. These were revised and slightly added to in 1995 by the Environment Act. Today, the national parks of England and Wales have the statutory purposes to

- “*conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage*” and
- “*promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the Public*” (NATIONAL PARKS 2013c and ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995).

Additionally, providing that the first two purposes are fulfilled, the National Park Authorities are responsible to

- “seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Parks” (NATIONAL PARKS 2013c and ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995).

Thus, the National Park Authorities are not only caring for the conservation of nature but are also responsible for allowing access for the public, maintaining cultural heritage sites and ensuring the social and economic wellbeing of communities in the national parks.

In Great Britain, the idea of the establishment of national parks was always considered having in mind public acceptance of conservation and the multi-functionality of “living and working” landscapes (NATURAL ENGLAND 2013a). To ensure the success of the movement to create national parks it had to combine the goals of different branches of “outdoor enthusiasts” to gain enough force to pressure the government into acting. The different forms of nature lovers and leisure activity promoters included every ideal from nature conservation to recreation in the countryside and demanded to think about ways of bringing them together in a national park from early on. Though it was very clear from the start that this would pose conflicts between nature conservation and recreation purposes, as many recreational activities and overcrowding are detrimental to conservation goals, it was thought that only through experiencing nature and the opportunity to learn about it the need for nature conservation could be ingrained into the public mind (EVANS 1992, p. 66).

To ensure a healthy relationship between the demands of nature conservation and recreational demands, the use of the “Sandford principle” was recommended in the so called Sandford report that was published in 1974 by the National Parks Policy Review Committee. The “Sandford principle” states that “where irreconcilable conflicts exist between conservation and public enjoyment, then conservation interest should take priority” (NATIONAL PARKS 2013e).

As the national parks in England and Wales are inhabited and comprised of cultural landscapes, they fall under category V (protected landscapes/ seascapes) by standards of the IUCN management categories (IUCN 2013). This category typically features areas where anthropogenic activity has shaped an area with “significant, ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value, and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area” (IUCN 2013).

4. National Parks in England and Wales

Based on the vision for the national parks in 2030 published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), sustainability, ability to mitigate climate change of the communities in the national parks and maintenance of wildlife are the key challenges in the future. By trying to achieve progress in these areas, the national parks should inspire people living outside of national parks to adapt ideas and lifestyles for a life within environmental limits and adaption to climate change. All in all, one can state that National Parks act as a test bed for sustainable living for the whole nation (DEFRA 2010).

Taking this into account one could say that national parks in England and Wales for the most part encompass the purposes of UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves that are areas that are designated by national governments and recognised by the UNESCO as areas in which solutions "to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use" and are as such considered to be "living laboratories" (UNESCO 2013). The benefits of Biosphere Reserves include that they can pose the framework for project development to foster sustainable development and create public awareness of present issues with balancing the requirements of nature and humans (UNESCO 2013). This thesis focuses on the PDEQM as an example of a project that tries to foster sustainable business practices in the Peak District National Park and thus would fall into the category of projects mentioned above, cementing the view that National Parks in England and Wales are indeed model regions for sustainable development (see also PÜNJER 2012).

From the start the National Parks in England and Wales followed the concept of integrated nature conservation that comprises the dual use of landscape for human needs and environmental protection, as they protect cultural landscapes rather than strictly natural landscapes (see for example SCHERR & MCNEELY 2008). They thus preceded the now growing sector of "protected landscapes" that "are characterised by the harmonious interaction of people and the land" (NEWSOME et al. 2013, p. 385). This paradigm shift from segregation of nature conservation areas from human inhabitation and agriculture areas to integration of environmental protection and human use as an addition to strictly segregated natural areas now starts to emerge in the rest of Europe as well (see for example MOSE & WEIXLBAUMER 2007).

4. 3 Tourism in English and Welsh National Parks

Today, the 13 national park in England and Wales welcome over 65 million visitors every year what puts an enormous strain on the protected landscapes. With 14.8 million, 9.5 million and 8.4 million visitors each year, the Lake District National Park, Yorkshire Dales National Park and Peak District National Park, have the highest amount of visitors in England and Wales (NATIONAL PARKS 2013b).

These visitor numbers have positive and negative impacts on the national parks' landscape, economy and communities that are taken very seriously by National Park Authorities. Positive impacts include the increase of demand for local services like buses or village shops, local food and crafts, the creation of income and jobs for local people and a certain pressure to conserve the landscape, as this is the main reason for guests to visit the national parks. Among the negative impacts damage to the landscape due to erosion, litter and traffic rank high, while other major negative impacts include the increase of living costs for inhabitants as tourists prices are often employed in the shops and housing prices increase due to holiday home or accommodation demands. Other negative effects are the adaption to tourists' needs more than inhabitants' requirements in shops, a demand for even more shops and holiday accommodations to be developed and also the jobs provided by the tourism industry being seasonal and often low paid (NATIONAL PARKS 2013f).

4. 4 National Parks and Sustainable Tourism

English and Welsh national parks are making a conscious effort to encourage sustainable behaviour in the protected landscapes. As 58% of the visitors reported that they are coming to the national parks to enjoy the scenery and landscape, it is crucial to sustain these qualities in the protected areas in order to still being able to offer them in the future (NATIONAL PARKS 2013g). As explained above, the high strain the numbers of visitors put the landscape under, economy and communities under requires action to be taken to be able to preserve national parks' landscapes and settings for future generations.

On the website of the national parks in the UK, the countryside code, that every tourist should comply with, is displayed in order to remind people how to behave in a

sustainable way when visiting the national parks by following some easy rules. It is stressed to

- *"plan your trip, check the weather forecast, take a map and suitable clothes"*
- *"take all your litter home with you, it can be dangerous to animals and spread disease"*
- *"follow signs and stick to the footpaths, walking at edges causes erosion"*
- *"leave gates as you find them"*
- *"don't move or damage any plants or rocks which provide homes for wildlife"*
- *"keep dogs under control and on a lead when near farm animals"* (NATIONAL PARKS 2013h).

National Park Authorities are working together with other organisation and local communities in order to make tourism more sustainable through information of the visitors, encouragement of leaving the car behind as far as possible, supporting low-impact outdoor activities and encouragement for visitors to buy local. Also, the National Park Authorities try to work together with local communities and stakeholders to get their views and ideas, run green business schemes to further sustainable development in the economy, maintaining footpaths in good condition to combat erosion, control the spread of buildings through planning policies, encourage energy efficiency, especially in a small-scale form, by grant funding and special planning policies (NATIONAL PARKS 2013i).

The national parks, as "models for sustainable development in the countryside" (NATIONAL PARKS 2013j) have also initiated a fund to promote and support sustainable development that is defined as being "about promoting the health and wellbeing of the environment, economy and people. It means helping us all live and work in a way that doesn't threaten our planet now or in the future" (NATIONAL PARKS 2013j). The sustainable development fund (sdf) is financed by the government of Wales and England and is given out by the national parks in Wales (since 2000) and England (since 2002) to projects that concern themselves with sustainable development (NATIONAL PARKS 2013j). As of 2012 the sdf had supported the financing of 1.669 projects by giving out £13.5 million in order to encourage progress for sustainable development (ENPAA 2012).

5. The Peak District National Park

In this chapter the Peak District National Park as the spatial scope, inspiration and benefactor of the PDEQM will be presented. The Peak District National Park was the first National Park designated in England and Wales in 1951 (PDNPA 2013a) and is

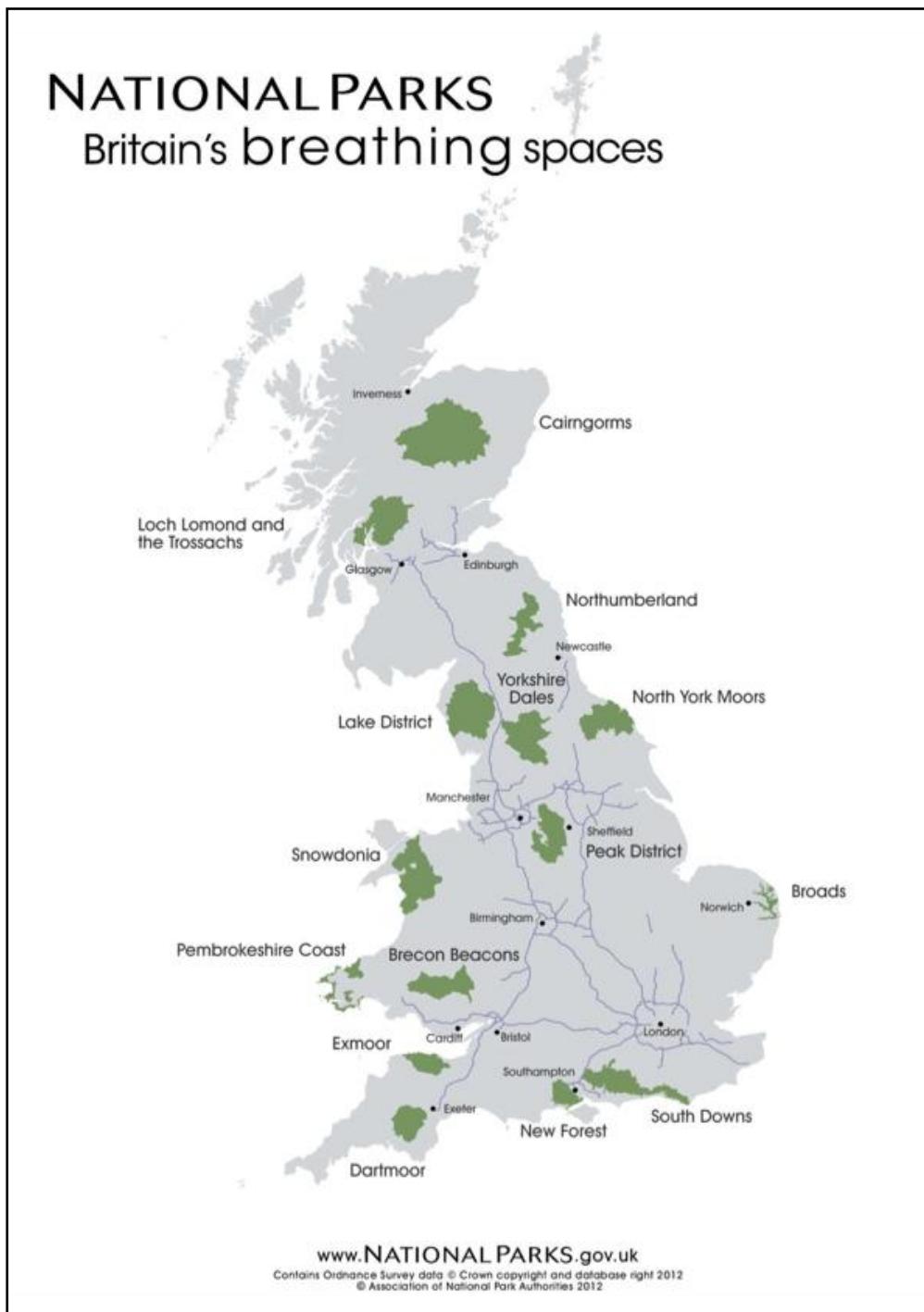


Figure 9: The location of the British national parks (source: NATIONAL PARKS 2013k).

5. The Peak District National Park

one of England's and Wales's top three national parks going by visitor numbers (NATIONAL PARKS 2013b). Its location is shown in figure 9, a map of the Peak District National Park is displayed in figure 10.

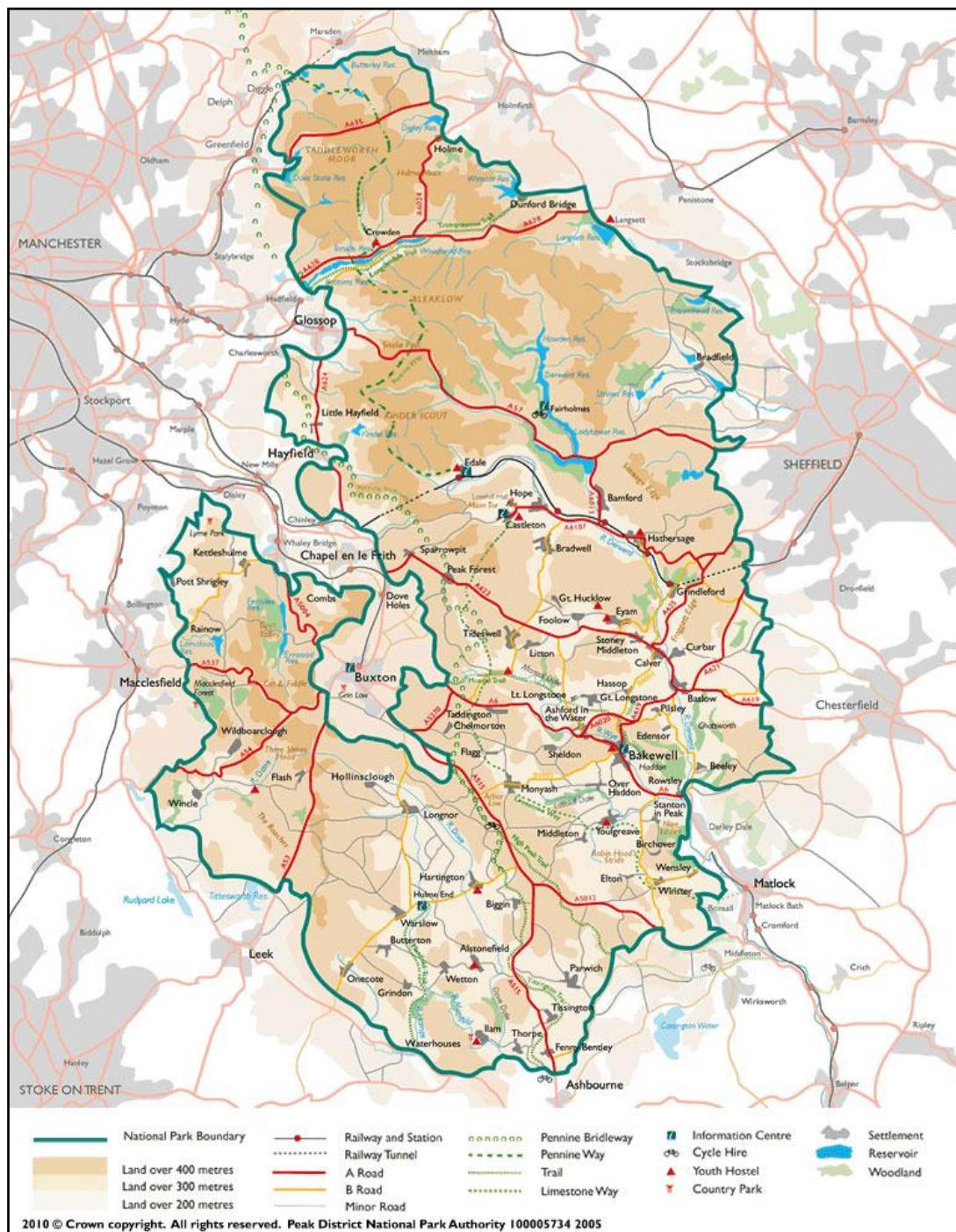


Figure 10: A map of the Peak District National Park (source: PEAK DISTRICT 2013).

5. 1 Location and Conservation Status

The Peak District National Park encompasses a rural upland area of 143,830 hectares situated at the southern tip of the Pennines. It lies within an area of large conurbations and can be reached by some 16.1 million people by car within one hour resulting in millions of visitors every year. The population living within the boundaries of the national park amounts to approximately 38,000 residents that live in towns, villages and dispersed settlements. A multitude of different agencies and organisations on all spatial levels up to national bodies are responsible for the environment of the national park and work closely together with the Peak District National Park Authority. The Peak District covers nine local authority areas as well as four regions and seven highways authorities (PDNPA 2013a). The National Park contains 60 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)² covering 49,919 hectares (35% of the National Park - as of May 2013), 47,100 hectares of Natura 2000 sites³ (33% of the National Park, covering most of the SSSI adding to the conservation status - as of 2011/12) and three National Nature Reserves (NNRs)⁴ - the Derbyshire Dales NNR (consisting of the five separate dales Lathkill Dale, Cressbrook Dale, Monks Dale, Hay Dale and Long Dale), Kinder Scout NNR and Dovedale NNR (PDNPA 2013b).

5. 2 Landscape, Environmental Qualities and Cultural Heritage

The Peak District National Park spans various different landscape types that include the Dark Peak with gritstone formation and broad open moorlands, the limestone plateaux and extreme relief with deeply cut dales and gorges of the White Peak and the diverse river corridor habitats of the Derwent Valley. These landscapes alternate with enclosed agricultural areas, consisting mostly of farmland, wooded valleys, villages and hamlets. The landscapes in the Peak District National Park have been

² SSSIs "are designated by Natural England and are sites that are deemed worthy of protection for their special qualities nationally. These qualities may include biological or geological features" (PDNPA 2013b). "SSSIs are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites" (NATURAL ENGLAND 2013b).

³ including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs).

⁴ NNRS "are designated as sites of national importance where the owner agrees to manage the land for nature conservation purposes" (PDNPA 2013b). "As well as managing some of our most pristine habitats, our rarest species and our most significant geology, most Reserves [...] offer great opportunities to the public as well as schools and specialist audiences to experience England's natural heritage" (NATURAL ENGLAND 2013c).

shaped by human settlements and activities for centuries, classifying them as cultural landscapes that offer a “rich diversity of natural and cultural heritage” (PDNPA 2013c). Most of the land is owned by individual private land owners of which in 2001, when the last data was collected, the biggest was the National Trust owning a total of 17,507 hectares (12% of the total national park area) meaning that the control over the landscape maintenance often lies with private institutions such as the Natural Trust, agencies like the highways authority or individual owners of which the majority are farmers (PDNPA 2013d).

Agriculture is the main feature that shapes the landscape of the Peak District today as in 2010 86% of the National Park area was classified as farmland, consisting mostly of permanent grassland and rough-grazing areas. In the same year there were 1363 agricultural holdings registered with 276 holdings covering over 100 ha and 396 holdings between 5 and 20 ha, making this the most common holding size in the Peak District. In 2012 37% of land was covered by entry environmental schemes and 51% by higher level entry schemes (PDNPA 2013e).

The Peak District is rich in different minerals like limestone, gritstone, and vein minerals which are extracted at various sites throughout the National Park. Currently, there are 39 active mineral working sites in the national park of which 17 are inactive because they are either in suspension or in the aftercare period. The total area covered by both active and inactive sites is 3,337 ha. Both number of sites and the area covered by them is expected to decrease in the future, as many sites are already in the aftercare period. One of the main issues with mineral operations in the Peak District is the legal base under which many of them operate since they have been granted permission to excavate in the 1950s or shortly after that. Often the current environmental, conservational and geo-technical requirements have not been applicable to them and could thus not be enforced by the PDNPA. After some difficulties of the NPA to change that situation, the law changed recently offering the NPA some means to upgrade the practices of old-established operating sites to up-to-date requirements (PDNPA 2013f).

The Peak District is rich in cultural heritage ranging from prehistoric to modern times and is greatly valued for these features. In 2011/12 462 Scheduled Monuments were identified in the national park with seven of them being in the “high risk” category and 78 at “medium risk”. Additionally, there were 2,907 listed buildings in the National Park

in 2011/12 and the PDNPA has designated 109 Conservation Areas in which joint projects between the NPA and the local community aim to conserve the site and develop the community. The number and area covered by archaeological features is not known as the national park has not yet been fully surveyed in this respect (PDNPA 2013g).

One of the main issues of the PDNPA is how the current and future development of the economy will affect the situation of cultural heritage features. Especially the maintenance of listed buildings and conservation areas could be affected negatively by reduced funding (PDNPA 2013g).

5. 3 Socio-economic Situation and Infrastructure

The 2011 census lists about 38,000 people as living within the boundaries of the Peak District National Park and the changes since the 2001 census show a decline of young age groups and an increase of elderly people over 65 that can also be seen nationally (PDNPA 2013h). Population numbers have been stable since 2001 against the increase of population throughout the UK of 7.1 % and one third of the Peak District's population is over 60, which is a much higher percentage than the national average, but is consistent with the situation in other National Parks. Self-employment rate in the Peak District is at over 25% of the working population and thus almost twice as high as the national average (PDNPA 2013i).

The percentage of households having access to a car in the Peak District is higher than the national average with 88% compared to 74% nationally and has increased by 2% since the last census of 2001. Also the number of cars a household has access to is 1.6 on average, while the number for the national average lies just under 1.2 (PDNPA 2013j). The number of operating bus lines has decreased from 96 in 2003/04 to 41 in 2012 due to government cuts and other factors (PDNPA 2013k), rendering the public transport service relatively ineffective and unattractive to locals and visitors alike.

The decrease of local services in the rural areas also affects the Peak District and thus the distances people have to travel to reach them is increasing. In order to maintain access to local services, innovative approaches to offering them have to be found, including community owned services replacing closing public sector offers, co-location

of different services in one building and virtual access to some services. The communication infrastructure is in need of improvement too, as the broadband access is inconsistent throughout the national park and thus impairs the growth of small businesses, working from home and the access to information of the communities (PDNPA 2013l).

The PDNPA is challenged with all mentioned above themes and is trying to improve the situation for the local communities and the landscape of the Peak District by promoting planning opportunities that ensure access to services and employment, encourage the development of innovative means to meet the sustainable transport needs of communities and minimise the distances to services by bringing them to the communities physically and virtually (PDNPA 2013l).

The economic activity in the Peak District ranges from farming, land management and manufacturing to the accommodation and retail sector (PDNPA 2013m). The unemployment rate of the Peak District National Park is lower than the national average of 3.9% (November 2012), though exact data are relatively difficult to cut from various Lower Super Output Areas⁵ and ward boundaries⁶. The main age group to be affected by unemployment in the Peak District is the younger generation though the Peak District seems to be less influenced by continuing recession and resulting unemployment, due to the relatively high wealth levels and average age of the residents (PDNPA 2013n).

The decline of traditional manufacturing and agriculture-based industry, that does affect the whole nation as well as the Peak District in the last 30 years, resulted in the loss of skilled workers and the need to diversify in different sectors as tourism industry and the service sector. In addition to established businesses being able to adapt to economic and social changes new business sectors like breweries and renewable energy generation are emerging in the national park and offer new employment opportunities (PDNPA 2013o).

⁵ “Super Output Areas were designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics and are built up from groups of Output Areas” (ONS 2013a).

⁶ “Electoral wards/divisions are the key building block of the UK’s administrative geography, being the spatial units used to elect local government councils in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and the London boroughs in England; unitary authorities in Wales; council areas in Scotland; and district council areas in Northern Ireland” (ONS 2013b).

The typical business in the Peak District is very small, with 75% consisting of 5 or fewer employees. The proportion of knowledge based businesses is around 25%. About half of the national park's residents commute to working places outside the Peak District National Park, while four in ten jobs in the Peak District are held by employees who live outside the boundaries of the national park (PDNPA 2013p).

Agriculture is a main business factor in the Peak District, although it operates in an area that is classified as a *Less Favoured Area* by the DEFRA. With most land being classified as severely disadvantaged (mainly grade 4 or 5, indicating the poorest agricultural land) agriculture in the Peak District is reliant on agricultural subsidies and/or environmental payments to keep their economic viability. To broaden their opportunities to generate income, farmers are assisted by the NPA to diversify their offers into fields as sustainable tourism, wildlife conservation and woodland management. The diversification scheme consists of four different levels of environmental management called *levels of stewardship* that range from basic straightforward approaches to stewardship of the countryside to more complex management strategies adapted for the respective circumstances at the higher level (PDNPA 2013e).

In 2010 3012 people were reported to work in agriculture in the Peak District, 1209 of farmers working full-time and 1136 classified as working part-time. Additionally, there were 211 full time employees, 264 part time workers and 172 casual workers working on farms in the Peak District (PDNPA 2013e).

Despite a steady decline in job offers due to increased efficiency, extraction of minerals is another important business factor in the Peak District and continues to be a major employer in the area (PDNPA 2013o). The Peak District is one of the last major fluorspar sources in Britain and currently contains the only processing plant that supplies acid-grade fluorspar for the hydrofluoric acid production of the UK. Additionally, the Peak District is a main supplier of building materials that is mostly sold to be used outside the national park. One issue with those big mineral operations is that without them being large enough to be economically attractive the supply of traditional building stones to the local area would also be threatened (PDNPA 2013f).

Tourism offers a large source of employment for the Peak District and is estimated to offer about 7,500 jobs and contributes £31 million to the economy of the National Park

5. The Peak District National Park

each year. It is also one of the growing business sectors in the Peak District National Park (PDNPA 2013p). In 2005 a survey of businesses in the Peak District conducted by the Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce 131 of the 290 responding companies were (at least partially) identified as tourism businesses with 52 of them listed as hotel or accommodation, while 89 businesses identified as offering accommodation, with a total of 1696 bed spaces (DERBYSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2005). As these data are not very recent and only encompasses the 290 respondents to the survey, it can only hint at the actual scope of the tourism sector in the national park's economy.

6. The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM)

This chapter will focus on the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark to ensure an understanding of the scheme as a basis for the survey undertaken for this thesis. The PDEQM is a labelling scheme that aims to assign businesses with a sustainable business practice in the areas of ecology, economy and social aspects that are located in the Peak District and care for its reservation and conservation for future generations. In the following, the history of the scheme's development, its concept and criteria and current marketing will be described.

6. 1 History of the PDEQM

The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM) was founded in 2001 as a “pioneering, place-based, cross-sectoral environmental accreditation scheme” for businesses that supported and “contributed to the conservation of the Peak District National Park” (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3) and was intended as a “product marketing, labelling and accreditation (PMLA) initiative” (Johnson et al. 2005, p. 11). The PDEQM was part of the “Eat the View” initiative launched by the Countryside Agency as one of their two pilot projects. Other participating organisations were English Nature, the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) and the PDNPA (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3).

The PDEQM was designed to be an experimental scheme that could be adopted for other areas, especially protected areas, and is tied to the Peak District as a place-based scheme that focuses on participants' contribution to the conservation aims and purposes of the national park. Additionally, the PDEQM scheme is aiming to integrate various business sectors in the area to create a network of businesses that contribute to the conservation efforts of the national park in a pro-active way. These contributions include a business ethic that encompasses a high standard of environmental management performance that is expressed through the compliance with the PDEQM standards that must be met by every participant (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3).

The purposes of the PDEQM scheme are to:

- *“Encourage businesses to develop projects that maximise environmental benefits to the Peak District National Park and minimise adverse environmental effects”*

6. The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM)

- Create a “marketing edge” for participating businesses, distinguishing their products and services from those of their competitors
- Encourage collaborative marketing of related products or services (for example in tourism and food production promotions) (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3).

The PDEQM was developed from two different approaches during the late 1990s. The first being the PDNPA looking for ways to create a local environmental quality mark, getting inspiration from a study about local produce marketing schemes in protected areas abroad. The other being the recently founded national government body of the Countryside Agency that was trying to develop schemes that carried out their aim to connect countryside conservation with economic development. Finding common aims and purposes made the PDNPA and the Countryside Agency decide to face the challenge together and in the end led to the development of the PDEQM. The scheme was developed taking into account more than 30 existing national and international environmental schemes and research and the Countryside Agency’s commission work to investigate the “applicability of foreign product labelling schemes to the UK” (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3). Among the studied schemes were the Green Tourism Business Scheme - Scotland & South Hams, ECOTEL - international, the David Bellamy Conservation Award, Little Acorn - New Forest, Green Globe - international, all kinds of organic schemes, ISO 9000/14000 and EMAS (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 11). The schemes were analysed and some placed on a continuum from offering few measurable to specific environmental benefits along with the still to be developed PDEQM as seen in figure 11.



Figure 11: A comparison of different PMLA schemes and placement of the PDEQM on the continuum (source: JOHNSON et al. p. 13).

6. The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM)

Other PMLA schemes that were examined during the planning stage of the PDEQM often fell more into one of the categories “product”, “process” and “place”, where only the product was protected, for example by the European Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) scheme, the process of production was certified to follow environmental protection, for example organic farming schemes, or the place of origin was labelled, for example the Union Jack to indicate a product that is produced in the UK. Contrasting to these examples, the PDEQM was intended to integrate product authenticity, environmental criteria and place-based marketing in one PMLA scheme (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 13).

Initially, there were four PDEQM standards that were applicable to *Farming businesses*, *Food & Drink businesses*, *Arts & Crafts businesses* and *Accommodation businesses*. Each standard had its own special objectives concerning their contribution to the conservation of the Peak District and business’ environmental management. The *Farming Standard* focused on the land management and farming practice, emphasising the specific Peak District landscape features and wildlife habitat on the farms. The standards for the other business sectors were more concerned with general environmental management, for example energy, water and waste minimisation, and delivering environmental benefits to the national park by buying products from PDEQM farms or farms that participated in agri-environmental schemes (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3).

To ensure the integrity of the scheme, the PDNPA legally protected the PDEQM logo as a certification mark registered with the Patent Office to limit the use to award recipients only. Additionally, an independent Award Panel was established that determined whether applicants met the criteria for the PDEQM standard of their business sector and then proposed the successful candidates for the award to the PDNPA. The award then is licensed for use to the business for one year and is validated annually under the premise that the business is still complying with the respective PDEQM standard (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3).

The PDNPA is promoting the award in different ways since the launch of the PDEQM, including press releases, the scheme website (<http://www.eqm.org.uk/peakdistrict/index.asp>), a leaflet with current PDEQM holders that is distributed in the four PDNPA Tourist Information Centres and features of the award holders in the PDNPA’s

6. The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM)

newspaper “Parklife” and the official Peak District Visitor Guide. Additionally, the PDNPA promotes the PDEQM at agricultural shows and local fairs and offers promotional support to participating businesses in the form of marketing materials, networking events and advice and grant aid (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 3).

The PDEQM scheme has undergone a review and renewal phase in 2011 and has been validated by Visit England. The renewed scheme is now conceptualised to be adaptable for other destinations than the Peak District National Park as well (PDEQM 2013a). Since April 2012 the PDEQM’s funding period ended and a CIC⁷ was founded that “is tasked with the day-to-day operation of the Environmental Quality Mark (EQM) scheme, marketing the scheme to new and prospective participants and marketing the schemes to other destinations and organisations which may wish to lease EQM for their own purposes” (EQM CIC 2013a). The PDNPA is still offering in kind support by offering promotional services and offices to the CIC but since the funding ended, the PDEQM label has to fee their members for taking part in the scheme (Suzanne Fletcher on the 24th of June 2013 and Bill Purvis on the 25th of June 2013). At the moment, businesses with fewer than ten employees are charged £150 (£180 including VAT) and businesses with ten or more employees have to pay £350 (£420 including VAT) (PDEQM 2013b).

This development caused some financial pressure for the PDEQM as the fees cannot cover the costs of the PDEQM scheme and currently the PDEQM looks for sponsors (Bill Purvis on the 25th of June 2013). This problem is recognised in literature as a common one concerning especially newer ecolabels that had been supported by funding bodies through the developmental stages of the label and that are not able to cover their costs by application fees or in this case yearly fees from their members (FONT 2001a).

In the five year vision of the PDEQM business plan from July 2013 it is stated that the CIC intends to increase the number of fee paying participants to 200 by 2017, to maintain a drop out rate of no more than 10%, to license the EQM scheme to two other destinations by 2016, to attain sponsorship of £5,000 for the year 2015/15 and thereafter annually sponsorship and to exceed expenditure with income (excluding grants) by 2017 (EQM CIC 2013b).

⁷ CIC - community interest company.

6. 2 Concept and Criteria of the PDEQM

Despite the name Environmental Quality Mark, the PDEQM does not only guarantee a certain standard of environmental performance of a business, but also considers the economy and the social aspects of living in a protected rural area and can thus be categorised as a sustainability label. As the PDEQM is awarded to all businesses that apply and fulfil the standard of sustainable business practice the PDEQM requires, this scheme is a label and not an award. Contrastingly, awards are characterised by the practice of only awarding the best examples of certain areas, as for example sustainability of business practice, from a pool of applicants (AYUSO et al. 2005).

On the website of the PDEQM scheme, the PDEQM concept is summarised as follows: “*The EQM is a place based environmental quality mark that enables any businesses to demonstrate how they use and enhance the place in a sustainable way, to increase the fulfilment of customers. It is a way that businesses can demonstrate not only how they are running good, sustainable businesses, reducing their negative impact on the environment and supporting their communities but also influencing customers' behaviour, engagement and knowledge*” (PDEQM 2013a).

The PDEQM is presented to businesses that

- 1) *“put pride in the Peak District at the heart of their operations*
- 2) *actively help safeguard and improve the Peak District environment and heritage*
- 3) *safeguard natural resources*
- 4) *promote their values to their customers*
- 5) *add to the wellbeing [sic] of their communities*
- 6) *work together with businesses in other sectors, use and promote their produce and services”* (PDEQM 2013b).

These qualities are surveyed by the PDEQM officers through a catalogue of questions that have to be answered by the applicant. This requires the applicants to think about their businesses and to report their business practice as well as their attitude towards the Peak District National Park and their intention to participation in the scheme if being approved of. Businesses should complete the Green Start process in order to apply for the PDEQM as this helps or reassures the businesses to be able to comply with green tourism standards that are required for application for all Visit Britain validated accreditation schemes (VISIT BRITAIN 2013). Additionally, there are sets of questions

6. The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM)

that target different sectors of businesses like farming or tourism businesses for example. The full question catalogue of questions can be found in the appendix. (13.1).

There are no measurable or hard criteria for the PDEQM application as this proves impractical due to the limited scope of many businesses in the Peak District and the means of the PDEQM scheme at the moment. Many firms have no way of exactly measuring many consumption factors as they are carried out on a very small scale basis and often have no separate facilities for their own home and the business, thus being unable to offer exact data for consumption of energy or water for the business. Another reason for the best practice approach of the PDEQM scheme is the difficulty of determining threshold criteria, like reduction of energy use by xx% in 2 years, for the whole range of targeted businesses from farming businesses that additionally offer a cottage with self-catering, over a small arts and crafts business to a larger hotel with spa facilities. As a result, and in order to be as inclusive as possible for all kinds of businesses, the PDEQM criteria are best practice oriented rather than based on a comprehensive fact-based catalogue of standards and each application is decided on a by-case basis (Bill Purvis on the 25.06.2013). This flexibility of criteria is typical of labels dealing with accommodation (or in this case various types of firms including accommodation businesses) (FRANKL et al. 2005a).

After the PDEQM officer has visited the business' site and is satisfied that the applying business meets the scheme's objectives, a report and a recommendation for the business will be generated by the CIC. This will then be presented to the independent PDEQM award panel for a decision whether to award the PDEQM to the business or not. The business' data will be updated every year and the PDEQM officer pays a monitoring visit to the business to ensure the continuing compliance with the scheme's objectives in every second year (PDEQM 2013a).

Applicants who are not accepted at the first try are offered advice on how to fulfil the PDEQM scheme's expectations at the next attempt (Bill Purvis on the 25.06.2013).

Looking at the criteria and concept of the PDEQM, one could classify the label as being in the *ISO Type I* category, probably it would be considered an *ISO Type I-like* label as suggested by RUBIK et al. (2005, p. 33). It includes the PDCA cycle approach of adhering to environmental policy, planning of measures in the environmental sector and verification due to constant management and control and verification through

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yearly assessments and the requirement to develop new action plans every year. This concept is aimed to result in constant improvement to the business management procedures and thus concurs with ISO 14001 aims and purposes. Additionally, the assessment is undertaken by a third body as required by this type (see description of ISO categories in chapter 3).

6. 3 Marketing of the PDEQM

Currently, the marketing of the PDEQM faces a certain decline, as a number of businesses discontinued their membership since the start of the feeing system in April 2012. According to Bill Purvis (on the 15th of June 2013) membership numbers fell from around 100 to about 60 total members, with 29 current members in the accommodation sector. According to Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) data by the ONS, there were 2,915 businesses operating in the national park area in 2012, what would put the market share of PDEQM certified companies at about two percent. As the data comprise accommodation and food services (245 businesses in 2012), a market share of PDEQM certified accommodation offers cannot be calculated (PDNPA 2013o).

The future marketing objectives of the PDEQM (and Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark) for existing and prospective award holders aim to achieve the business plan's aim to attract 25 new award holders per year until 2017. Other objectives include the compilation and distribution of an e-newsletter three times a year, presence at various events in the Peak District (and Staffordshire) and to get the proprietors and partners of the EQM to actively promote the scheme. Additionally, a discount will be offered to existing award holders if they introduce a new applicant and a compilation of revised benefits for market award holders is planned to be distributed to encourage new applicants to join (EQM CIC 2013a).

The marketing strategies for the public and customers of the award holder businesses and the prospective scheme licensees are not yet available as the CIC is currently in the planning stage and will not be complete until spring 2014 (EQM CIC 2013b).

7. Methods

This chapter will focus on the first three phases of a research process, namely problem definition, definition of the object of research and employment of research methods, as described by ATTESLANDER 2010 (p. 21) and additionally give a short criticism of the methods used.

7. 1 Problem Definition and Development of the Questionnaire

In this study the influence of the PDEQM on accommodation businesses in the Peak District should be analysed. Due to the scope of the thesis it was determined to employ a case study and utilise an explorative approach to the object of research. This approach's benefits include the ability to capture qualitative data and allows for a detailed analysis of processes that lead businesses to applying for the PDEQM and their experiences with the scheme. The major drawback of this method is the lack of representativeness, but the object of research would not allow for representativeness outside of the specific case due to the small number of PDEQM holders in the accommodation sector (ATTESLANDER 2010, p. 61).

The present survey of accommodation businesses that are also holders of the PDEQM was realised through a qualitative, structured interview of all current PDEQM holders (interviewees were owners or managers of the business) using a half-standardised questionnaire (see ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 133 and 144f). The interviews were carried out personally by a face-to-face meeting at the business in the Peak District or by a telephone interview with the PDEQM holder. As there are presently 29 holders of the PDEQM that operate in the accommodation business it was possible to aim for a complete survey of all members instead of drawing a sample. Being a case study, this survey does not intend to result in representative data for the larger research area of sustainability and ecolabels, but only has to represent the members of this scheme. Findings of this survey can then be extrapolated according to applicability for other cases of still developing eco- and sustainability labels and the broader field of sustainability research.

To be able to develop a questionnaire to achieve insight into the questions that should be answered by the survey, the problems have to be clearly determined beforehand. The questions that are the basis of this survey are the following:

- What is the motivation of accommodation businesses in the Peak District to take part in the PDEQM scheme?
- What expectations do businesses have for their participation in the PDEQM scheme?
- Are the expectations of the businesses for being a member of PDEQM met?
- Do only environmentally aware businesses take part in the PDEQM scheme?
- What do businesses think are the important aspects of their business that enable them to meet the requirements for the PDEQM?
- How does holding the PDEQM impact business decisions and management?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of the PDEQM scheme?
- Do businesses hold other awards and why do they do that?
- How do businesses use the PDEQM for advertising and marketing?
- How does holding the PDEQM impact the business performance?

The last question is always very interesting for environmental or sustainable tourism schemes, as it significantly influences the demand for environmental and sustainable certification on the supply side of the market. Since this is a difficult question to answer in the scope of this thesis, as it is very challenging to distinguish and isolate different factors influencing business performance, this question was only dealt with very marginally and generally.

Taking the questions mentioned above into account the questionnaire was developed. Additionally, some questions were added to allow an overview of the various businesses, as they are ranging from spa hotel over businesses offering multiple self-catering cottages to businesses only offering one small cottage that sleeps two. Being a qualitative survey the respective business situation is very important to be able to understand the answers given and to be able to analyse the different intentions behind joining the PDEQM. Some questions were closed (ATTESLANDER 2010, p. 146) to ease the comparability of the answers in cases where the asked information was of a more factual nature. In other cases the questions were a combination of closed and open to have the possibility to create countable data without losing the opportunity to have an

additional explanation for the answer given (for example questions 5 and 30, see appendix 13. 1).

The questions were developed following the general guidelines to question formulation detailed by ATTESLANDER 2010 (pp. 155ff). In particular, the following aspects were considered while developing the questionnaire to ensure comprehensibility of questions and avoid misunderstandings:

- avoidance of technical terms
- use of short and simple questions
- concrete questions, no hypothetical questions
- no suggestive phrasing of questions and neutral wording
- only one issue per question
- no double negation
- equality of negative and positive answers (see ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 155ff).

The complete questionnaire can be found in the appendix at the end of the thesis (13. 1).

In addition to the survey, there were two expert interviews that were respectively based on a partly structured guideline and conducted personally face-to-face (ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 141f). The interviews were executed informally and intended to grant access to background information about the EQM CIC, the history and general information about the PDEQM and the current issues with the scheme that were important for the understanding and analysis of the survey's results.

7. 2 Interviewees and Interviewing Process

The present survey was planned to be carried out on current PDEQM members, because they were sure to be still in business and invested into the PDEQM scheme enough to at least still be members and though likely to participate in the survey. The survey was carried out in co-operation with the EQM CIC, as they are interested in the results of this thesis as a basis to know what their members expect of and think about the scheme at the moment and explore improvement opportunities for the future. As aiming to be a self-sustaining scheme, the PDEQM currently does not have the means to do regular studies like the one carried out in this thesis and as a result has to rely on

outside help. The co-operation thus allowed the CIC to include some questions in the survey that are of interest to them and in return facilitated the compilation of and contact to the potential interviewees for the author. In this case the selection of the interviewees was eased by the fact that there were currently only 29 participants in the accommodation sector what allowed for a complete survey of all participants rather than drawing a sample.

The survey was partly carried out by personal face-to-face interviews that took place at the business location in the Peak District (14 interviews) or by a personal telephone interview (six interviews). The personal face-to-face interviews were carried out between the 12th and the 26th of June 2013 and the telephone interviews were carried out between late June and the middle of August 2013. Participants were sent the questionnaire before the actual interview to allow them to prepare some questions that could not necessarily be answered instantly and reflect their motivations and experiences before answering the questions. The interviews took between 30 and 90 minutes depending on time limitations and elaboration of answers.

All interview results have been anonymised in order to allow for a more open assessment of the expectations and experiences of the interviewees.

The two experts interviewed were Suzanne Fletcher, who works for the PDNPA and was concerned with the EQM scheme from its start as a pilot project and Bill Purvis, who works in the EQM CIC and is concerned with the day-to-day business and current issues of the PDEQM and the EQM CIC. The interview with Suzanne Fletcher was conducted on the 24th of June 2013 in the PDNPA offices in Aldern House in Bakewell and the interview with Bill Purvis took place on the 25th of June in Tideswell. Both interviews took approximately 80 minutes.

7. 3 Result Analysis

The results of the survey will partly be analysed quantitatively using simple statistical methods like percentage of answers using the programme Apple Numbers (analogue to Microsoft Excel). Further statistical analysis is impractical and impossible due to the low number of participants in the scheme in the sector of accommodation businesses.

The emphasis of analysis lies on the qualitative examination of results in order to be able to analyse the intentions and expectations underlying the businesses' decisions to apply for the PDEQM and their evaluation of their work and satisfaction with the PDEQM scheme in their area of business. To analyse the open questions, similar themes and answer patterns were grouped or categorised (ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 302f) in the result chapter and later examined in these categories in the discussion.

The results will be interpreted on an internal basis in the context of the PDEQM scheme and externally by comparing them to other studies and research in the area of eco- and sustainability labelling (see ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 316f).

7. 4 Criticism of Methods

Qualitative interviews are always charged with a variety of aspects that have to be considered in order to guarantee a scientifically sound result. The major aspect that cannot be omitted is that an interview is always a social situation that in itself can have considerable influence on the answers given. The interview situation can be described as a reactive system that is influenced by stimulus, person and reaction. Stimuli include the surroundings and time of the interview, the appearance of the interviewer and every question posed. Following the stimulus is the reaction of the interviewee that includes internal evaluation and analysis of the stimulus and following that the formulation of the answer that can be considered the reaction to the stimulus. The internal process of assimilating influences and determination of reactions or answers is impossible to decipher for the interviewer and thus have to be noted as unavoidable imprecision of all interviews as methods for research (ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 113-118).

An additional object of attention has to be the fact that answers to interview questions can be ambiguous and have to be considered individually while bearing the context in mind. Also, single answers cannot be treated as isolated data, as the answers in a single interview have deep connections to each other and can only be interpreted correctly in context, especially in qualitative research (ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 131f).

A pre-test of the questionnaire could not be conducted due to the temporal restrictions of this project and owing to the case study nature of this survey. Conducting a pre-test

could have resulted in additional pre-categorisation of open questions to avoid having to categorise the answers given later on, but with the subject of the survey being the accommodation businesses holding the PDEQM a pre-test with other participants of an eco- or sustainability label would in all likelihood not have been relevant for the examined case and thus redundant. Another benefit of pre-tests is of course the elimination of ambiguous questions and the affirmation of the instrument resulting in useful information for the survey (ATTESLANDER 2010, pp. 295f). This benefit was in part acquired through other means by getting a review and comments on the questionnaire by the EQM CIC before using it, what gave access to the opinion from experts in the field of the survey object.

The circumstance that the questions were not posed firstly at the actual interview but rather given to the interviewee beforehand is considered as a necessary measure, as most of the questions do not rely on spontaneous reactions but rather on being able to think about the questions what allows the interviewee to answer in a reflective way. Due to the nature of the questions asked in the interview the sending out of the questionnaires before the actual interview is not considered as being problematic for the quality and “verity” of answers (see ATTESLANDER 2010, p. 149). The questions are indeed about personal experience but are not charged with considerable social expectations for the answers as the businesses are already showing responsibility in the sustainability sector.

In other cases giving the interviewees time to think about their answers could prove a derogatory factor for the results. In this case the opportunity to think about the answers beforehand is considered to contribute to an improvement of the interview flow, as the interviewee was not required to go and look up data repeatedly, and improve the quality of answers given, as improvement suggestions and assessment of satisfaction with a scheme tend to take some thought and reflection. Additionally, it was emphasised in the introductory interview requests that the results will be used to improve the PDEQM scheme, so answering truthfully and thoughtfully would be beneficial to the interviewees in the end.

Not being a native speaker of English could be a source of misunderstandings between interviewer and interviewee that cannot be excluded completely but were minimised by checking any perceived unclear answer with the interviewee during the interview.

8. Results

The following chapter will detail the results of the survey that has been undertaken in the Peak District National Park among the holders of the PDEQM in the accommodation sector. The survey questionnaire starts off with general questions about the business, to be able to put other answers into perspective, and then aims at the motivations to join the PDEQM, how joining the PDEQM has influenced the firms so far and how expectations match the real outcomes of being part of the PDEQM scheme. All graphics in this chapter are based on the author's own survey results.

8. 1 General Information about the Business

Most of the interviewees started their companies after 1990 and only one firm was started as early as in the 1950s (that is listed as 1955, but no concrete year could be given by the interviewee), while the newest business was started in 2011 (fig. 12).

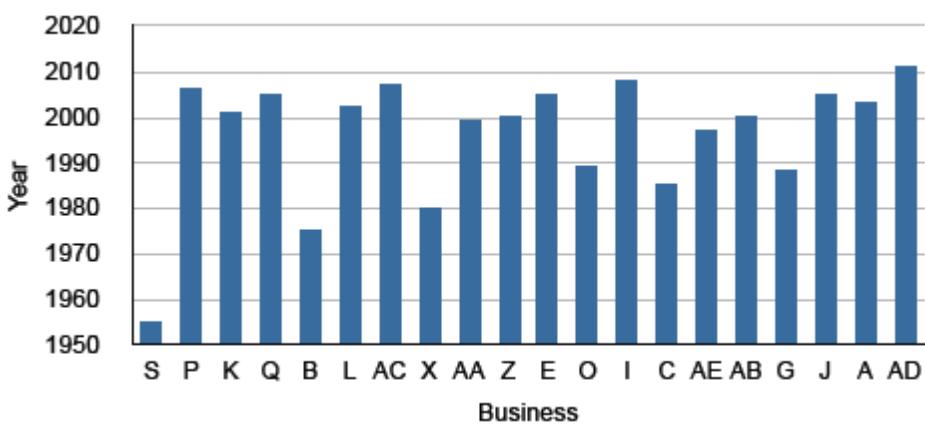


Figure 12: Year of business start (source: own data).

The vast majority of accommodation providers fell into the category of self-catering, followed by a much smaller amount of bed and breakfast (B&B), only two businesses interviewed were hotels. The percentages of the accommodation categories are graphically shown in figure 13. Some companies offered more than one category of accommodation, for example some B&Bs additionally offered self-catering accommodation.

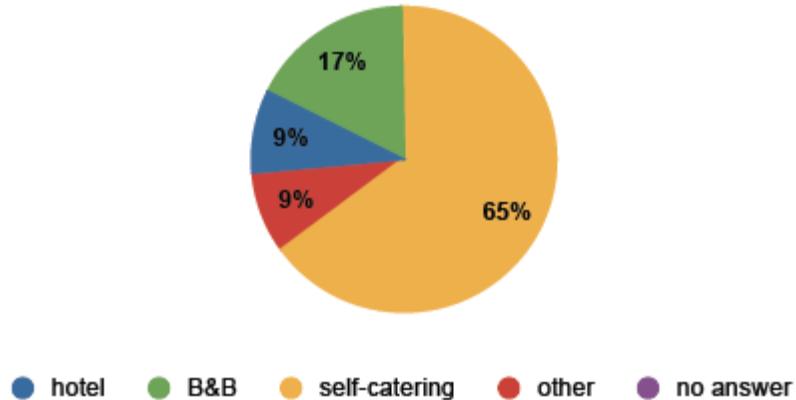


Figure 13: Category of the accommodation businesses (source: own data).

Most of the companies offered less than 20 beds, the three largest provided 30, 45 and 68 beds (see figure 14). The largest bed number and the 30 beds were offered by hotels, while the 45 beds were offered in a combination of B&B and self-catering cottages. The two businesses that are listed as offering zero beds are camping sites that in one case offer 31 caravan and 40 tent places and in the other case 35 tent places.

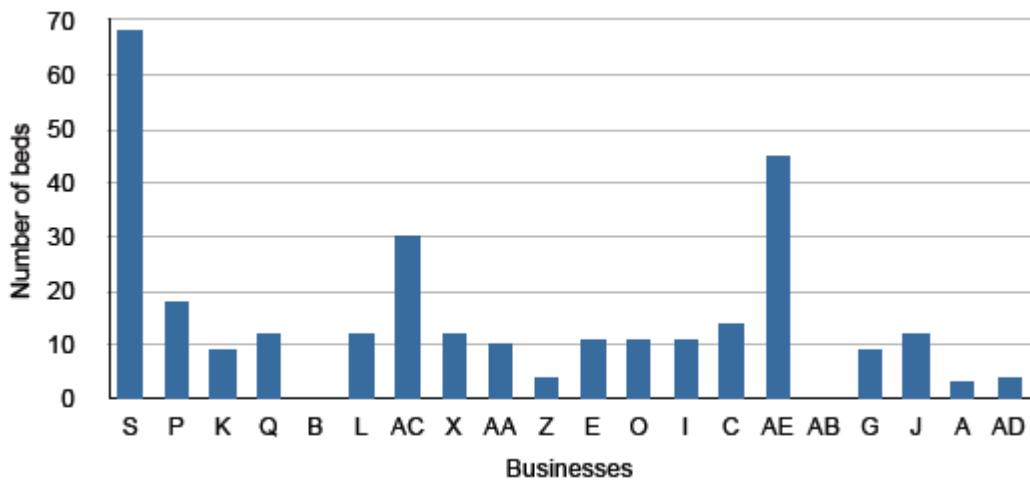


Figure 14: Number of beds that are offered by interviewed firms (source: own data).

The number of guest nights each company had in the year 2012 was difficult to determine, as many interviewees only monitor how many weeks their cottages or rooms had been booked and not how many people were staying how many nights. Some firms could therefore only estimate a guest-night number, while others only could

state the occupancy rate without further information about how many people were staying. To be able to compare the numbers, occupancy rates were multiplied with 75% of bed numbers to allow for booking which did not make use of the full accommodation capacity. Accordingly, data for the guest nights are not fully reliable and only can offer a basic overview of business activity. Additionally, two interviewees could not state estimates about either occupancy rates or guest nights and are listed with a question mark in the following table (table 1).

Table 1: Number of guest-nights in year 2012 by business (source: own data).

ID Code	Number of guest-nights (estimate)
A	527
Z	693
AD	821
K	1048
L	1271
X	1375
Q	1392
AA	1847
I	1869
C	2333
S	2766
G	2788
J	3121
P	3181
E	3311
AC	6500
AB	7000
AE	10343
B	?
O	?

80% of the interviewed companies offered some other service besides accommodation. This included various services and even other businesses, for example also owning a farm on the site of the accommodation and offering produce from that, offering seminars or courses on various themes or venues for such events, offering catering for special events and having weddings. Also, many businesses provided local or home-made food in the guest accommodation, often using products from other PDEQM members. One of the interviewed hotels also ran a Michelin Star restaurant at the venue and one firm ran a pub with accommodation, while one firm bred pedigree sheep and marketed the wool and woollen products and one interviewee ran a wood turning company.

8. 2 PDEQM Membership

Half of the interviewees were holders of the PDEQM for five or more years and can thus be considered established members of the scheme. Only ten percent joined within the last year, while the rest of the businesses joined the PDEQM within the last five years (see figure 15).

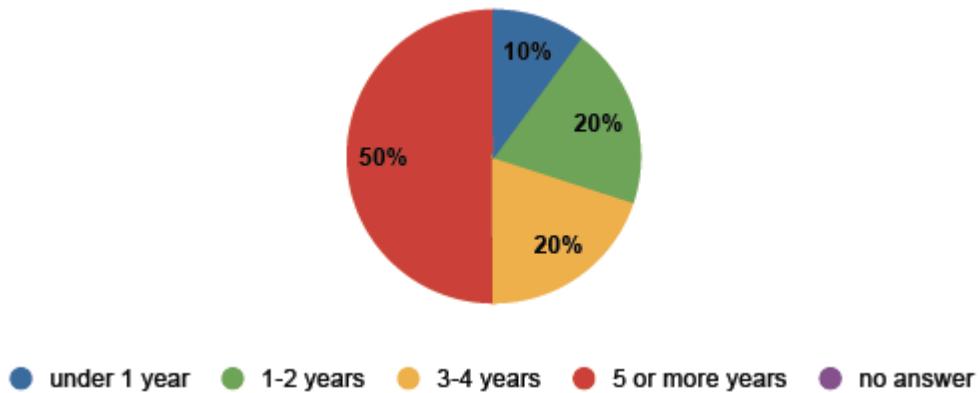


Figure 15: Duration of PDEQM membership (source: own data).

Most of the interviewees did not hear about the PDEQM through the sources listed in the questionnaire which included the internet, business contacts, newspapers, information fairs, through seeking grants by the PDNPA or seeking advice by the PDNPA and through acquaintance and friends and family. Some interviewees were approached directly by a representative of the PDEQM about the possibility to join the PDEQM or heard about it at various business events and are included in the section other in the following graphic (fig. 16). Two firms stated that they were involved in the development of the scheme respectively in the pilot project and thus did not *hear* about the PDEQM per se. Only one company stated that it had been looking for ways to promote the business and thought the PDEQM scheme a good possibility to do that.

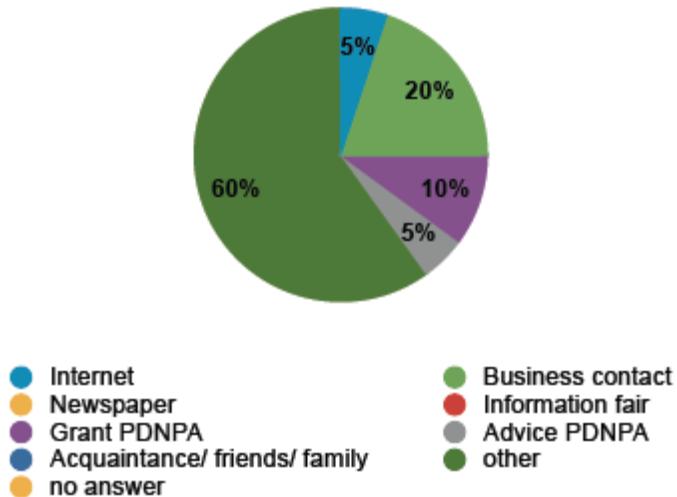


Figure 16: First information source about the PDEQM (source: own data).

80% of the interviewees thought the financial efforts of holding the PDEQM, which means mostly the yearly fees, are justified, while four interviewees considered the financial contribution to the PDEQM scheme as being too high for the returned benefit. Concerning the temporal efforts of the initial application process and later the yearly reassessments and biannual business visits, only two of the firms felt to be asked to invest too much time into the PDEQM scheme.

18 of the 20 interviewed companies plan on keeping the PDEQM for the foreseeable future, while only one planned to stop the reassessment and drop out of the scheme and one firm was not sure how to proceed at the interview date. As a reason for dropping out, the interviewee named that the benefits could not outweigh the efforts of taking part in the scheme, as the business is situated too far away from other members and claims too much of the time to participate in events and networking easily.

When asked about how the firm meets the requirements of the PDEQM most interviewees could name a variety of different schemes and projects they do for the sustainability of the business and the support of local communities. The answers are condensed in table 2.

Table 2: Activities of the firms that meet the requirements of the PDEQM sorted by themes and number of mentions (source: own data).

Theme	Number of mentions
local products (home grown products, locally grown products, local building material, etc.)	24
promotion of car free holidays (promotion of walking, discounts for "car-free" customers, etc.)	24
information of guests about the local area and the business (history, Peak District National Park, local products and venues, business practice etc.)	22
energy management (low energy light bulbs, insulation, etc.)	21
environmental protection (animal areas in the garden, "green behavior", information for guests, etc.)	18
local labour (local craftsmen, local employees, etc.)	16
waste reduction (composting, recycling, etc.)	12
renewable energy facilities (sun tubes, solar panels, etc.)	12
green products (sustainable products, chemical free cleaning products, etc.)	12
caring about local community	9
reduction of water use	6

Some interviewees mentioned more than one activity that fit into one category or theme, thus some themes got more mentions than the number of interviewed businesses and the number of mentions does not represent the number of companies who engage in activities in that area.

8. 3 Development of the Firms since Joining the PDEQM

Of all the interviewees only one reported a negative overall financial development of the business since joining the PDEQM, however 45% reported no change. The rest of the interviewees could detect an overall positive financial development of their business since joining the PDEQM, as shown in figure 17. The question about the financial development of the firm can only give a hint for business development and is

not meant to be understood as asking about the financial retribution of joining the PDEQM, as most interviewees additionally stressed that they either could not link the financial development to the PDEQM membership at all or could not estimate the influence PDEQM membership had on their company financially.

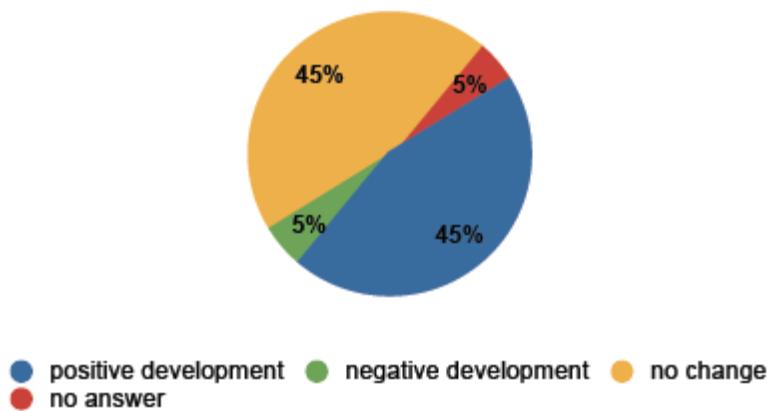


Figure 17: Overall financial development of the business since joining the PDEQM (source: own data).

The development of running costs of the firm since joining the PDEQM is an important question for allowing an assessment of the potential financial benefits a business could attain through saving running costs with the help from the PDEQM. Again, the overall development of running costs cannot cover all the aspects that go into the actual costs, for example energy price development, guest behaviour and amortisation of investments. 45% of interviewees reported no change in the running costs, while 35% had lower running costs (see figure 18). Some reported that while the overall running costs of the business increased, the running costs per capita decreased as they enlarged their firms in the last years.

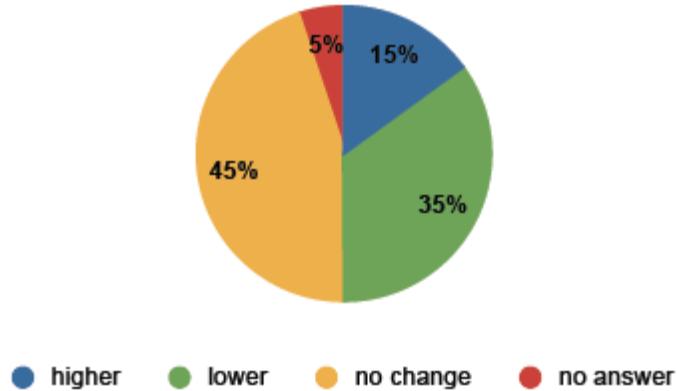


Figure 18: Overall development of running costs of the businesses since joining the PDEQM (source: own data).

65% raised their prices since being awarded the PDEQM, but most of the businesses stressed that this had nothing to do with being part of the PDEQM but rather were due to rising cost of living (fig. 19).

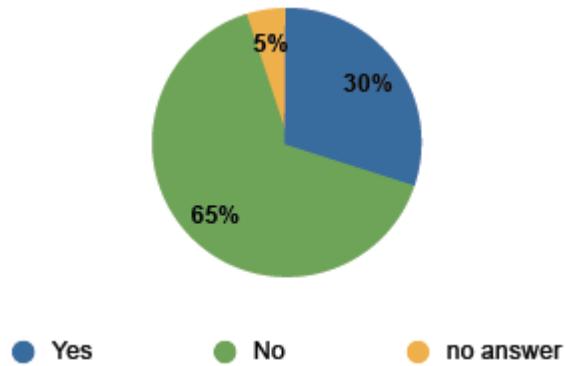


Figure 19: Did the business raise the prices since being awarded the PDEQM? (source: own data).

Since being awarded the PDEQM, only 35% of interviewees noticed an increase in guest-nights, while almost half did not report any change and two businesses even received fewer guests than before (see figure 20).

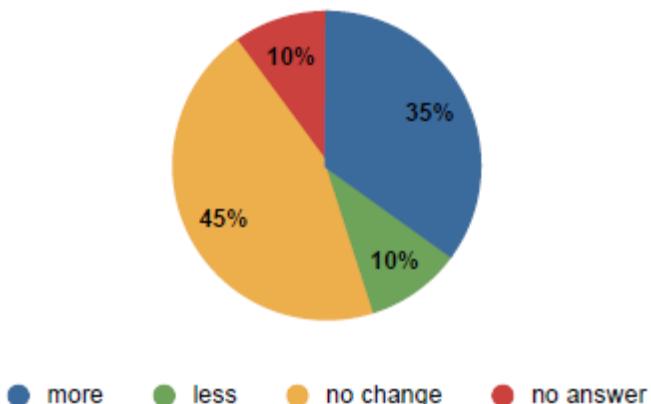


Figure 20: Change of guest-night numbers since being awarded the PDEQM (source: own data).

8. 4 Interest in Sustainability Related Themes Before and After Joining the PDEQM

In order to determine the attitude of interviewees that hold the PDEQM concerning sustainability related themes such as nature conservation, reduction of resource use (water and energy), waste reduction and promotion of the Peak District National Park, the firms were asked to state their interest in these themes before and after the application for PDEQM. Most of the businesses were interested in all listed themes before and all were interested in the themes after the application for the PDEQM, however many stated that they knew even more about these themes because of the application for and work with the PDEQM. Only three interviewed companies reported to not have been interested and/or invested in all the above themes before applying for PDEQM.

Most of the businesses were at the time supporting or were members of various schemes that are concerned with themes mentioned above while only four did not actively support any activities in these areas. Among the supported schemes were Friends of the Peak District (mentioned ten times), Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (mentioned three times) and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (two mentions), various local conservation projects, landscape and/or community promotion schemes, national conservation schemes like Uplands Stewardship or LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) and schemes concerning the promotion of the Peak District, like Peak Park Ranger Service, Peak District Walking Festival and National Trust Peak District Appeal.

8. 5 Use of PDEQM for Promotional Purposes

Almost all interviewees stated that they used the PDEQM as a means of promotion for their business, only one claimed that they did not do this at the moment. All nineteen firms who used the PDEQM for promotion did so by displaying the label of the PDEQM on their website and many companies also used other forms of promotion, like providing the PDEQM leaflet featuring all current members and further information about the PDEQM scheme or including a mention of it in written mail and business correspondence. One firm respectively used the PDEQM in the social media representation of the company, or mentions it when talking about the business to guests and colleagues. Half of the firms used the PDEQM in email correspondence and less than half displayed the label or used signs to signify that their business is a member of the PDEQM scheme (see figure 21).

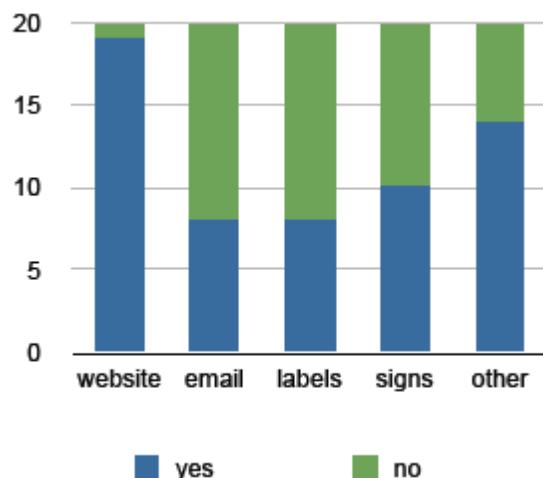


Figure 21: Forms of promotion using the PDEQM by use (source: own data).

When asked about which other PDEQM marketing initiatives the firms would like to have help with developing, twelve of the 20 interviewees could not think of one. Among initiatives that were desired to be developed were a stronger presence of the PDEQM at various local and maybe even national events about sustainability, tourism and at local markets and market fairs to improve recognition of the PDEQM, raise awareness of it and manage to attract more companies to take part in the scheme. Another suggestion was to recruit spokesmen with authority in sustainability, especially in tourism, like Xavier Font, to speak at PDEQM events and maybe even promote the PDEQM and for the PDEQM to work together more with the local tourist board. Also,

one interviewee was interested in the development of an eco-friendly and weather proof plaque that can be displayed visibly on the grounds of the accommodation.

8. 6 Other Awards and Labels: Which and Why?

80% of the businesses were holders of other awards and/or are members of other labels beside the PDEQM, while the rest only held the PDEQM. Most often the firms also had a four or five star rating with either Visit England or Enjoy England (in the two cases of camping sites with the AA⁸) and some had additional national awards in different categories, like sustainable tourism, accessibility, etc., from these and other organisations, like the Green Hotelier award 2013 UK (see GREEN HOTELIER 2013) or David Bellamy Gold Award. Also, many companies held local tourism quality awards that covered various different categories from food and breakfast awards, to sustainability awards. Additionally, many businesses were part of the Walkers Welcome and Cyclists Welcome scheme of Enjoy England Quality in Tourism (see QUALITY IN TOURISM 2013). Some firms also were members of other sustainability labels like Green Tourism Business Scheme that operates in the UK, Ireland and Canada (GREEN TOURISM 2013d).

The most common answer to the question why companies are members of additional schemes or hold other awards beside the PDEQM was that they wanted to gain national or international recognition for their business that was not provided by the PDEQM. Additionally, the different schemes, labels and awards were considered a cause to look at the quality of the firm from different perspectives, like sustainability, quality of guest service and accommodation, and make sure to provide evidence of that quality for the potential customer. It was felt that potential customers look for quality in accommodation above all else and that this quality in different categories could best be proved by collecting various labels, schemes and awards that could help to build a reputation as a quality business. Another reported reason for multiple awards was the opportunity to look at the company from different perspectives and discover potential development directions for the firm and/or offer good quality guidelines for different parts of the business. Among other reasons were promoting the company, especially due to the requirement of quality ratings to be able to promote on popular

⁸ AA - Automobile Association.

websites (for example visitpeakdistrict.com and visitderbyshire.co.uk), creating a unique selling point (USP) and differentiation from other accommodation offers in the area. It was also stated that the PDEQM is too local to attract national costumers and therefore not sufficient as a sole quality label for an accommodation firm in the Peak District.

For most interviewees the variations of Visit England and Enjoy England four and five star rankings were considered to be the most important award or label. As a reason for that, the businesses name the national and international recognition and good reputation with customers of these schemes. Only two interviewees named the PDEQM as the most important label of the firm due to the business' ethics and one stated that for the national recognition the five star rating with Visit England and for the regional recognition of the company the PDEQM was the most important award or label. The businesses that had enclosed food venues listed respectively the Michelin Star and a breakfast award as the most important.

8. 7 Why the PDEQM?

The most common answer to the question why businesses decided to apply for the PDEQM was that by getting the PDEQM, the firms could get their green or sustainable business practices recognised by an outside body and as a means to preserve and support the local area. Another repeatedly stated reason is that the PDEQM is locally tied in and cares about the local environment and communities. Additionally, firms considered the PDEQM to be a means to get "greener" credentials and to get access to a group of like-minded people. Two interviewees respectively thought the PDEQM as an opportunity to get help with marketing and get a structured outside view of the company. Additionally, interviewees named a variety of other reasons of which the following have been mentioned once each: saving money through lower running costs, thought it a "nice idea", getting a different angle on sustainable tourism than that offered by GTBS, wanting help to run a "greener" business, find a USP, personal recommendation of the PDEQM and assurance that the firm fulfils the requirements, many business contacts had applied⁹, having access to expert skills in sustainability

⁹ In this case members of Premier Cottages, a collective of four and five star rated holiday cottages (see PREMIER COTTAGES 2013). The Premier Cottage members in the Peak District aim to get all Premier Cottage members in the area to apply for the PDEQM.

and green business practice, informing staff about and getting staff to adhere to sustainable business practice, attracting more business, getting networking opportunities, because PDEQM supports small rural firms, as a statement against “disposable society” and because the PDEQM needed promotion and the time and coincided with company ethics of preserving and caring about the Peak District, its environment and the local communities.

The question about the identification process of the PDEQM as a label that the business wanted to hold was answered by almost half of the interviewees by stating that they did not look at other labels or awards at the time of applying for the PDEQM. Three firms respectively state that they chose the PDEQM because it was local, linked to the Peak District National Park and offered access to the PDEQM network of like-minded companies, while two businesses were already involved in the development or the pilot project stage of the PDEQM and as a result did not choose the PDEQM from a range of available labels and awards. Other once mentioned answers were that the PDEQM offers another angle than the GTBS, the GTBS scheme looked too intimidating and the PDEQM was the alternative, that the PDEQM does not only focus on green issues, that the scheme was recommended by colleagues, that the requirements were sensibly arranged, that the interviewee thought it “good to have the PDEQM”, that a different part of the company already had it and that the PDEQM coincided with the business’ ethics.

8. 8 Expectations versus Reality

The most common answer to the question what changes the firms expected from joining the PDEQM were respectively with six mentions to increase the environmental awareness in and of the company and to attract more green guests (what did not prove to be the case according to the interviewees). These answers were closely followed by the respectively five times mentioned answers to increase public awareness of the business and its work (which is not felt to be achieved yet), to save money on running costs and the answer that the company did not expect great changes due to the fact that they either already had another green or sustainability label or award (in most cases the GTBS) or already engaged in sustainable business practice and only wanted to get their efforts recognised by an outside body. Mentioned four times was the answer of expecting increased business, while mentioned three times each were the

answers to have a higher profile for the firm in the region and to run a “greener” business. Two times mentioned each were the expectations of connecting with the local economy, having networking advantages, having more access to information concerning sustainability, working with like-minded people and having guests coming because of the PDEQM membership. Other answers were having more returning customers, get advice to increase the quality of guest experience, earning legitimacy to promote the company as green and caring for the Peak District, getting inspiration for sustainable business practice, being more respected as a company by the PDNPA, to actively promote local tourism and the Peak District and raising awareness of environmental issues.

70% of interviewees reported that their expectations for holding the PDEQM were met, however some also stated that they did not really expect much from holding the PDEQM, but rather just wanted to get their efforts for sustainable business practice confirmed from an outside source. Three firms’ expectations were only met in part and were put in the category “no answer” in figure 22.

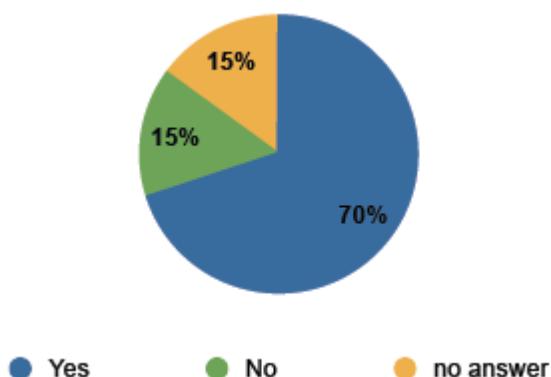


Figure 22: Are your expectations for holding the PDEQM met? (source: own data).

Of the companies that reported that their expectations have not been met, two respectively stated that the expected financial gain did not occur and that the business did not attract more green customers, though many customers appreciated the firm’s efforts to be sustainable. Another reason named by one interviewee is that there were fewer meetings than expected and this was suspected to be because of funding and therefore staff shortages and the need for the businesses to do more by themselves. One reason for the failure of the PDEQM to meet expectations was that lately the

PDEQM included “too big” companies that do not have much in common with the small rural firms that were (supposedly) targeted in the beginning.

The benefits of the PDEQM were led by the answer of participation in a network of like-minded businesses with nine mentions followed by the recognition of the firm as green and sustainable, the sharing of experiences, help to solve environmental issues in the company and the encouragement to “move forward” with six mentions each. Four times mentioned were the benefits of having a more sustainable business practice than before the PDEQM membership and the better monitoring of the firm due to the PDEQM. Mentioned twice each were the benefits of preserving the environment of the Peak District, professional training and networking. Other benefits were having lower running costs, getting an USP, going to business related events, having a local emphasis, getting more visitors, getting more visitors who are “on the same wavelength”, people appreciating the “environmental conscience”, showing that the firm cares for the local environment and differentiation of the company from other businesses. One interviewee also mentioned that one benefit of the scheme had been that it had an innovative scheme when it was launched but that this was not the case anymore as it is now too inclusive of “big businesses”. Only one firm stated that the PDEQM had no benefits at all.

The most commonly stated drawbacks of the PDEQM scheme were the costs of membership that were mentioned by five interviewees, while two additional businesses said that the costs could be considered as a drawback, but are not really an issue in their firms due to the benefits of the PDEQM. Two companies reported the annual re-inspections that take too much of their time, while other named drawbacks were the lack of promotional benefit, the difficulty of developing yearly action plans, the costs of the initial outlay of changes (changing light bulbs, maybe installing renewable energy facilities, etc.) and the presence of too “big businesses” in the scheme at the moment that are impairing the benefits for small firms. Nine companies stated that there are no drawbacks of the PDEQM scheme for their business.

When asked about the differences in the way of running the business, with nine mentions the most common answer was that there is an increased awareness of sustainability issues and their possible solutions. Three interviewees respectively named more discipline in business management, especially concerning data collection,

more care and thought going in the choice of purchased products and more “eco-friendly” behaviour in the business as changes in the way of running the firm. Five stated that there are no real changes in business management mostly due to the fact that they ran their company as sustainable as possible before joining the PDEQM. The reduction of the business’ carbon footprint was mentioned twice, other answers were having more emphasis on the visitor experience, being stimulated by other PDEQM members, focusing more on the business development and making business decisions according to the PDEQM philosophy.

Only 30% of the interviewees reported that there was no change in their work attitude since being awarded the PDEQM. All other firms detected an altered attitude towards their work, with six stating an increased pride in what they are doing and five reporting an increased thoughtfulness in their business decisions. Four companies detected more awareness of possible sustainable business solutions, while two respectively reported more thoughtfulness in their staff and their starting of promoting the PDEQM to other firms. Once mentioned each were more pride in advertising the Peak District, local products and attractions, more involvement with local businesses and talking to guests and other people about the efforts to be more sustainable. One interviewee felt as a member of a special and respected group of people since joining the PDEQM and one firm stressed that it was important to them not to “preach” to the guests about eco-friendly behaviour.

When asked in what way the company is different from businesses in the area that do not hold the PDEQM, four could not say whether or in what way their business was different from others as they could not be sure what other firms were doing especially concerning sustainability. The most common answer with twelve mentioning that aspect was that they thought their companies were more sustainable than businesses that are not members of the PDEQM. This answer was closely followed the feeling that their firm is more aware of the impact of business practices on the environment and local communities mentioned by eleven interviewees. Ten companies also said that they are “more green” than others in the area. Three firms respectively named having lower energy costs, being more aware of the special features of the Peak District, better information about the local environment of their guests, being more supportive of small rural businesses and having a code of good practice that they have to adhere to. Mentioned two times each were the answers of having energy saving initiatives, more

renewable energy use, being more in control of the firm as a whole, being more aware of doing “the right thing”, being more aware of local communities and having more structure to their green ethics than other companies and benefiting the Peak District. Other answers were the education of guests about green business solutions, better education of guests, a better guests experience in general and promoting supporting local events.

65% of the interviewees noticed a change in their interaction with guests; the rest did not change their behaviour since being awarded the PDEQM. Among the reported changes was increased communication about sustainability themes and guest behaviour that complies with the goals of the business mentioned by 13 businesses. Other changes were increased information of guests about the special features of the Peak District, local shopping opportunities and leisure activities in the area that could be undertaken and/or reached without the use of a car mentioned by 15 firms. Two of the companies that did not notice a change in their interaction with guests reported that they did inform guests in the ways listed above anyway and did not increase that information due to the PDEQM membership. One interviewee each reported that the guests were more interested in what the business is doing and that the firm was prouder to promote the local environment due to the PDEQM membership.

Almost all interviewees stated that their guests choose their accommodation firm because of its location, while five respectively reported that guests choose them because of the style of accommodation, the awards and label memberships and the easy use and look of their website. Four each named their quality and the suitability for walkers as reasons for guests’ choice of their business. Three interviewees each listed the various activities in the area, the reviews and the business’ excellent customer service, while two named peace or tranquillity as the reason. No interviewee mentioned the PDEQM as a reason for guests to choose their firm but two stressed that customers do not choose their establishment for PDEQM membership and one firm’s own guest survey showed that the green aspect of the company is “nice to have but not essential” for choice of accommodation. Once mentioned were the reasons accessibility, food, horse accommodation, proximity of major riding path, a wedding barn, location on a working farm, being a large property and the business’ positive attitude towards the environment. One interviewee said that they “hope” that guests

choose their establishment for their green ethos, but are not sure that this is indeed the case.

Almost half of the interviewees reported that there is no PDEQM initiative that they are most proud of, while three named the use and promotion of local products. Two businesses listed their renewable energy facilities as the PDEQM initiative they are most proud of while other answers were the sun tubes, the offering of PDEQM products, the support of local community and economy and support of local community events. Also mentioned were recycling and reduction of landfill waste by half since joining the PDEQM and an audit that informed a project about renewable energy.

The vast majority of interviewed firms were satisfied with the activities of the PDEQM in the accommodation sector, only one was not (and planned to drop out of the PDEQM). The two companies that are in the category of “no answer” in figure 23 were partly satisfied, but also had aspects about the scheme in mind, that were not satisfying to them.

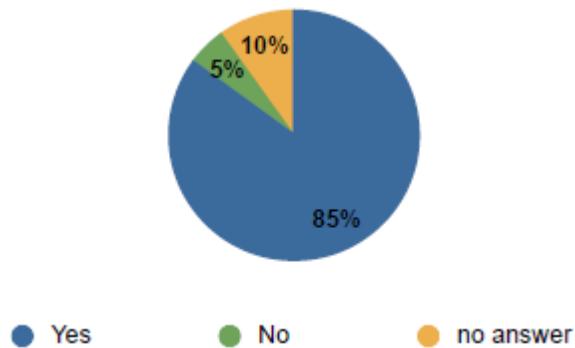


Figure 23: Are you satisfied with the activities of the PDEQM scheme concerning the accommodation sector? (source: own data).

Only six interviewees said that they did not have improvement suggestions for the PDEQM scheme concerning the accommodation sector. Two firms agreed that there should be more members in the PDEQM scheme to improve promotional opportunities for the participants. Other suggestions were to “get commercially savvy” and try to get more funding for the scheme, as the fees are possibly deterring companies from joining the PDEQM. Many suggestions circled around the attempt to increase the PDEQM scheme’s recognition, maybe through engaging expert spokespeople for the scheme like Xavier Font and attract more members by sending information per email to

targeted businesses in the area. Also suggested were more and better advertising of the PDEQM scheme in the local setting and featuring at more events to increase awareness of the scheme in the public. Other suggestions concentrated on the activities for the PDEQM members like having a meeting once a year, where members can exchange experiences of their work and seminars about sustainability themes, maybe even with experts doing seminars, having more events in general and thereby offering more opportunity to co-operate without companies having to organise meetings themselves. Concerning this theme other suggestions were to increase the sharing of ideas and information about the activities of the PDEQM maybe through a newsletter and doing workshops on how to use the PDEQM as a marketing advantage. One interviewee suggested encouraging PDEQM members to organise more events and projects on their own as many only wait to receive benefits and are making no real effort to arrange activities on their own. Another suggestion was to facilitate the online application and the reassessments and to try to co-ordinate PDEQM requirements with the requirements of other quality labels as at the moment some of them tend to clash. This way the PDEQM could maybe “educate” the quality labels about sustainability. One suggestion was to differentiate the member businesses according to their size as big firms tend to have other issues and means to achieve standards than small companies. Another suggestion was to decide whether the PDEQM scheme is meant solely as a quality label like the star rating of Visit England or intends to be a “promotion cartel” for the members.

All interviewees would recommend the PDEQM scheme to other tourism firms in the Peak District, even the one that plans to drop out of the scheme stated that the networking opportunities offered by the PDEQM scheme are great and that only the fact that the company cannot spare the time to do the networking properly caused the decision to drop out. Indeed, the most common answer to the question why businesses would recommend the PDEQM scheme to other tourism firms in the Peak District was that it offers good networking opportunities and support and/or advice for companies who want to be more sustainable. Other common answers included that the PDEQM scheme is a good source of information about all kinds of sustainable and general business practice, is committed to the Peak District and raises awareness for sustainability themes. Three interviewees respectively named the PDEQM's commitment to local communities, the improvement of business planning and marketing due to participation in the scheme, including getting an outside view of the

firm and being more in control of the business' operational sequences as reasons for recommendation. It is also mentioned that the PDEQM scheme is especially beneficial for small companies, helps to connect with like-minded people and offers a comprehensive structure to assess sustainability in the business. Additionally, ethical reasons for joining the PDEQM were given and it was stressed that it is important that "as many as possible" firms should consider and improve their sustainability. Also, that the PDEQM looks after the environment and thus sustains the basis for the future tourism interest in the area and as a result the livelihood of accommodation businesses as well was stressed. Mentioned once were the fact that the PDEQM gives recognition for firms that are working in a sustainable way, that the PDEQM is theoretically regionally and nationally recognised, if not yet well known, and that companies that hold the PDEQM are featured on the websites of the PDNPA and PDEQM what increased the firm's Google rating. Also mentioned once was the fact that the participation in the PDEQM scheme helps businesses to increase the guest experience and as a result the attractiveness of the accommodation for visitors.

9. Discussion

In this chapter the findings of the survey that have been described in the previous chapter will be discussed and interpreted. Firstly, there will be a characterisation of the firms that take part in the PDEQM scheme, including a description of their PDEQM membership. Secondly, the development of their business since joining the PDEQM will be discussed. Then follows an assessment of the firms' interest in sustainability related themes and what that asserts about the scope of the PDEQM scheme in the market of the Peak District National Park. Then, the use of the PDEQM for promotional purposes will be analysed, what will be followed by an investigation about the array of awards and labels the businesses currently hold. Following that will be an examination of the reasons for businesses to choose the PDEQM scheme from the variety of available schemes on the market. Lastly, the contrast of companies' expectations against reality will be analysed and interpreted.

9. 1 Characterisation of the Businesses Taking Part in the PDEQM Scheme

The vast majority of businesses taking part in the PDEQM scheme offer self-catering accommodation like cottages, while there are only some other business types like B&Bs or hotels. Most of these companies started between 1990 and 2005 what makes them fairly established businesses in the Peak District. With a majority of venues offering less than twenty beds and having had less than 4.000 guest nights in the year 2012, one can assess that the typical firm in the accommodation sector taking part in the PDEQM scheme can be considered a small-scale business, what considerably limits their means to take incisive business decisions and invest much money in modernisation projects. Another implication of being a small-scale company is the difficulty of promotion and advertising for the business on their own, what increases the need of being part of bigger organisations that include the small firm into their promotion scheme to take advantage of their scope and penetration of the market.

Most of the interviewed businesses do offer other services besides accommodation what hints at the possibility of the accommodation offer alone not being sufficient to

generate a reliable and adequate income and reinforces the suspected limited means of some of the small-scale businesses.

When asked about why their customers choose their particular accommodation offer from the variety of offers on the market, most interviewees were sure that it was not because of the PDEQM but because of the location and quality of the business. This seems to hint at a lack of a “green customer niche” in the market that was expected and intended to take advantage of by many firms in the PDEQM scheme. They expected to position themselves on the market as a special quality offer for environmental and sustainability conscious tourists that would be interested in staying at accommodation suppliers with green credentials. These hopes are currently not fulfilled in the experiences of the businesses since joining the PDEQM, what will also be discussed more in depth in the section about the contrast of the companies’ expectations against the actual experiences since joining the PDEQM. The lack of increased general tourist and green tourist attention through eco- or sustainability labels is also mentioned in literature as one main issue of certification (see for example FONT (2001b), BUCKLEY (2001) and MIHALIĆ (2001)). MIHALIĆ (2001) especially notes that while eco- or sustainability labels should increase competitiveness of the business, the environmental quality of the destination exceeds the value of such labels by far, as shown in the present survey, when interviewees rank location and quality (of accommodation and landscape) as the major factor of guests’ choice.

Many of the interviewed businesses are established members of the PDEQM and only few firms joined since the end of financial funding and the start of the fees for members from early 2012. Most of these companies have been contacted directly by the PDEQM officials about the possibility of their firm to apply for the PDEQM or heard about it at various events. Some were informed about it through business contacts, like for example the group of Premier Cottages that intended to get all their Peak District members to partake in the PDEQM scheme and actively promoted the scheme among their members. This highlights the fairly coincidental nature of first information about the PDEQM scheme many companies experienced, with only some members reporting that they knew about the PDEQM prior to considering applying for it. More about the process of choosing the PDEQM scheme for the business can be found in the section about the firms’ expectations for the PDEQM membership.

One major concern for eco- or sustainability labels is always the question of fees and other costs, like the temporal outlay to be able to qualify for the label and additionally the time needed for the initial assessment and yearly re-assessments for the label (see for example FRANKL et al. 2005a). In this case, the influence of the investments needed for getting accepted in the PDEQM and being re-assessed each year can only be guessed by the fact that since the start of the fees many businesses did not renew their membership¹⁰ and only two¹¹ new businesses in the accommodation sector decided to apply for the PDEQM since then. However, when asked about the fees, most of the companies think them justified and only two interviewees reported that they deemed the temporal effort that they have to invest into the scheme too much. With reference to the interview with Bill Purvis on the 25th of June 2013, the current fees cannot self-sustain the PDEQM scheme at the moment and further sponsorship is sought for and sorely needed. Additionally to the overall financial shortage of the PDEQM¹², the earnings and costs of the scheme vary with the cycle of first assessments, full re-assessments and phone re-assessments alternating yearly with the fee staying the same each year. According to that cycle, the staff costs are higher or lower each year, so that no steady earning can be achieved.

As many of the interviewed firms do not report any measurable financial benefits for their business due to the PDEQM, there have to be other benefits or ethical reasons for them to still be members in the PDEQM and additionally in most cases think the fees justified. Another reason for thinking the fees justified could be the consideration of expenditures the PDEQM scheme has due to staff and organisational costs and thus could possibly be disconnected from an input and output consideration alone.

Most businesses intend to stay members of the PDEQM in the foreseeable future what hints at a satisfaction level with the scheme that justifies the continuation of the financial and temporal investments of the firms. Despite this satisfaction with the scheme and the willingness to continue their membership, there have been many suggestions for improvement that are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

¹⁰ Since the start of the fees the overall membership (including all business sectors) of the PDEQM scheme decreased from around 100 members to about 60 members (Bill Purvis on the 25th of June 2013).

¹¹ only including the interviewees.

¹² At the moment, a portion of the work of the staff consisting of currently three plus two advisors is carried out in an honorary capacity (Bill Purvis on the 25th of June 2013).

When asked about how the company meets the requirements for the PDEQM, many different activities are recounted that almost always target more than one of the three pillars of sustainability of ecological, social and economic themes. In most cases there is an emphasis on ecological activities, for example reducing consumption of energy, water and other resources and purchase of environmentally friendly products for the business. Additionally, there is almost always mentioned a connection with and promotion of local communities and the local economy, like using local labour instead of for example relying on guest and seasonal workers from eastern Europe¹³ and using locally produced products in their accommodation and promoting local shops and restaurants to their guests. In one case, there is a pronounced interest in local social events that the firm often sponsors and promotes to their guests.

The field of economy can be seen from two points of view. On the one hand it targets the viability and economic success of the business itself and on the other hand it can be projected on the economic prosperity of the whole local area. The economic success of the companies cannot be assessed in this survey and can only be guessed, but no interviewee mentioned a distinct problem with a lack of customers. The economy of the local area at any rate does in great parts rely on tourism, so the promotion of shopping local products in local shops instead of getting "the usual" at the next supermarket (that can be a quite long drive away in many cases) can indeed boost the local economy and maybe help to sustain local infrastructure. Additionally to promoting local shops and restaurants to their guests, many firms reported that they sold products from other PDEQM members in their business, so the accommodation firms help to increase the scope of local manufacturers and arts and crafts businesses. This could help to provide a little more job opportunities in the rural environment that normally would struggle to generate an adequate income¹⁴ for the majority of inhabitants. In summary, these findings suggest a quite thorough knowledge of the concept of sustainability in the companies and a deep interest in preserving the nature and communities in the Peak District, while being able to generate an economically viable livelihood for themselves without impairing their environment in all senses of the word.

¹³ According to some interviewees, many, especially bigger establishments, rely on those kind of work to be able to offer a more competitive price for their service.

¹⁴ Whether this is really the case must be assessed by separate investigations and can only be suspected in a small degree due to the results of this survey.

To summarise, it can be stated that the interviewed accommodation firms currently taking part in the PDEQM scheme are in most cases small-scale and seem to care deeply for the Peak District National Park and its inhabitants. They seem to be well educated in the field of sustainability and interested in further developing the PDEQM scheme to make it more beneficial for partakers, especially in the accommodation sector, to increase the scope and positive effects on nature and local communities.

9. 2 The Development of the Businesses Since Joining the PDEQM

This aspect is especially interesting as it illuminates the impacts of the PDEQM membership on the business. In this survey only tendencies can be assessed owing to the complex nature of firm development and the difficulty of isolating the influence of single factors like PDEQM membership. The following observations and interpretations have to be considered bearing in mind that the scope of this survey can in no way distinguish definite isolated causes and factors of an observed companies' development and thus one can only speculate about basic trends in firm development and its connections with the PDEQM membership at this point.

In the survey done for the PDEQM project in 2005 "several participating businesses believe they do gain economic benefit as a result of the award, particularly the accommodation businesses" (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 22), while in the present study most of the interviewees implied or directly reported that this is not the case.

Half of the interviewees reported that they had a positive financial development since joining the PDEQM, but many companies stressed that this was not caused by the PDEQM membership. Despite only half of the firms stating a positive overall financial development, only one business could detect a distinctive negative trend of the company's financial development. These mixed findings offer no clear hint at how to interpret the influence of the PDEQM membership, but evidence seem to indicate that at least the businesses that take part in the PDEQM scheme achieve to preserve their commercial status quo or even improve the financial situation of the firms. The comments about the PDEQM membership being of no influence on the financial improvement of the companies¹⁵ show that some business members are quite

¹⁵ Only interviewees that improved their financial situation directly commented about that.

confident to state that the scheme could not influence customer behaviour and through that generate more income. Nonetheless, there could be indirect and thus more hidden impacts of the PDEQM scheme on the firms that the owners may overlook when asked directly about financial success of the business. Among these could be improved visitor experience and guest information prior to the journey, which have been mentioned as a change since joining the PDEQM by the interviewees and could well indirectly influence the financial development while not being consciously connected with the PDEQM membership by the firms.

Another more indirect change in the finances of the businesses could concern the running costs. Again, more in-depth studies are needed to try to ascertain the real savings against investment costs and other expenditures due to changing to more eco-friendly resource consumption, especially in the sector of renewable energy use and water consumption. In this survey, only the trend of running costs was examined without taking into concern other developments of the company, to get an overview of the influences of the PDEQM membership on general business figures. This is interesting because of the initial hurdle for getting a PDEQM membership that most of the time already includes some form of consumption management and it was beneficial to assess whether this was further developed since joining the PDEQM scheme.

It turned out that only 35% of the interviewees had lowered their running costs since joining the PDEQM while 45% had steady running costs, indicating that only some firms benefited financially from their membership in this area. However, there is one aspect to consider with this question that can have negative influence on the findings and that is the lack of information about the unit of the given assessment. In some cases it was pointed out that the running costs per capita have decreased while the overall running costs of the company have increased due to an extension of the business since joining the PDEQM, so some answers could be misleading when overall running costs were reported as being higher without mentioning that maybe the per capita running costs decreased. Most of the firms that reported to have stagnating running costs stressed that they had all energy management measures appropriate for their company in place before they joined the PDEQM, what highlights on the one hand the often found emphasis on energy consumption when talking about running costs and on the other hand the sometimes apparent lack of ability of the PDEQM scheme to further lower running costs after joining the PDEQM. To add a more positive note, one

has also to consider that this indicates the quality in the area of reducing resource consumption of businesses that are applying for the PDEQM scheme.

65% of the interviewees raised their prices since joining the PDEQM and most of these again stressed that this was not because of the PDEQM membership but in order to accommodate the rising costs of living. This could be interpreted in two ways that are not exclusive: either the firms do not think that they can “get away” with charging more due to a more qualitative service offer confirmed by a label or the companies’ ethical point of view dictates their efforts in the field of sustainability to be not only for the commercial benefit of the firm itself but for the benefit of their environment and the future of the tourism region of the Peak District and should not be charged extra. Concerning the latter interpretation, there is much evidence throughout the survey, and due to comments in general conversation apart from the questionnaire, that many companies care deeply about their home and setting in the Peak District and consider the intent of the PDEQM to help to preserve the landscape, cultural heritage and communities in the Peak District through more sustainable business behaviour as their prime motivation to join the PDEQM rather than generating higher income. More about the motivations to join the PDEQM can be found in later parts of this chapter.

Concerning the doubts to be able to charge more for the added quality of the accommodation offer, there is an ongoing discussion among researchers about the willingness of consumers to invest more money in products and services when they offer less impact on the environment or are more sustainable. There is evidence for an increased awareness of environmental themes in the general customer and expressed willingness to pay more for environmentally as sound as possible products and services on the demand side. Whether this is actually happening in a discernible amount in the real market is doubted by many authors: FRANKL et al. (2005a) are unable to calculate any net gains in the field of tourist accommodation in Europe due to ecolabels but are suspecting them to be very low, while in the same book it is also stressed that ecolabels (defined as concentrating only on environmental themes) are thought to be more successful than sustainability labels would be (FRANKL et al. 2005b). SHARPLEY (2001) states that there is little evidence that indicates that an increased awareness of environmental themes is linked directly to an increase in responsible, green tourists, that are interested in green offers or even willing to pay more for ecolabelled tourism products and services. This situation is confirmed by

MIHALIČ (2001) as well. According to these findings a real influence of sustainability labels, even internationally well-known ones, on customer choice in the sense of being the cause of increased demand for such labelled offers is to be doubted at this stage. Another hint in this survey at this being indeed the case is the fact that only 35% of the firms could detect an increase of guest-nights since joining the PDEQM and again most of these pointing out this was not because of the PDEQM membership but other reasons. This result once more indicates the lack of easily visible commercial benefit the PDEQM scheme is able to offer the companies that take part and highlights the current need for an ethical motivation to join the PDEQM rather than a solely commercial one. Even though the literature findings about the ability of sustainability labels for products and services are mostly sceptic, there are studies that confirmed an increased demand for sustainably certified products in New Zealand (cleaning and personal care products) and Australia (lamb meat) (HARRIS 2007). In the light of these findings the PDEQM membership could in the long run have commercial benefits for the businesses, if knowledge of the label in the public and clear communication of environmental and social benefits of PDEQM members can be increased.

To summarise, there are no conclusive trends to be carved out about the impact of the PDEQM membership on the development of the interviewed firms from the evidence of this case-study, but there are some interesting aspects discernible from the answers given to this kind of questions. Firstly, many interviewees are absolutely sure that the PDEQM membership is not responsible for an increased income or higher guest numbers. Secondly, most companies did not charge more for their service due to the PDEQM membership, what hints at distrust that customers would accept such a change.

9. 3 Interest in Sustainability Related Themes Before and After Joining the PDEQM

Most businesses have shown interest and engagement in themes like nature conservation, resource consumption and promotion of the Peak District National Park before applying for the PDEQM, but in some cases there was a slight increase in the number of topics that were of interest for the firms. Nonetheless, many companies pointed out that they have increased their knowledge in these themes since joining the PDEQM, what shows that there are information benefits for partakers that surpass the

knowledge the businesses could gather on their own. As expected, there are no firms that did not concern themselves with any of the listed sustainability related themes and only started to do so in the wake of wanting to apply for the PDEQM. As the scheme calls for a certain level of quality in the sustainable management of the applying companies, this finding does not come as a surprise but also limits the scope of possible future businesses to only those that are concerned about their environment at least to a certain extent. At the moment, the results of the survey indicate that the PDEQM does not have many financial or commercial benefits to offer to future members, what further limits the market reach because “normally operating” firms that do not have a strong green moral code and rely more on traditional management techniques are unlikely to apply for the PDEQM.

Having a moral responsibility for their environment for almost all companies comes with supporting different schemes and projects in the region that concern themselves with topics like environmental protection, promotion of the Peak District National Park, preserving of the cultural heritage. This further engagement in especially local projects and schemes like for example the Friends of the Peak District and local wildlife trusts, cements the apparent dedication of the interviewed businesses in their environment in all senses of the word.

9. 4 Use of the PDEQM for Promotional Purposes

Almost all interviewees use the PDEQM scheme for promotional purposes. Especially, the label is displayed on websites, on the “awards and labels wall”, in email correspondence and in information brochures in the guest accommodation facilities. This result is in tune with earlier research that had been undertaken at the start of the scheme, where award holding businesses reported to use the PDEQM logo on display, on promotional literature and leaflets and on their website (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 22). Despite the planned encouragement of the use of explanatory posters from 2005 (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 22), these did not appear as an answer in this study.

This level of use of the PDEQM label for promotional purposes seems to contradict the earlier finding that the PDEQM membership of the firm does not achieve to attract more customers to the more sustainable companies and some businesses reported that they are only seldom asked about the PDEQM scheme due to the promotion.

Some interviewees commented that the promotion of the accommodation firms seems only to be able to increase interest for business members of other sectors, like producing and arts and crafts companies, as the guests are only told about the PDEQM scheme by the accommodation when they arrive and then sometimes visit other members. The vast majority of guests seem to not be aware of the PDEQM prior to coming to the PDEQM member accommodation business. This again reinforces the suspicion that most guests are not aware of the PDEQM at all and thus do not include it into their accommodation choice factors. Having coming together the two factors of disputable influence of eco- or sustainability labels (see for example FRANKL et al. 2005a) and lack of knowledge about the PDEQM label among the guests, casts great doubt on the possible influence of the PDEQM on customer behaviour and choice at the moment and maybe even in the future.

Less than half of the interviewees could think of marketing initiatives they would like help with developing and most suggestions focussed on the PDEQM officials increasing promotion efforts in the region. The response to this question indicates that there is a lack of own initiative and proactivity in many members, which may have the attitude of wanting to get something for their money, especially since the start of the fees in April 2012 (Bill Purvis on the 25th of June 2013). In this respect some interviewees mentioned time, distance and motivation problems when trying to initiate a new project among PDEQM members that relies on their own work and not on that of the official side of the PDEQM.

9. 5 Other Awards and Labels: Which and Why?

In literature there is an ongoing discussion about the influence of the multitude of quality ratings, awards and labels on the market on customer behaviour (see for example concerning food safety labels ROOSEN 2003, concerning organic labelling LARCENEUX et al. 2012, concerning ecolabelling HORNE 2009 and BRATT et al. 2011). Mostly, it is said that too many different labels and awards only confuse the customer and in the end impair the beneficial nature of quality control and its communication to the potential buyer. To ascertain the relevant scope of this discussion for this paper, one has to consider the exact position in the choice process of the customer when he or she makes their choice of accommodation. In the scenario used in this paper, the customer already has decided on the holiday location, which is the Peak District

National Park, and that he or she does not necessarily want to stay in a bigger city around the Peak District like Manchester, Sheffield or Derby but a location that is in or nearer to the national park itself. Now, the most important factors for choice are location, quality and cost of the accommodation¹⁶ (most people will also have decided on the category of accommodation, like caravan or tent (21% of staying visitors), hotel (19% of staying visitors), B&B (16% of staying visitors) or self-catering cottage (17% of staying visitors) (PDNPA 2005, p. 22)).

Concerning this paper, this is the decisive moment when the PDEQM is intended to come in but apparently does not due to lack of knowledge and disputable influence on customer choice. However, before and since joining the PDEQM businesses had and have other means of directing the potential customer in their direction: quality ratings, labels and awards. 80% of the interviewees held a multitude of regional, national and even international quality ratings, were members of an equal amount of labels and won awards in different categories that also ranged from regional to international. Most businesses reported that "the more ratings/labels/awards the better", because their customers are looking for quality and that is the way to go to show dedication to quality to potential customers. Among other reasons to have various awards and labels was for example the necessity to hold a quality rating with Visit England or Enjoy England to be featured on their respective websites, that rank high among England tourists, and on the Peak District National Park website. Also, as many labels and awards are known on different regional dimensions (for example Visit England is well known internationally, while the PDEQM is only known on a very limited, regional basis) it is necessary to represent the business on these different scope levels to be successful. While a regional tourist could maybe be attracted with the PDEQM label, national and international tourists would be more likely to be aware of and searching for accommodation that got a quality rating with Visit England. At the moment, most firms consider well-known quality rating labels like Visit England and Enjoy England as the most important for their company, while locally known labels and awards are considered as being secondary to business success.

To summarise, most companies do not seem to have a sense of apprehension concerning the holding of various different labels and awards as they feel that it shows the customer the firm's ongoing dedication to quality and helps to accentuate different

¹⁶ In the visitor survey for the Peak District in 2005 85% of the respondents visited the area for the scenery and over 50% for the tranquility (PDNPA 2005, p. 25) and this should also influence their choice of accommodation location.

strengths of the company (for example having won an award for disabled access). In this study it is not possible to assess how the customer reacts to the mass of credentials some businesses proudly present, but it does not seem to impair business at the least.

The Peak District National Park Authority does not see any conflicts between the PDEQM and other labels in the accommodation sector, as they consider the PDEQM as an accreditation of the firm's concern and work for the Peak District National Park and not as an accommodation quality label. Thus, the PDEQM is not likely to cause conflict with other labels or confusion, especially with the quality rating segment of labels (Suzanne Fletcher on the 24th of June 2013).

9. 6 Why the PDEQM?

One of the main questions of this paper is why the PDEQM members decided to apply for the PDEQM, as this reflects the expectations for the PDEQM membership and the reasoning behind the decision to take part in an eco- or sustainability scheme.

Most firms named as one of the main reasons for applying for the PDEQM to get their green and sustainable business practices recognised by an outside body to be more comfortable to advertise and communicate these efforts to their guests. This shows that the companies realise that customers care about independent evaluation of claims the businesses make about their practices and sustainability and that they deemed the PDEQM scheme as a reliable affirmation body for their business practices concerning sustainability. This reason was also one of the top three reasons for joining the GTBS in a study of Visit England in the year 2009, with 84% listing the intention of getting their green business practices confirmed by an outside body when joining the label (GREEN TOURISM 2013b).

Some firms reported that they thought to attain marketing benefits from being part of a larger group that could achieve a greater scope of attention than the company could reach by itself. This prediction was coupled with the hope or even expectation to attract more customers that in almost all cases could not be achieved as many businesses were sure that the PDEQM membership could do nothing to improve their number of guest nights, even if some firms could achieve an increase since joining the PDEQM

scheme. In the scope of this thesis it is not possible to distinguish between marketing benefits and actual increase of customers that result from these benefits. So it is entirely possible that there are indeed marketing benefits for the companies in the PDEQM but that these cannot influence customer decisions as much as desirable. However, some evidence points in the direction that the PDEQM does not really offer significant marketing benefits at the moment, as many businesses complained about a seeming lack of knowledge about the PDEQM even in the local region.

The certification of the firm's efforts in sustainability and as a result strengthened positive publicity that should generate additional attention from green customers is also listed in literature as the main incentive for companies to take part in eco- and sustainability label schemes (WEAVER 2006, p. 116). An often attributed weakness of eco- and sustainability labels as mentioned in literature is also reflected in the present survey, as many interviewees reported that the expectation of increased business is not yet fulfilled, partly due to lack of knowledge of the PDEQM (see WEAVER 2006, p. 125).

Additionally, there were a multitude of other reasons for joining the PDEQM that mostly concerned ethical reasons, like feeling responsibility for the Peak District and its inhabitants and the impacts of the firm for the environment as a whole, or business strategy themes, like getting access to help with positioning the company in the market as a firm that is being sustainable and responsible in its business decisions. The personal commitment to the environment was the top reason in the Visit England study investigating businesses' reasons for joining the GTBS scheme (GREEN TOURISM 2013b), but interestingly does not feature as prominently in this survey as an answer to that particular question.

Other reasons to join included getting access to expert skills in the environmental and general sustainability sector, business practice and management and to achieve differentiation from other companies in the market. Especially small firms in which the managers do not have formal training in the tourism and accommodation sector would look for business management and practice advice in a label additionally to having a focus on sustainability. It becomes obvious that besides being part of a sustainability label that stands for best practice examples in the field of sustainability in the Peak District National Park, the businesses also expect to get access to skills that help to improve the firm in other areas in order to make the company more competitive while

still being as sustainable as possible. Interestingly, lowering running costs as one of the top three reasons on the Visit England study for GTBS with an occurrence rate of 80% (GREEN TOURISM 2013b) was only mentioned once directly as a reason for joining the PDEQM in this survey. This could be owing to the fact that many interviewees reported that they already did implement many resource saving measures in their business prior to applying for the PDEQM and thus did not expect to further reduce them due to joining the PDEQM. When asked about the expected changes from the PDEQM membership, the reduction of running costs was mentioned more often (see subchapter 9. 7).

When asking about why companies decided to apply for the PDEQM it is also very important to understand their decision process in order to be able to analyse strengths and weaknesses of the scheme and potential development angles. In this survey, half of the interviewees answered that they did not look at other schemes at the time they decided to apply for the PDEQM when asked about how they identified the PDEQM as a label they wanted their business to hold from the range of available labels and awards. These findings suggest that many firms did not take a concerted action to identify a label to apply for and in most cases rather heard about the scheme by chance, got a recommendation from some contact or were approached by a PDEQM staff member about the possibility of the firm to apply for the scheme. However, many interviewees appreciated the local emphasis of the PDEQM and reported that as one influencing factor of their decision to join the PDEQM scheme. Some companies stressed that they especially missed a local tie in other available schemes that are concerned with sustainability and green business practices and work on national or even international level like the GTBS, of which some firms are members as well. As a result, one should note that even while it can be regarded as a disadvantage that the PDEQM only works on a local level as this can limit the scope it can achieve marketing wise the local emphasis is valued in the sustainability sector (EPLER WOOD & HALPENNY 2001). The companies who already had the GTBS membership in most cases did name the more local emphasis and especially the ties to the Peak District National Park as the reason for their additional application for the PDEQM as accreditation of their environmental and sustainability efforts.

In general conversation beside the questionnaire questions many businesses complimented the personal touch of the PDEQM and the commitment of the people

working there, what highlights the need for and advantages of a close working relation between the firms and a label. This positive outlook on the close spatial connection of the PDEQM to the Peak District is also reflected in literature, where local eco-tourism labels are generally considered as more likely to create a valuable product than national or even international ones (EPLER WOOD & HALPENNY 2001). In this light, the intention to create a network of many regional EQMs seems to capture the essence of eco-tourism effectively. To elaborate on this point, the concept of the EQM being adaptable to various regions (like the already existing Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark working with this concept) seems to be a sensible development angle for the whole EQM concept and, should it go forward, could be beneficial for the PDEQM as well. Having a national network of regional EQMs will definitely increase awareness of the schemes and help to spread the knowledge of this label and as a result maybe attract more customers.

9. 7 Expectations Versus Reality

This subchapter focuses on the expectations of the businesses at the time of applying for the PDEQM and their actual experiences with the scheme as of today. This will help to illuminate what firms look for in a sustainability label and in what ways the PDEQM is able to fulfil these hopes and in which areas there is potential for further improvements.

Expectations for joining the PDEQM.

The first question discussed in this section is what changes the companies expected from joining the PDEQM among which the hope to increase awareness of green issues in the business and to attract more green guests ranked relatively high. The particular hope of attracting more green guests could not be fulfilled by the PDEQM membership as many company owners pointed out as mentioned above, while many firm owners or managers confirmed increased knowledge about and awareness of environmental and sustainability themes in themselves and their staff. Even if many businesses were interested in these themes before joining the PDEQM, the membership proved beneficial for their knowledge and the implementation of this knowledge in the business decision making process. Some interviewees additionally expected to have to use a more structured approach to their efforts in the sector of sustainability due to their PDEQM membership than when they worked on it on their own. This prediction was fulfilled by the PDEQM membership as well, with the exception of the firms that already

were in the GTBS prior to applying for the PDEQM and did not attach that much importance to this aspect.

Another hope for the PDEQM membership was to increase the visibility of the company and its efforts in the area of sustainability. In most cases interviewees do not think this to be the case based on their experiences with the scheme.

Additionally, interviewees expected to be able to save money on running costs due to their PDEQM membership, even if they already implemented many management measures for increased resource use efficiency. Many firms reported that this indeed was the case, but often also mentioned certain problems with getting permits for renewable energy facilities like solar panels in the national park, especially as many companies are situated in listed buildings with limited range of transfiguration possibilities.

Some interviewees pointed out that they did not expect any real changes for their business as they already felt that they did everything they could in the area of business sustainability and only wanted to get this efforts certified by an outside body. Especially firms that were GTBS members had no real suppositions for change in their company due to the PDEQM membership. Some interviewees applied for the PDEQM scheme in addition to their prior GBTS membership, even if this international label is known better in the UK than the PDEQM by far and cannot compete with GTBS efficiency and scope at the current stage. This fact highlights the desire for regional connection and a deep set identification of the members with the Peak District National Park.

Satisfaction with the membership.

To assess the satisfaction with the label the question whether members' expectations have been met by the PDEQM was employed. 70% of the interviewees considered their suppositions to be fulfilled, what demonstrates that most members seem to have realistic hopes for their membership and do not expect utopian impacts for their businesses. Three firms said that their expectations only have been met in part as there was no perceivable financial and promotional benefit for their companies while other suppositions were met. Another three interviewees reported that their predictions for membership had not been fulfilled by the PDEQM; two of these also criticised the lack of financial gain from the membership and one complained about too few

meetings being organised by the PDEQM and suspects problems with funding as the reason behind this.

These findings show that some firms do expect a direct financial gain from the PDEQM membership due to increased customer interest in their business. At its current stage the PDEQM is unable to deliver this separate from the reduced running costs that the PDEQM is able to achieve in many cases. As mentioned earlier at the current stage of evolution of eco- and sustainability labels, it is not certain if customer interest will ever fully transit from the statement of caring for the environment when on a holiday to actually include these labels into their decision process (see for example SHARPLEY 2001 or MIHALIČ 2001). At the moment the PDEQM can neither achieve a national scope in the area of knowledge about the label nor could this guarantee more customer interest for the members. Again, this seeming discrepancy between intent and behavioural action has to be analysed more thoroughly in separate research. In this case at least the often implicated higher prices of more environmental sound products and services can be eliminated as a reasons for a lack of increased guest decision for labelled companies, as almost all businesses who raised their prices since being members of the PDEQM have stressed to not having done that because of the PDEQM but to accommodate rising costs of living.

Benefits of the PDEQM.

Mentioned the most often when asked about the benefits of the PDEQM scheme was being part of a group of like-minded businesses, getting help and inspiration by other firms that have experiences in sustainable business practice and being forced to adopt a more structured approach to business practice than before. Interestingly, while the adoption of environmental management is considered as a challenge for small companies in literature (SAMPAIO et al. 2012), in the case of the PDEQM this is often considered as having positive effects on business management, as the more informal approach adopted before is seen as inferior (see also *Drawbacks of the PDEQM*).

Other reported benefits included the preserving of the environment and the increase of professional expertise of members. These findings suggest that the companies especially appreciate the exchange of ideas and experiences in the field of sustainability among peers and the management structure the label enforces for reassessments that many businesses claimed to not be motivated to uphold on their own. The provision of expertise and opportunity for networking is also mentioned as

major industry incentives for participation in ecolabels by WEAVER (2006, p.116). Very similar benefits of joining a sustainability label in tourism were discovered by JARVIS et al. (2010) in a case study about the benefits and challenges of the GTBS scheme in the west of England.

Drawbacks of the PDEQM.

Among the drawbacks the most mentioned were the costs of the membership, what seems to be an issue that occurred with the end of funding and the need of the PDEQM CIC to be more self-sustaining since April 2012. This aspect is considered as problematic by some interviewees as the PDEQM started out as a pilot project that could offer membership and services free of charge initially and now the CIC has to charge money in order to pay for the running business as financial funding stopped. As a result, member numbers dropped considerably which increased the financial problems in the PDEQM and additionally limited the means for organising events that go beyond "general" working procedure of assessing potential members and re-assessing current members. At the moment, the CIC tries to reach more companies in an effort to increase financial means and to acquire sponsors to help build up money to be able to work more freely. The interviewees who think the fees to be a serious drawback of the PDEQM seem to argue that the lack of financial benefits the PDEQM offers does not justify taking fees for the label, while many other firms accept the fees.

Two interviewees considered the temporal effort they have to make in order to be initially accepted for the PDEQM and later to pass the yearly re-assessments as a drawback of the scheme. Here also it is argued that there were too few benefits for the business to justify this kind of work for the label and that constantly devising new developmental goals for the firm takes up too much time in the normal business process. This comment can be related to the findings of SAMPAIO et al. (2012), who examined the challenges small companies that are characterised by an informal management approach and often managed by "owner-managers" are faced with when adopting environmental management. They point out, that the "Plan-Do-Check-Review" approach to environmental management demanded by most eco- and sustainability labels can hinder small businesses to apply for these labels, as they do not see the point of this kind of environmental management for the size of their firms, not even mentioning the time that needs to be invested in the implementation. To alleviate this issue, SAMPAIO et al. (2012) recommend adequate mentoring and

consulting for small firms that want to participate in certification schemes. In the PDEQM scheme, however, there seems to be enough mentoring and communication between project officers and participants for these issues seem to be limited to a small amount of members having real trouble with implementing environmental management in their firm, as confirmed by being only mentioned twice as a drawback of the PDEQM in this survey.

Again, it is mentioned that there is a lack of promotional benefit what is considered a drawback of the PDEQM scheme, too. Interestingly, companies did expect a promotional benefit from becoming a member of the PDEQM scheme, while BONILLA-PRIEGO et al. (2011) found in a study about Spanish EMAS-certified hotels, that only few recognised a market advantage in the adaption of high environmental standards - most of these hotels rather wanted to “avoid legal challenges” by getting certified.

One interviewee pointed out that the initial outlay of costs when preparing to apply for the PDEQM could be too expensive for some businesses as they, for example, have to change their light bulbs to more energy efficient ones that are more expensive or have to invest in the installation of renewable energy facilities. On the other hand, some firms heard about the PDEQM scheme when applying for help or a grant at the PDNPA often in order to implement energy management or renewable energy facilities.

Again, the perceived drawbacks of the PDEQM scheme or challenges presented for businesses who consider joining it closely correspond with the findings of JARVIS et al. (2010). In their case study, lack of knowledge about the sustainable tourism industry, perceived costs of joining and/or membership and lack of time to complete application and ensure future compliance with the scheme were worked out as major challenges of the GTBS scheme.

Almost half of the interviewees did not name any drawbacks to the PDEQM scheme, what shows the general satisfaction with the scheme and understanding for some of the current issues regarding the financial situation of the PDEQM.

Differences in running of the business to before applying for the PDEQM.

Another important question is what the differences in the way of running the firms are compared to before their PDEQM membership. Most interviewees mentioned that they now are even more aware of environmental issues and their possible solutions and try to implement this awareness in the business process by considering the impacts of their decisions in all parts of the company, from installing a new more efficient boiler to buying more chemical free cleaning products. This indicates that the PDEQM has great influence on the firms and helps to improve green and sustainable behaviour.

Another common answer was that there is more discipline in the running of the firm and the monitoring of business processes since joining the PDEQM, what is probably true to a lesser extent for companies that already held other environmentally or sustainability oriented labels like the GTBS. This change indicates that the PDEQM membership not only boosts sustainability in the firms but also manages to increase professional business management behaviour, especially in small scale firms. Again, this is regarded as a positive aspect by many, rather than a hindrance to apply for an eco- or sustainability label as suspected by SAMPAIO et al. (2012). However, for those who do not apply and are thus not included in this case study this could prove to be one reason for not joining the PDEQM.

Five interviewees stated there were no real changes since joining the PDEQM, as they were already adapted as far as possible to sustainable business practice and could not improve that due to the PDEQM membership.

Summing up, all reported changes in the way of running the firms were positively connoted and were appreciated by the interviewees, but some, mostly bigger or more experienced businesses, could not detect further improvement from their membership.

Changes of work attitude and guest interaction.

70% of the interviewees also reported a change of their work attitude that was always positively connoted and included more pride in their work and being more comfortable in promoting their firm as being sustainable. The PDEQM membership thus seems to assure and encourage the companies in their efforts to be more sustainable. Some interviewees mentioned that they felt encouraged to promote the special qualities of the Peak District to their guests even more than before, what shows the positive

influence of the PDEQM's work regarding the promotion and education about the national park through accommodation providers. Additionally, it indicates the deep connection of the businesses with the Peak District and the value they put in their surroundings and other people's enjoyment of the national park. These results reinforce the very similar findings from an earlier survey of the PDEQM members in the report on the development of the PDEQM scheme from 2005 (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 22).

The answers concerning interaction changes with guests looked similar, with 65% of the interviewees noticing a change that was considered as positive and the other businesses mostly reporting to not have noticed changes due to their PDEQM membership. Generally, the PDEQM seems to boost the interaction with guests and increases the motivation to share information about the national park and its special qualities with guests.

Perceived difference to non-PDEQM businesses in the Peak District.

A very interesting and important question of this survey was how the firms would imagine they are different from other non-PDEQM accommodation companies in the Peak District. In order to indirectly assess the picture potential customers may have of the PDEQM it was interesting to find that four interviewees pointed out that they could not say how their companies were different from non-PDEQM members as these could make an effort in the field of sustainability as well and only not have applied for the PDEQM. This information points to one important aspect that is mentioned by FONT (2001b) and BUCKLEY (2001) concerning the factors that influence the success of ecolabels: the penetration of the label and/or how much environmental difference the customer perceives between labelled and unlabelled products and services. FONT (2001b) as well as BUCKLEY (2001) argue that only labels that can guarantee a certain quality gap between labelled and non-labelled products or services in order to be meaningful to the customer. This is generally achieved by the label testing all products and/or services on the market and label those, that achieve a certain level of quality in the chosen field, so that the customer can be sure that a business or product that is not labelled failed to attain this level of quality. As a best practice oriented and application based label with very limited financial means, the PDEQM is not able to offer this amount of market penetration and thus cannot guarantee a quality gap between labelled and non-labelled products. The concept of the PDEQM does not seem to

intend this level of penetration, but this could contribute to the lack of commercial benefits for their members and hints at the need to orient their offer of benefits in a different direction. This theme will be further elaborated in the chapter "Conclusions".

Despite these four interviewees hinting at an important weakness of the PDEQM scheme, mostly the interviewees agreed that they thought the PDEQM members to be more sustainable than the average firm in the Peak District and to be more aware of the impact of the business.

PDEQM initiatives in the firms.

When asked about the PDEQM initiative the company is most proud of, almost half of the interviewees reported that the initiative they are most proud of was not inspired by the PDEQM, but rather often seemed to be the reason for their acceptance into the PDEQM scheme. This indicates that in many cases the PDEQM did not inspire the most noticeable and pride invoking initiatives, but also highlights the engagement of the businesses that apply for the PDEQM in the field of sustainability, especially the environmental sector. Mostly named by the interviewees, who had a PDEQM inspired initiative, were projects concerning the support of local communities and engagement with the local economy. This hints at the fact that the PDEQM especially is able to broaden the efforts of the firms into the area of the social and economic aspects of sustainability. The answers given also indicated that the companies started to act as multipliers for the theme of sustainability in businesses and some reported to have supported other firms on the way of applying for the PDEQM and talk about the PDEQM with business contacts.

Satisfaction with the PDEQM scheme.

To the question of general satisfaction with the activities of the PDEQM in the sector of accommodation, 85% reported their satisfaction with the scheme. Some interviewees had implied that other business sectors (especially the producing and arts and crafts sector) benefited more from the promotion as they are additionally promoted by the accommodation firms and rely on guests already in the Peak District, while the accommodation businesses rely on national and international guests who, in the vast majority of cases, have not heard about the PDEQM prior to staying with a PDEQM member accommodation. Despite this, most interviewees do not seem to feel too disadvantaged in comparison with other business sectors to be unsatisfied with the work of the PDEQM in the accommodation sector.

Improvement suggestions.

Almost two third of the interviewees had improvement suggestions that will be discussed in the following.

One suggestion was to try to encourage more firms to join the PDEQM scheme and “get commercially savvy” in order to improve the visibility of the scheme at the regional and maybe even national level and thus maybe attract more customers. This suggestion is in tune with the efforts of the CIC at the moment, as a certain number of members is needed to be able to offer certain services like seminars and events, where members can exchange their experiences. A larger number of members probably will not be able to elevate the financial situation of the PDEQM much, because with more members there is also an increase in work needed to process them. In order to improve the financial situation of the PDEQM, the CIC tries to additionally acquire sponsors to reach a higher liberty of action for the organisation of events that are desired by the members. Acquiring sponsors will prove to be the best development angle at the moment as this can enable the PDEQM to offer more events that attract attention in the business environment and maybe inspire more change towards sustainable development in the Peak District National Park.

Another more than once mentioned suggestion indeed was to have more events and seminars, with interesting guest speakers like Xavier Font, who could even become champions for the PDEQM and maybe link the PDEQM with other projects they know about. Doing more seminars would improve the scheme, as this would offer more directly visible benefits for the firms, what is important to attract new and hold current members, that are not in the PDEQM because of a strong ethical motivation and loyalty to the scheme (since many of them joined in the pilot project stage or at least before fees were charged). The improvement of event offers is a challenge that is already taken on by the CIC and will be tackled in the future of the scheme.

One interesting suggestion was for the PDEQM to try to co-ordinate requirements for the PDEQM label and other quality labels, as these often tend to clash, especially in the luxury label area, where many requirements go against sustainability principles (like providing fresh towels and bed sheets every day or using non recycled toilet paper). Some interviewees complained that the luxury labels and ratings are hard to acquire when the business wants to simultaneously stick to their sustainability code of

conduct and fulfil the requirements of the PDEQM. It was suggested for the PDEQM to try to educate other labels in the sense of luxury not having to equal being unsustainable in the firm. This last suggestion may be aimed a little too high for the PDEQM at the moment, but is nonetheless very interesting for sustainability in the hotel and accommodation industry of the whole UK, especially in national parks like the Peak District. This issue could account for many luxury accommodation offers not considering sustainability at the moment thinking that luxury and sustainability cannot be reconciled. For the future, the PDEQM could indeed try to work in that direction and maybe organise a workshop about this aim to think about ways of initiating projects to educate the luxury hotel and accommodation sector.

Another suggestion to improve the PDEQM was to try to differentiate the members according to their size, because some smaller firms felt that the needs, means available and experiences vary too much in the different members to be discussed among all sizes of companies together. This seems a sensible suggestion because, indeed, the possible scale of sustainability projects and the means to invest in such measures are vastly different in the smaller and bigger firms who are members of the PDEQM at the moment. However, as of today it seems impractical to have such a differentiation as there are only roughly 60 businesses in the PDEQM in total and offering events and professional help tailored for different company sizes is not feasible at the current stage of the PDEQM. One should think about this sometime in the future, when hopefully the financial leeway of decision making of the PDEQM will be greater and there are more members.

One suggestion for the PDEQM to be more successful was for the label to decide whether they only want to be a quality rating similar to the star ratings of Visit England and Enjoy England, or more like a promotion syndicate to sharpen their focus and communicate this intention to potential members. As most interviewees agreed that the PDEQM at the moment has no influence on customer choice, only being a quality rating for sustainable business practice does not seem to be a solution for the future of the PDEQM. Besides, the PDEQM is not intended to solely be a quality rating as it is best practice oriented and tries to further improve sustainability in members and encourage inspiration among members to try things that proved successful in other companies. This concept is tailored to inspire more communication among peer firms that try to improve sustainability of the region as well as their own companies.

Accordingly, the PDEQM cannot be described as a promotion syndicate either, as the scheme focuses more on developmental help for members and constant improvement of the companies that take part. This suggestion, however, shows that some businesses do not really see any commercial benefits for their own firms and would like to have a clearer communication of intent by the PDEQM scheme.

Recommendation of PDEQM to other tourism businesses.

All interviewees would recommend the PDEQM to other tourism firms in the Peak District. Despite the improvements that are desired, the interviewees seem to think the overall concept of the scheme to be valuable for the business and the aims and purposes of the Peak District National Park.

As a reason for this recommendation, most interviewees gave the good networking opportunities the PDEQM could offer to firms that are interested in being sustainable and want to constantly improve and learn from other companies. Especially smaller and new firms can benefit from these networking opportunities. They also mentioned that the PDEQM is a good information source concerning sustainability related themes. These reasons seem to show the heart of why companies decide to apply for the PDEQM or when having applied for other reasons, like having commercial and/or financial benefits, to stay with the PDEQM even if these expectations could not be met by the PDEQM scheme until now.

9. 8 General Observations

The interviewees mostly show a high amount of motivation and seem to be highly driven and organised managers that often already had operational and appropriate environmental measures implemented in their firms that showed a certain link to the Peak District National Park environment. Additionally, most interviewees held great pride for their location in the National Park and their service in the accommodation sector. These findings are congruent with earlier findings of research about the PDEQM in the developmental phase from 2001 to 2005 (JOHNSON et al. 2005, p. 22).

10. Conclusions

This chapter is dedicated to drawing the conclusions from the prior chapters and work out some recommendations for the future development of the PDEQM. It will summarise important aspects of businesses' decision to join the PDEQM and the impact of the PDEQM on their firm against their expectations. Additionally, it will illuminate some further research areas for the future work in the area of eco- and sustainability labels.

The decision to apply for the PDEQM often does not follow a classic concept of first having an intent of getting environmental and/or sustainable accreditation, then researching possible labels and awards, a comparison of multiple possibilities and choice of one of them to apply for. In half of the cases, the decision process can rather be described as first hearing about the PDEQM, thinking about the scheme's impact on the business and then decision for application (or against application for businesses who have not been interviewed in this study). This hints at the fact that many businesses will have to be contacted directly in the undertaking of the EQM CIC to attract more businesses for the PDEQM membership.

The main expectations for the membership and reasons for joining the PDEQM scheme are in tune with other findings in this research area. The major themes in the answers to these questions were getting green or sustainable accreditation and attain marketing advantages that would result in more customers or even more green customers. Additionally, reduction of running costs, responsibility for the Peak District National Park and access to expert skills in sustainability were mentioned. These themes are also named in literature and other research as the main incentives for joining an eco- or sustainability label (see for example GREEN TOURISM 2013b and WEAVER 2006, p. 116).

There seem to be two general types of businesses in the PDEQM at the moment:

- a) the businesses that are looking for help in the area of sustainable business practice and professional business management, that are seeing real benefits for their businesses due to the membership in the PDEQM and have some sometimes too high expectations for their membership in the label and

- b) the businesses that already are well adapted in sustainable business practice and even have some credentials like the GTBS, but want to include the more local aspect of caring for the Peak District National Park, that is very important to them and do not expect great benefits from their membership in the label.

This constellation seems to be quite beneficial for the newer and more inexperienced member businesses as they are able to learn from more experienced firms. However, the PDEQM does have to consider how to be attractive to more experienced businesses that may be unwilling to pay for the membership only for the additional label of “caring for the Peak District”.

Despite a quite high amount of interviewees’ good knowledge of the sustainability concept, the PDEQM membership could improve knowledge and thus fulfils its aim of increasing the number of sustainable business practices that are constantly updating to the state of the art.

Despite the claim that most businesses expected an increase in customer numbers and attention for the firm that is not being fulfilled, the vast majority of companies are satisfied with the PDEQM scheme. This can be attributed to other benefits the PDEQM scheme has to offer. These include the networking opportunities, the access to expert skills and best practice examples of real peer companies and the support at developing the firm in a sustainable way. Also, many informally trained owners of small businesses, who double as managers for their company, benefit from various events that train the managers in business practice and (environmental and general) management, so that the business can be run more effectively. Due to these benefits, that do not include necessarily actual commercial benefits are the strengths of the PDEQM at the moment that should be further developed.

One issue with the PDEQM as of today is the limited pro-active approach of many members. Some interviewees commented that they tried to start a project with other members that discontinued after some meetings, due to temporal and motivational problems. Additionally, with the start of the fees, many businesses expect to “get something for their money” and demand more events organised by the PDEQM. Even if it is indeed recommendable to increase these events in number, what is difficult at the

moment due to the financial shortages, the PDEQM should emphasise that they are intended to build a frame for pro-active work by the members among themselves, too.

Another strength of the PDEQM scheme is its connection with the members and thus developing loyalty to the scheme. Many interviewees emphasised the personal touch of the PDEQM and reported that they started to act as multipliers for the scheme's ideas and goals. Some even introduced new firms into the label and helped with the application process. The members' enthusiasm for the PDEQM could even result in a more pro-environmental behaviour of guests, as the information of customers about the Peak District can increase attachment to the area (see RAMKISSOON et al. 2012).

One possible development angle for the PDEQM could be to encourage food tourism projects that were recently considered to be able to contribute to the sustainable development of tourism regions (see HJALAGER & JOHANSEN 2013 and EVERETT & SLOCUM 2013). Such projects could also increase attention for the PDEQM and networking between the members and maybe attract more farming businesses, who would like to differentiate into the food and tourism sector.

One of the major or maybe even the most important issue of the PDEQM and other eco- and sustainability labels is, that there is no reliable evidence as of today, that the detected increase of market's demand for more sustainable products and services does result in a behavioural change of actual increased demand that would justify the additional costs of eco- and sustainability accreditation for businesses. This problem will, if not resolved by a real increase of demand, forever limit the market for eco- and sustainability accreditation to a small proportion of businesses, who are ethically or morally motivated or emotionally attached to their home to an extent that demands them to safeguard their surroundings.

This often observed deficiency in the attraction of more business could be attributed to a failure of EPIS and eco- and sustainability labels and awards to raise enough awareness of the schemes in the public, due to various issues like for example an abundance of labels and awards that confuse the potential customer. This interpretation is often adapted by labels and the problem is thus attempted to be solved by increasing promotional efforts to raise recognition of and knowledge about the label and its aims, as recommended for the GTBS scheme for example (JARVIS et al. 2010).

The other interpretation of this problem is that the claim of intent by customers to prefer and even pay more for certified products and services will never be followed by a behavioural change away from choosing the same offer as before by a considerable proportion of consumers. In this case, not increased promotion for eco- and sustainability labels but other means are needed in order to improve overall sustainability of the market.

Due to the certain possibility of the ongoing lack of "real"¹⁷ demand in the future, one should consider the alternatives of creating incentives for businesses to join eco- and sustainability labels, as the increase of sustainability in the market is one of the main aims and purposes of labels like the PDEQM. In the case of the PDEQM (and by extrapolation in other cases as well), the possibility of engaging administration and policy could prove to be beneficial. Were there certain benefits for PDEQM members when applying for grants or building permits with the PDNPA or maybe other advantages or privileges for members provided by administration, there would be a stronger incentive for businesses, who do not have at least partially moral reasons for joining the PDEQM. This could attract more members than with the now promoted benefits of a PDEQM membership and thus expand the scope of the PDEQM to more "traditionally managed" companies in the Peak District.

Based on the findings of this case study, there are some further questions that should be addressed in later research. Two of these are why firms do not apply for the PDEQM (or any eco- or sustainability label) and whether the demand side of the market is not overrated at the moment or even at all able to develop to an extent that creates a firm basis for eco- and sustainability labels to be effective in gaining their members real commercial benefits. As the increased demand for ecologically sound or sustainable products and services seems to be the starting point of many labels, this question is of paramount importance for the further development of sustainability in the market. Only if there is indeed a major demand shift to these products and services, is the inherent core assumption that the demand side can transform the market to being more sustainable correct. If not, and instead there should be a limitation to this demand in real life, the sustainability of the market will be limited accordingly in the future. In this scenario, there have to be alternatives to the demand pressure, like the one of including benefits for labelled businesses provided by administration and policy. At the

¹⁷ Meaning actual behavioural change of buying much more labelled products.

moment, such questions are discussed heatedly and repeatedly without certain results, owing to the difficulty of means and reliable methods to assess these issues. Further research potential in this field is certainly present.

All in all, this case study illuminated the impacts the PDEQM has on its members at the moment, and where the discrepancy between expectations and actual experiences lie. The findings of this study should be able to inform the further development of the PDEQM and, to an extent, on the one hand confirm earlier findings of research for this case and raise further questions for research and development possibilities for eco- and sustainability labels in general.

11. Summary

This paper intends to analyse the impact of ecolabels on participating businesses, comparing them to the initial expectations of the businesses, employing a case study in the Peak District National Park. This national park is one of the top three national parks by visitors in the UK and thus is put under an especially tough strain by guests, what results in an increased interest to develop sustainable development incentives to preserve the natural beauty of the Peak District and thus the basis of the touristic interest and income source of the protected rural area.

The case study focused on the PDEQM scheme that was founded in 2001 as a pilot project by the Peak District National Park Authority. The PDEQM is intended to be a sustainability label that focuses on the environmental and social benefits from sustainable business practice and is used as a tool to increase the economic success of participating businesses while encouraging sustainable business practice (see PRINCE 2010, pp. 11f).

Accommodation businesses that are participants in the PDEQM were surveyed using a half standardised questionnaire that examined the expectations of the firms for their membership as well as their experiences with the scheme so far and improvement suggestions. The results indicated that the main reasons for joining the PDEQM were to get certification for sustainable business practice and gaining marketing benefits that were expected to result in more green customer attention, what as of today could not be fulfilled according to the interviewees. Another major expectation for the PDEQM membership was to raise awareness of environmental and sustainability issues in the firm, what was proved to be true.

It turned out that the PDEQM does not seem to be able to generate real marketing advantages at the moment, but the continued membership of the interviewees indicates that it offers other benefits for the firms.. Among these are support of businesses that want to increase their sustainability, offering of networking opportunities and a connection with local communities and economy. Being part of a group of like-minded businesses, that offered best-case examples of sustainable business management to each other, was emphasised as a benefit of the PDEQM scheme as well.

In literature one of the main issues of eco- and sustainability schemes is considered the lack of offering marketing benefits for their members, as even bigger more established schemes than the PDEQM struggle with this problem. The main suggestion to alleviate this problem often is to increase marketing efforts to make the label more recognisable to customers and thus increase demand for the labelled products and services. The inherent assumption that the lack of knowledge results in a lack of demand, however, is doubted by many researchers, who were unable to directly connect the found interest in and claim to favour environmentally sound or sustainable products and services to an actual behavioural change of increased demand and money spent on these. The uncertainty of the scope of demand pressure for ecologically sound and sustainable products and services should be kept in mind by eco- and sustainability labels as this casts doubt on the often solely employed strategy of raising awareness of the label in order to improve its success.

Concluding, there are some general observations about the PDEQM members and recommendations for the further development of the PDEQM. These observations include the fact, that most members appreciate the local emphasis of the PDEQM and the connection with like-minded businesses in the Peak District that can inspire each other to more sustainability. Despite the obvious necessity of more promotion, as the PDEQM is in need of both more members and more recognition by potential customers, the scheme should additionally focus on the acquisition of funding bodies to be able to offer other benefits besides marketing advantages for the members. Should it prove true that the demand side of the market is not sufficient to generate enough incentive for businesses to be more sustainable, there should be other measures considered to boost overall sustainability in protected areas. These measures encompass administration and policy incentives for firms to be a member of eco- or sustainability labels.

Further research should be undertaken in the area of examining the scope of real demand increase for environmentally sound and sustainable products and services, as, especially in the service sector, previous research could not estimate the potential market share of these products and services.

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13. Appendix

13.1 Questionnaire of the Survey

The Peak District Environmental Quality Mark - Questionnaire



Interviewno.: _____	Date/Time: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face	<input type="checkbox"/> telephone
Location: _____			
Enterprise: _____			
Interviewee: _____			
1. When did your business start? _____			
2. What category of accommodation is your business? <input type="checkbox"/> hotel <input type="checkbox"/> B&B/ inn <input type="checkbox"/> self-catering <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> no answer			
3. How many beds does your business offer? _____			
4. How many guest-nights did you have last year (2012)? _____			
5. Do you offer any other services besides accommodation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> no answer If yes, what services? _____ _____			
6. How long have you held the Environmental Quality Mark (EQM)? <input type="checkbox"/> under 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 years <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more years <input type="checkbox"/> no answer			
7. How did you hear about the EQM? <input type="checkbox"/> internet <input type="checkbox"/> business contact <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> information fair <input type="checkbox"/> part of applying for grant from PDNPA <input type="checkbox"/> seeking advice from PDNPA <input type="checkbox"/> acquaintances/ friends/ family <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> no answer			
8. How did the financial situation of your business develop since being awarded the EQM? <input type="checkbox"/> positive development <input type="checkbox"/> negative development <input type="checkbox"/> no change <input type="checkbox"/> no answer			
9. How did the running costs of your business develop since being awarded the EQM? <input type="checkbox"/> higher running costs <input type="checkbox"/> lower running costs <input type="checkbox"/> no change <input type="checkbox"/> no answer			

13.1 Questionnaire of the Survey (continuation)

10. Did your business support other schemes/ projects concerning the following themes before applying for the EQM?

	Yes	No	no answer
10.1. Promotion of the Peak District National Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.2. Nature conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.3. Waste reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.4. Water saving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.5. Energy saving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Does your business support other schemes/ projects concerning the following themes since applying for the EQM?

	Yes	No	no answer
11.1. Promotion of the Peak District National Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.2. Nature conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.3. Waste reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.4. Water saving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.5. Energy saving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered with no to all questions or do not wish to answer, please move directly to question 13.

12. What schemes does your business support at the moment that concern the themes mentioned in question 11.?

13. Do you use the EQM to promote your business?

Yes No no answer

If yes, in what way?

web site email signature labelling signs
 other: _____

14. Which other EQM marketing initiatives would you like support with developing?

15. Did you raise your prices since being awarded the EQM?

Yes No no answer

13.1 Questionnaire of the Survey (continuation)

16. Did the number of guest-nights change since being awarded the EQM?

- Yes, more guest-nights Yes, fewer guest-nights no change
 no answer

17. a. Do you consider the financial efforts of holding the EQM as justified?

- Yes No, too much No, too little no answer
b. Do you consider the temporal efforts of holding the EQM as justified?

- Yes No, too much No, too little no answer

18. Do you plan to keep the EQM?

- Yes No no answer

If no, why? _____

19. Did you receive other awards for your business?

- Yes No no answer

If yes, which ones? _____

If you answered with no or do not wish to answer, please move directly to question 22.

20. Why do you hold multiple awards?

21. Which award do you consider the most important for your business?

22. Why did you decide to apply for the EQM?

23. How did you identify the EQM as an award you wanted your business to hold from the variety of available awards?

13.1 Questionnaire of the Survey (continuation)

24. How do you meet the requirements for the EQM?

25. What changes for your business did you expect from holding the EQM?

26. Are your expectations for holding the EQM met?

Yes No no answer

If not, why? _____

27. What are the benefits of holding the EQM?

28. What are the drawbacks of holding the EQM?

29. What are the differences between the way of running your business before and after being awarded the EQM?

30. Are there changes of your work attitude since holding the EQM?

Yes No no answer

If yes, what changes? _____

13.1 Questionnaire of the Survey (continuation)

31. How is your business different from businesses that do not hold the EQM?

32. Did your interaction with guests change since you hold the EQM?

Yes No no answer

If yes, how? _____

33. In your experience, why do guests choose your accommodation business from the range of accommodation offers?

34. Which EQM initiative are you most proud of and tell your customers about?

35. In general, are you satisfied with the activities of the EQM scheme concerning the accommodation sector?

Yes No no answer

36. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the EQM scheme in the accommodation sector?

37. Would you recommend the EQM scheme to other tourism businesses in the Peak District?

Yes No no answer

Why? _____

13.2 Green Globe Standard Criteria and Indicators

Standard Criteria and Indicators of Green Globe

(source: GREEN GLOBE 2013b)

A. Sustainable Management

- A.1 Implement a Sustainability Management System
- A.2 Legal Compliance
- A.3 Employee Training
- A.4 Customer Satisfaction
- A.5 Accuracy of Promotional Materials
- A.6 Local Zoning, Design and Construction
 - A.6.1 Design and Construction - Compliance with Legal Requirements
 - A.6.2 & 3 Sustainable Design and Construction of Buildings and Infrastructure - New and Existing Buildings
- A.7 Interpretation
- A.8 Communications Strategy
- A.9 Health and Safety

B. Social/Economic

- B.1 Community Development
- B.2 Local Employment
- B.3 Fair Trade
- B.4 Support Local Entrepreneurs
- B.5 Respect Local Communities
- B.6 Exploitation
- B.8 Employee Protection
- B.9 Basic Services

C. Cultural Heritage

- C.1 Code of Behavior
- C.2 Historical Artifacts
- C.3 Protection of Sites
- C.4 Incorporation of Culture

13.2 Green Globe Standard Criteria and Indicators (continuation)

D. Environmental

D.1 Conserving Resources

D.1.1 Purchasing Policy

D.1.2 Consumable Goods

D.1.3 Energy Consumption

D.1.4 Water Consumption

D.2 Reducing Pollution

D.2.1 Greenhouse Gas

D.2.2 Wastewater

D.2.3 Waste Management Plan

D.2.3.1 Plan and Reduce

D.2.3.2 Reuse

D.2.3.3 Recycle

D.2.4 Harmful Substances

D.2.5 Other Pollutants

D.3 Conserving Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Landscapes

D.3.1 Wildlife Species

D.3.2. Wildlife in Captivity

D.3.3. Landscaping

D.3.4. Biodiversity Conservation

D.3.5. Interactions with Wildlife

13.3 PDEQM Catalogue of Assessment Questions

The Peak District EQM Questions and Guidance

(source: PDEQM 2013a)

This questionnaire has to be filled out by applying businesses in order for the CIC to assess the business before the visit to the business by a project officer. To all questions there is a guidance of answer examples offered that helps the business to answer the questions.

Section One

1.2 a) Brief description of your business/activity, facts and figures, location, special features. Who are your customers?

1.2 b) When did you start?

1.2 c) Tell us about your awards, assurance schemes and achievements, Star ratings, farm assurance, animal welfare schemes

1.2 d) Describe how you feel about the environment and the Peak District

1.2 e) What do think is the biggest negative environmental impact of your business?

1.3. Will you, through your business activity? a) Work collaboratively with businesses in other sectors by using and promoting their products and services. b) Safeguard natural resources c) Protect and enhance the local built and natural environment. d) Invest in the wellbeing of your staff, local communities and the wider global community. e) Actively help safeguard and improve the special characteristics of the Peak District

1.4. Are you compliant with all relevant regulations and legislation including planning regulations?

1.5. Are your personnel clean, appropriately presented and friendly? Are your premises free from waste materials and discarded items.

1.6. Have you completed the Green Start process?

1.7. If your business doesn't fit Green Start, is there a basic environmental improvement plan for your sector? What is it and have you completed it?

1.8 If you are a farmer/land manager, are you cross compliant?

1.9. If you are a farmer/land manager, which baseline, entry level or higher level scheme are you in?

1.10 . If you are a farmer/land manager, what was the date of your last Rural Payments Agency visit?

1.11. What were the issues raised by the RPA visit?

13.3 PDEQM Catalogue of Assessment Questions (continuation)

Section Two**2.1 Marketing and promotion**

In your marketing and promotional activities, how do you show potential customers and visitors what you are doing and how the Peak District is special?

2.2 Enquiry/booking/point of sale and administration

How do you show customers what you are doing to reduce your environmental impact and how the Peak District is special?

2.3 Transport, arrival, distribution

How does your business try to minimise transport impact in the Peak District? How do you distribute your products in an environmentally sensitive way?

2.4 Place-view

Consider what the customer sees on arrival; appearance and condition of buildings, signs/lighting, storage of materials/waste.

2.5 Place-access

How will your customer or visitor be aware of your involvement/ support of disadvantaged people? Do you cater for people with special needs? Do you have well maintained footpath/stiles?

2.6 Place-your immediate surroundings

How do you manage your surroundings to enhance the Peak District and its valued characteristics for the visitor or customer? Consider garden, grounds, biodiversity, soil, water, air, tranquillity, dark skies.

2.7 Place-facilities

In the place where you meet people; your 'customer interface', what facilities are there to allow them to make green decisions and look after the Peak District?

2.8 Service/processes (Cleaning/laundry)

How do you reduce the negative impact of your cleaning processes? How does the customer know?

2.9 Service/processes (Purchasing)

What you are doing to reduce the negative impact of this? Supplier screening? Recycled products? Transporting purchases? How does your customer know?

2.10 Service/processes (Food preparation and service)

If your business produces or prepares food, how do you celebrate the environment and the Peak District? How can the customer make choices that contribute to its care?

13.3 PDEQM Catalogue of Assessment Questions (continuation)

2.11 Processes-Making

Making/creating, manufacturing: How do your creative processes celebrate the environment and the Peak District? How do your customers know?

2.12 Service-Volunteering

If your activities include volunteers, how do they reduce your environmental impact and celebrate the Peak District when serving customers or visitors?

2.13 Process- Farming

How do you manage your farm to conserve the special qualities of the Peak District? What animal welfare measures do you have in place? How do people know?

2.14 Peak District Culture, Heritage and Environment

What do you do to support the Peak District's valued characteristics? How are you safeguarding and sharing these? How does the customer or visitor enjoy, learn about and contribute to the Peak District culture heritage and environment?

2.15 Active participation in the EQM scheme

How will you contribute to the EQM scheme?

2.16 You and your staff

How do you and your staff keep up-to-date with Peak District initiatives, EQM and new environmental ideas? How do you keep your work related skills up-to-date? Training attended?

2.17 Employing people

Do you employ local people? How do you look after your employees? How can they make suggestions? How do your customers or visitors know?

2.18 Local Community

How do you support your local community? How do people know? How can the customer or visitor contribute too?

2.19 Networks

How does your business work with other EQM and environmentally sensitive/Peak District businesses? How do your customers and visitors know?

2.20 Global Community

How does your business support the community beyond your local community? How will your customer or visitor be aware of your involvement/ support of the global community? How can they contribute too?

13.3 PDEQM Catalogue of Assessment Questions (continuation)

2.21 Customer/visitor

How can your customers and visitors give you their feedback and share their ideas with you about environmental issues and keeping the Peak District special?

2.22 Other

Other EQM activities or innovations that inspire a passion for the Peak District

Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich diese Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Außerdem versichere ich, dass ich die allgemeinen Prinzipien wissenschaftlicher Arbeit und Veröffentlichung, wie sie in den Leitlinien guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg festgelegt sind, befolgt habe.

Großenkneten, den 02. November 2013