

## Natura 2000, a point of attraction? Possibilities and limitations of tourism marketing

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Final conference AlpNaTour  
Natura 2000 im Alpenraum – Leben, Wirtschaften, Schützen  
Natura 2000 nel territorio alpino – vivere, gestire, salvaguardare  
Natura 2000 in the alpine space – living, developing, protecting

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## Content

- Background: destination marketing and branding
- Natura 2000 in tourism marketing
- Results of surveys in two test sites of AlpNaTour
- Examples: how to link Natura 2000 and tourism
- Conclusions

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## Background

Why do tourism destinations consider increasingly marketing and branding?

- The competition in the tourist sector increases as the general quality of the offers increases and standards become established. Besides, there are over-capacities.
- Thus on the market there are more and more similar products without independent profile.

(cp. Scherhag 2003, Bieger 2005)

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## Background

Destination choice

- The destination choice is a complex decision; it is highly involving, expensive decision at great risk.
- But it still becomes more difficult and complex for tourists. Generally, destinations become more and more diversified, the uncertainty in the decision increases.
- So the image of a destination becomes very important .

(cp. Scherhag 2003, Liping 2002, Pikkemaat 2002)

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## Background

- This situation makes it necessary to offer a differentiated product with a clear profile and an appealing image. This can be achieved most effectively by branding.
- Experienced tourist expect to a differentiated product. A brand acts as guaranty and to avoid risk in the decision.

(cp. Scherhag 2003, Pechlaner 1998, Bieger 2005)

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## Destination branding

Definitions: destination brand

- *Name, symbol, logo, word mark, graphic or combination*
- *It identifies and differentiates the destination;*
- *It promises a memorable travel experience uniquely associated with the destination;*
- *It consolidates and reinforces pleasurable memories of the destination experience*
- *It provides constant quality level regarding all participating players*

Ritchie & Ritchie (1998:103) following Aaker (1991), Scherhag (2003:100)

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## Natura 2000 in tourism marketing

Potentials of Natura 2000

- Pan-European vision to halter the loss of biodiversity
- Europe-wide network
- Consistent logo and name
- Dedication of the Natura 2000 sites followed only scientific criteria, favourable conservation status has to be ensured
- Can contribute to achieve a Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

EURAC research

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## Brand Building

Core demands for brand positioning
Relevant for target group
Attractive for target group
Authentic for the target group
Differentiating in the competition
Conveying salient ideas
Deliverable (service or product must justify positioning)
Defendable (cannot be copied easily)
Possible to communicate
Compatible with the overall concept

Klein-Bölling & Maskus 2003, Morgan & Pritchard (2005)

EURAC research

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## Falkenstein, Germany

Test site within Interreg IIIb project AlpNaTour:  
Natura 2000 site „Falkenstein, Alatsee, Faulenbacher- und Lechtal“

- Rather small sensitive area (987 ha) in Allgäu, Bavaria
- Famous alpine tourism destination

**Surveys:**  
Standardised personal interviews: Summer and autumn 2005; 297 respondents  
Interviews with tourism stakeholders: spring 2006 (student course); 22 respondents

EURAC research

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**Schneeberg, Austria**

Test site within Interreg IIIb project AlpNaTour:  
Natura 2000 site „Nordöstliche Randalpen“

- Large area (64,066 ha) in Lower Austria including “Schneeberg”; mainly alpine grasslands
- Popular destination for day visits from Vienna, Slovakia and Hungary

**Survey:**  
Standardised personal interviews: summer and autumn 2005; 134 respondents  
Written questionnaire (winter and spring 2006); 81 respondents

**EURAC** research

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**Visitor characteristics**

**Falkenstein:**  
→ mainly tourists

**Schneeberg**  
→ pre-dominately day visitors

**Visitor groups**

**Visitor groups (summer) - Schneeberg, Austria**

**Visitor groups (winter) - Schneeberg, Austria**

**EURAC** research

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**Motives for the visit of the area**

**Main Reason for Visiting the Area - Falkenstein, Germany**

**Main Reason for Visiting the Area - Schneeberg, Austria (summer)**

- Falkenstein: Most important motive is nature and landscape
- Schneeberg: most important motive is Nature and Landscape and Sports

**EURAC** research

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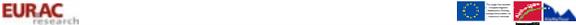
## Examples- Infrastructure

Suggestions for the tourism marketing in the Natura 2000 site Falkenstein



Natura 2000 logo on the environmental education centre "Wald erlebniszentrum Ziegelwies" as entrance of the Natura 2000 site

Source: Algelsperger et al. 2006




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## Examples - Events

„Heufest“ (Hay Festival) in Pfronten, Germany  
 Tourism event focusing on the topic hay. Capitalizing of nature conservation, supporting programme with exhibitions and smaller events  
 Height of the event: Coronation of the „Hay Queen“  
 Nature based tourism offers: Hay&Wellness („Heu-Vital“)







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## Conclusions

What can protected areas achieve in destination branding?  
 → Protected areas are relevant and attractive for tourists in alpine areas.  
 → Protected areas are seen as sign of quality by different user groups

What limits the performance of Natura 2000 in destination branding?  
 → Natura 2000 is unknown for the major part of the tourists, there is hardly any awareness  
 → Possible confusion for non-experts in nature conservation because of different protection categories

To do  
 → Raising awareness on the vision and benefits of Natura 2000 all over Europe  
 → Including into destination concepts as part of an umbrella brand strategy  
 → Establishing different branding initiatives communicating vision and benefits Natura 2000 all over Europe  
 → There is potential but a long term strategy is necessary




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