

## Exploring the potential of an air transport eco-label

Stefan Baumeister<sup>1\*</sup> and Tiina Onkila<sup>2</sup>

Received: 10/01/2017 Accepted: 05/07/2017

<sup>1</sup>University of Jyväskylä, School of Business and Economics. P.O. Box 35, 40014 University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Tel +358 40 805 4122, Fax +358 14 260 1021. E-mail: stefan.c.baumeister@jyu.fi

<sup>2</sup>University of Jyväskylä, School of Business and Economics

\*Corresponding author

### Abstract

Air transport plays a vital role in tourism because it makes long-haul destinations accessible and more frequent vacations possible. Despite its benefits, air travel extensively contributes to climate change. Behavioural change is seen as a key driver in mitigating the environmental

impacts of air transport. One way to encourage behavioural change is the use of eco-labels. This paper presents the idea of introducing an air transport eco-label. It explores the idea's potential and realization through the thematic analysis of 12 interviews with airline industry experts. The results indicated a need for an air transport eco-label. It could help build awareness among air travellers by providing them with environmental information during booking, thereby making flights environmentally comparable. This would also stimulate more competition between airlines, motivating them to improve their environmental performance and creating competitive advantage for those performing better. Finally, the study found that there should be only one eco-label, which should be compulsory for all commercial flights. It should be introduced by an independent authority in order to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. This study could be a first step towards the introduction of an air transport eco-label, making the industry more sustainable.

© 2018 Varna University of Management. All rights reserved

**Keywords:** tourism, air transport, eco-label, energy label, behavioural change, sustainability.

**Citation:** Baumeister, S., T. Onkila (2018) Exploring the potential of an air transport eco-label. *European Journal of Tourism Research* 18, pp. 57-74