

Green Sail have developed an innovative way for boat owners and yacht charter companies to measure their environmental footprint.

The first-of-its-kind system, approved by scientists from the Institute for Tourism in Croatia, will help vessels to determine their environmental footprint. Vessels are then awarded a rating out of five, which reflects their environmentally friendly credentials. *'The biggest advantage of calculating emissions is the management of risks and opportunities. If we think about dealing with the sea and tourism in the long term, it is logical that we take care.'* - **Hrvoje Carić** (Institute for tourism).

The Vessel Environmental Footprint (VEF) system has been developed to reduce the environmental impact of the charter industry and assist the nautical sector in its necessary transition towards a sustainable future. The rating system allows customers to make informed purchase decisions, supporting boat owners who invest in environmentally friendly solutions.

The VEF system calculates each vessel's rating by taking into account the emissions produced by the vessel, energy consumption, water use, and how much waste is produced onboard.

To measure the overall ecological footprint of a vessel, four key areas are considered:

- emissions produced on board
- energy consumption
- water usage
- waste produced onboard

The system also takes into account elements that have the ability to offset or reduce the environmental impact of a vessel. These include anti-fouling processes, the presence of renewable energy sources onboard (solar panels, water makers etc.) and whether recycling facilities are utilised. The age of the vessel, how often it is used and how it is used (i.e. charter or leisure) are also taken into account with the VEF rating system.

Boat owners are required to fill in a short survey, which then allows Green Sail to calculate an individual rating. Ratings are provided to boat owners, allowing them to proudly display their green credentials online.

The many benefits of adopting the rating system include improved reputation, company culture and brand credibility, reduced operating costs, improved supply chain flow and improved transparency.

Although nautical tourism contributes minimally to global pollution (less than 1% of all

marine pollution is attributed to carbon released from recreational boat engines), it can have a negative impact on local coastal communities thanks to pollution of the sea, air and the accumulation of waste. This is particularly problematic in Croatia, where there are no regulations in place for the disposal of grey or black water waste, and no infrastructure allowing for the efficient separation and recycling of waste.

In the future, the calculation of emissions and pollution will assist with monitoring positive environmental developments as they occur and raising awareness around nautical sustainability.

The VEF System is a modern effort aimed at sustainable development within the nautical tourism sector, which will contribute to the EU's increased climate ambition. Green Sail encourages all charter companies and boat owners to get in touch to monitor their emissions through the VEF system and support grassroots initiatives to tackle environmental sustainability, Croatia Week reports.