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# The blue destination strategy in a small island tourism oriented society

The case of Bonaire

Tourism studies

B-thesis

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## **Abstract:**

Tourism could be discussed as being a damaging phenomenon if not managed correctly as well as being destructive towards its own industry by its contribution towards climate change (UNWTO 2008; Glegg et al 2021; Grilli 2021). However, tourism is often considered to be highly important for the destination's economic and social development (Glegg et al 2021). Besides this, natural resources often tend to play an important role in the attractiveness of a destination (Fennell 2015; Uyarra et al 2009). A strategic tourism strategy is therefore needed in order to protect the natural resources of the destination, and in order to become economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. The blue destination strategy could be defined as the sustainable use of ocean resources for growth, well-being, and jobs while protecting the oceans' ecosystems' health (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017).

Bonaire is a small island in the Caribbean that, since 2017, has been implementing a blue destination approach as their destination development strategy. By examining the case of Bonaire, the study aims to develop a better understanding of the contribution of a development strategy towards a sustainable tourism industry within a tourism-oriented society, and aims to highlight the stakeholder's perspective. This is trying to be obtained by answering the three research questions of what the tourism industry looks like on Bonaire, what is trying to be achieved with the blue destination company certification and what the blue destination strategy is as well as what effect it has had on Bonaire so far. In order to provide an answer, the study uses a triangularization method. Six interviews with stakeholders, document analysis, and statistical analysis were carried out. Results highlighted that tourism on Bonaire is an important driver for economic and social growth. The tourism industry on Bonaire is seen as highly dependent on the natural resources of the island, mainly its ocean. The blue company certification has been highlighted as a tool to ensure that sustainable criteria are met as well as an important tool for marketing and inspiring others to become more sustainable. Blue destination has then been highlighted as a way to create and ensure a tourism industry that generates economic welfare and stimulates sustainability for the whole island while highlighting the connection between human activity and the marine ecosystem that takes place in the ocean economy. Measurable effects have so far been minimal or not noticeable but stakeholders highlighted that it has helped by synergizing the island and providing better cooperation between stakeholders, leading to them having the same vision.

**Keywords:** *Blue Destination, Island Tourism, Bonaire, Sustainability, Tourism Development Strategy.*

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## **Preface**

The study has been conducted as a b-thesis as a part of the tourism program at Karlstad University. The study has had a focus on the blue destination strategy within the case of Bonaire and is written by Demy van Bremen.

I, the author, would like to comment that I have found it very interesting to be able to increase my knowledge about the subject and to be able to get an in-depth insight into an island that is geographically far away but still stands so close to myself.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me during and after the writing process in order to be able to carry out this study and who has contributed with valuable and important feedback. I would also like to thank everyone who has been willing to participate in the interviews. I would like to thank you for your insights and interesting answers that have helped me in this study. It has been an intensive but extremely interesting study to carry out.

*/ Demy van Bremen*

# 1. Introduction

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*Chapter one includes an introduction about the chosen research topic that the study examines as well as providing an overview of the research area. The chapter provides background information about the case, Bonaire. Problematics are then further discussed in the problem formulation to then formulate the purpose of the study, and to highlight the research questions. Further, the chapter includes demarcations of the study, a list of concept definitions, and a description of the disposition of the research.*

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Tourism is often seen as an important economic sector that provides a destination with economic growth and development (Glegg et al. 2021). Despite that, the tourism sector has to a great extent been linked with sensitivity regarding internal and external effects on its resources as well as being a contributor to negative effects impacting the environment and social sustainability of its surroundings and resources (UNWTO 2008; Glegg et al. 2021; Grilli 2021). It has therefore been heavily discussed that proper communal policy strategies should be implemented in order to build a sustainable tourism industry (UNWTO 2008; Glegg et al. 2021; Uyarra et al. 2009; Esparon et al. 2015).

Island and coastal zones are considered to be among the most vulnerable to climate change (UNWTO 2008). They are at high risk for coastal flooding, extreme weather, and losses or reductions of beaches and coastal ecosystems due to rising seawater and rising temperatures caused by global warming (UNWTO 2008). The Caribbean is being highlighted as a highly vulnerable area to the effects of climate change (Glegg et al. 2021). While sea levels and temperatures continue to rise, threats such as loss of coral reefs, coastal erosion, and exposure to extreme weather conditions will continue to affect island and coastal areas. The tourism industry itself has been highlighted as a contributor to climate change by its emissions of greenhouse gasses (UNWTO 2008). Besides this, tourism has been linked with losses in the habitats of small island coastal areas as well as being a threat to local culture (Grilli 2021). If the negative impact of tourism is not controlled, the tourism industry could be negatively affecting its own resources and become a destructive factor for its own destination and industry.

To examine tourism planning based on strategic planning, it is important to understand on what geographical scale the strategy is implemented. Bonaire is a special municipality in the kingdom

of the Netherlands, which would mean that a national strategy would account for the whole of the Netherlands. On the other hand, it is not a regional strategy either as Bonaire is a special municipality with its own politics while still being under the leadership of the King of the Netherlands. This could be seen as Bonaire being its own country while belonging to another country. That is why I have chosen to call Bonaire's development plan a "destination development strategy" to clarify.

## 1.1 Background

Bonaire is a small island of 288 km<sup>2</sup> in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (figure 1) which is formed by the special municipalities of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba, collectively known as the Caribbean Netherlands, as well as the countries of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten (Ministry van BZK u.å). Bonaire has a long history of tourism and is one of the most progressive destinations in the field of sustainable tourism development. STINAPA (2015) emphasizes that nature is considered by many of the island's inhabitants as part of the island's identity and that the natural resources are of great importance for the destination's attractiveness. Tourism is considered to be the largest sector in Bonaire's economy and is considered to be the driving force behind many of the island's other sectors that are suppliers or are dependent on the island's tourism sector (KvK Bonaire 2020). Tourism is of great importance to the whole society. Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) highlights that Bonaire is primarily known to tourists as a diving destination due to its diversity of fish species, its coral reefs, turtles and dolphins. Planning for and protecting the destination's most important attractions is thus not only important for the preservation of nature, culture and social well-being but also for the destination's economy. The island has been working towards being the first blue destination where its marine resources are used sustainably for the development of its society. This is trying to be achieved with the help of a communal tourism destination development strategy in the guidelines of the blue economy concept (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). A blue economy is the term for the management of coastal resources to drive economic growth while protecting the marine ecosystem (CDB 2018). In order for companies to play an important role in the progress of turning the destination Bonaire towards a blue destination, a certification system has been made (Good Travel Seal u.å). Certification systems have been commonly used to ensure that specific sustainable criteria are met by the certified company and can be used as a tool for competitiveness (Esparon et al. 2014). Managing and planning the tourism activities taking place

in a destination as well as involving the stakeholders is thus of key importance in order to become economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Besides this, the UNWTO (2008) emphasizes that one destination alone can not change the global situation of climate change but it could start by developing a communal policy in order to manage their tourism growth and regulate its negative impacts locally. It will further take an international sustainable agenda to undertake the global problems leading to global climate change.

### Bonaire on the world map



*Figure 1: Visual representation of the geographical location of Bonaire on a world map. (Source: van Bremen 2021)*

## 1.2 Problem formulation

Tourism is often an important economic sector that provides economic growth and societal development (Glegg et al. 2021). In contrast, tourism could have a harmful and destructive influence over its own resources and environment as well as contributing to global climate change causing international problems (UNWTO 2008; Glegg et al. 2021; Grilli 2021). The island of Bonaire is one of the most progressive in the strive towards sustainable tourism where it is working towards being the first blue destination (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). In order to build a sustainable tourism industry, policy strategies are needed for the regulations and management of the negative impacts generated by tourism locally and globally (UNWTO 2008; Glegg et al. 2021; Uyarra et al. 2009; Esparon et al. 2015) . By examining the blue destination development strategy of Bonaire, this study tries to contribute to a better understanding of the effects a policy destination development strategy could have in a tourism oriented society. This could be useful for the evaluation and planning of a communal destination development strategy for the development of sustainable tourism.

## 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the study is to examine the contribution of a destination's development strategy towards a sustainable tourism industry within a tourism oriented society and, to highlight a stakeholder's perspective of the contribution of the destination development strategy.

## 1.4 Research questions

- What does the tourism industry look like on Bonaire?
- What is trying to be achieved with the blue destination company certification?
- What is the blue destination strategy for Bonaire and what effect has it had on Bonaire so far?

## 1.5 Demarcation

To demarcate the study of a communal destination development strategy's contribution towards a sustainable tourism industry, the study will exclusively analyse the case of Bonaire. Bonaire has

to a great extent recognized the importance of its nature and the need for sustainability. It has recently introduced a tourism strategic plan where the island is striving after becoming the first blue destination. The plan itself functions as a blueprint for the further development of the island and the protection of its natural resources (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). The economy of Bonaire is highly dependent on its tourism sector as well as that the tourism sector is highly dependent on the marine ecosystems of Bonaire. Everything together makes it an applicable region to study.

Furthermore, the study will be using interviews in order to gain a deeper understanding of the stakeholders' perspective of the contribution of the destination development strategy. These interviews will be held with blue destination certified companies as well as with the Tourism Corporation Bonaire and STINAPA. These stakeholders play an important role in the implementation of the destination development strategy in the destination. STINAPA is an organisation commissioned by the island's government to manage Bonaire's two national protected parks and has its mission to manage, share, protect, restore, promote, educate and value the nature of Bonaire. The Tourism Corporation Bonaire is the leading organisation implementing the strategic tourism plan in the destination. The blue destination certified companies are of importance for the evaluation of the contribution of the destination development strategy.

To gain a broader understanding of the concept of the destination development strategy and the tourism industry on Bonaire, an analysis will be done on planning documents for tourism and register data. This should be able to provide a basis for how tourism has developed over the years and provide an overview of what the communal destination development strategy towards being a blue destination may mean for the industry.

## 1.6 Concepts' definitions list

***Sustainable tourism*** - defines "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO 2017 p.15)

***A blue destination*** - Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) defines a blue destination as: "A Blue destination is a sustainable use of ocean resources for growth, well-being, jobs, and ocean

ecosystem health” - Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017, p. 7). Blue growth is then described as “... a long-term development strategy that supports sustainable growth in coastal and marine based destinations” (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017, p. 44).

***Tourism industry*** - In this study, the concept is used to define the sum of all businesses providing products and or services to serve the needs of visitors and make business possible in the context of tourism.

***Natural resources*** - Natural resources have in this study been used to define the marine- and land based ecosystems of Bonaire. According to Fennell (2015), natural resources are the connection between the demand, the site and the perception of the natural resource making the experience valuable rather than the consumption of the natural resources.

## 1.7 Disposition

For the disposition, chapter 1 starts with an introduction followed by background information, problem formulation and the purpose as well as research questions of this study. Chapter 1 has then been complemented with a concepts definitions list as well as with a description of the disposition of this research report. Chapter 2 includes the theoretical framework of this study where the theories on natural resources as touristic attractions, the tourism sector as the driving force for development, certification as a tool to ensure that sustainable criteria are met, the tourism sector and its vulnerability to climate change, the destructive side of tourism and the blue economy are highlighted. Chapter 3 includes the methods used in this research. The chapter starts with a description of the case study which then is followed by a description of the abductive approach and choice of method of this research. The study uses primary- and secondary data as well as qualitative and quantitative methods. The disposition is then further divided into a description of the semi-structured qualitative interviews, the document analysis and the statistical analysis. These have then been further explained with the selection of, the conduct of and the processing, analysing and coding methods of the interviews, document analysis and statistical analysis. This is then followed by a discussion about the methods reliability and validity, critics of the methods and an ethical reflection. Chapter 4 includes the empirical data of this research, the results. This chapter starts with the results about how tourism on Bonaire looks like, the importance of natural resources and being the driving force for the bonairian economy. This is then followed by the results of Bonaire’s history with preservation and

conservation of its environment, the vision of a blue destination, Bonaire as a blue destination and the strategic tourism master plan. The third part in the results is the results around the blue destination company certification program and the certification program's contribution towards a blue destination. The effects of the blue destination strategy have been highlighted last as well. Chapter 5 includes the discussion and analysis of the research, where empirical and theoretical data are discussed and analysed. This chapter includes a discussion around tourism on Bonaire, the blue destination company certification, blue destination and its effects. Chapter 6 includes the conclusions of the research as well as recommendations for future research. In the end, one can find the appendices and references of this study.

## 2. Theoretical perspective/ Literature review

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*The theoretical chapter of this research includes theories around the natural resources being touristic attractions, the tourism sector being seen as a driving force for development, certification being used as a tool to ensure that sustainable criteria are met, the tourism sector and its vulnerability to climate change, the destructive side of tourism and the blue economy.*

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### 2.1 The tourism sector as the driving force for development

Bonaire explains in their tourism development plan (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017) that they work towards being the first blue destination where the sea's resources are used sustainably for the development of society. Glegg et al. (2021) highlight that the tourism sector is an important component for Caribbean economies, and states that it is the primary driver of economic growth and societal development for the majority of the Caribbean countries. KvK Bonaire (2020) emphasizes that the tourism sector on Bonaire is seen as a driving force for the island's whole economy and means that many other sectors directly or indirectly depend on the tourism sector. The sector tends to play an important part in the island's economy and thus has a great influence on society, mainly by providing job opportunities. Companies are dependent on one another for their operations and create and develop a destination's brand (Syssner & Kvarnström 2013). It is the companies that implement the idea and create the conditions needed to be able to conduct business. Syssner and Kvarnström (2013) highlight the entrepreneur as the destination's driving force for development. The behavior of the companies is therefore of great importance for the development of the island. With the help of a certification program, companies and organizations on Bonaire should be able to play an active role in Bonaire's job towards being a blue destination (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). Esparon et al. (2014) explain certification as a tool to ensure that sustainable criteria are met by the certified company. They emphasize that certification programs can succeed if the consumer is interested in the specific sustainable criteria. Esparon et al. (2014) highlight the connection between consumers' perception of the company's contribution to sustainability and consumer experience, where eco-certified companies are considered to contribute to more sustainability and better consumer experiences than non-certified companies. The certification, in this theory, could be seen as a strategic tool for the competitiveness of a business. However, Esparon et al. (2014) also emphasizes that companies that are perceived to produce better products for humans and nature

do not necessarily produce better products from an environmental and / or societal perspective. Esparon et al. (2014) explain that eco-certifications are primarily created when it is believed to improve environmental performance and help the consumer to guarantee a certain quality.

## 2.2 Natural resources as touristic attractions

Natural resources as tourist attractions have been discussed by Fennell (2015) as being a connection between the tourist, the place and the tourist market. The connection between the demand, the site and the perception of the natural resource. Natural resources can therefore be seen as a definition of human perceptions and attitudes towards them. Their attractiveness can therefore be highlighted as a product of human perception. The value then lies in the experience provided by the assets of the landscape rather than consumption (Fennell 2015). Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) emphasizes that Bonaire is mainly known by tourists as a diving destination due to its richness of fish species, coral reefs, turtles and dolphins. Briene et al. (2019) specify that it is the island's coral reefs and nature that are considered to be its most important attractions. The coral reefs and nature of Bonaire has as well been highlighted as an important factor for the island's tourism industry by Uyarra et al. (2009). Uyarra et al. (2009) highlight the importance of management and protection of all attributes of coral reefs in order to maintain the attractiveness of a diving destination by examining the relationship between the actual condition of its coral reefs and the perception of its visitors in Bonaire. They point out the connection between visitor satisfaction and the condition of coral reefs. Visitors tend to experience differences in satisfaction levels between different dive sites in connection with the actual conditions of the coral reefs. Fish and coral-related attributes such as the condition of the corals as well as its color and the number of fish are considered to be the most important factors for visitors' satisfaction when diving (Uyarra et al. 2009). Esparon et al. (2015) explain visitor satisfaction as the emotional reaction received when expectations conflict with what is experienced. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one of the destination's attributes can then lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the whole destination (Esparon et al. 2015). Esparon et al. (2015) emphasize that it is the product's assets that are experienced and not the product itself. This means that Bonaire, as a diving destination, is considered to be the tourist product while its coral reefs, fish species and other ecological and marine attributes are considered to be the characteristics of the product that affect the satisfaction of the visitors. The existence of a healthy ecosystem is thus important for the success of tourism for the destination. Clegg et al. (2021)

highlight that chances of returning visitors are highly linked to the visitor's sensitivity to environmental degradation.

### 2.3 The tourism sector and its vulnerability to climate change

UNWTO (2008) emphasizes that the tourism industry is a highly sensitive economic sector regarding climate change due to its close connections with nature. A destination's climate tends to define, according to UNWTO (2008), the destination's tourism seasons in its quality and length and is seen as essential for visitors' destination choice. A destination's climate, its natural environment and safety have been identified by the UNWTO (2008) as being the primary factors for visitors in destination choice. Tourists tend to choose destinations after the most favourable conditions in weather and climate. These conditions as well tend to impact the overall satisfaction of the holiday. The UNWTO (2008) emphasizes that coral reefs are of crucial importance for the attractiveness of many destinations and therefore are highly important for a destination's economy. Clegg et al. (2021) emphasize that the tourism industry in the Caribbean heavily depends on its coastal recreation such as snorkeling and diving. The UNWTO (2008) emphasizes that the climate affects the environmental resources available at the destination which are seen to be critical for the attractiveness of a destination. Clegg et al. (2021) highlight that the Caribbean is highly vulnerable towards the effects of climate change in the form of coastal flooding, extreme weather, loss or reduction of beaches and losses in coastal ecosystems. Island and coastal zones have been discussed by the UNWTO (2008) as being the most vulnerable to climate change. Rising temperatures and increasing extreme weather conditions are seen as a major threat for coastal and island destinations. An increase in the amount, and intensity, of tropical cyclones and hurricanes as well as rising sea surface temperature has mainly been discussed as being an effect of greenhouse warming (UNWTO 2008). While sea levels continue rising due to increasing temperatures by greenhouse warming, threats such as coastal erosion, loss of beaches, loss of coral reefs and mangrove areas, flood hazards, pollution of freshwater aquifers as well as increased exposure to extreme weather conditions will continue to affect island and coastal area destinations (UNWTO 2008).

## 2.4 The destructive side of tourism

Tourism could be discussed as having a destructive form if not managed correctly. The UNWTO (2008) emphasizes that the tourism industry is a contributor to climate change itself, mainly by its emissions of greenhouse gasses due to the transport, accommodation and activities of tourists and its use of energy. According to UNWTO (2008), the tourism sector contributed between 3,7% and 5,4 % of all global greenhouse gasses in 2005. Transport contributed the most (75%) of which air transport contributed between 54% to 75% of the total amount contributed by transport. The UNWTO and ITF (2019) calculated that tourism-related transport emissions represented approximately 5% of all global greenhouse gasses in 2016. They further expect an increase of at least 25% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by the tourism industry by 2030. UNWTO (2008) further states that there are variations between different types of tourist trips, where an average trip generates about 0.25 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Long-haul and luxury cruises have been said to generate 35 times as much CO<sub>2</sub> than the average trip, counting up to 9 tonnes. Long-haul trips and cruises are mainly the trips taken by tourists while visiting Bonaire (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). If no management over the negative outputs of tourism on nature are applied then the tourism industry could be negatively impacting their own resources and become a destructive factor towards its own industry. Grilli (2021) emphasizes that tourism both can cause a loss in the habitats of small island coastal areas, which can threaten its entire ecosystem while at the same time threatening the locals' cultural heritage, identity and their social well-being. The UNWTO (2008) emphasizes the need for all destinations and tourism businesses to manage and adapt their activities to climate change regardless of their impacts in order to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. They as well emphasize that the tourism industry alone can not undertake the problems of climate change by oneself, but could start by developing a policy destination development strategy to manage tourism growth and regulate the use of energy and the emission of greenhouse gasses. They further emphasize that it will take an international sustainable development agenda to undertake all problems of climate change together in order to minimize the effect climate change has on our economies, health and social well-being. Tourism has been discussed as being heavily influenced by internal and external factors as well as contributing to negative effects impacting the environment and social sustainability of its surroundings and resources. Glegg et al. (2021) emphasize that the understanding of the human-driven impacts by the ocean economic sector calls for a reflection and management of the resources' ecosystem.

## 2.5 The blue economy

Glegg et al. (2021) state that “The term blue economy became a more prominent feature in international policy dialogue on the ocean” (Glegg et al. 2021, p.3). The term has then been used to reflect on human-ocean-related activities and, according to Glegg et al. (2021), is used as a concept for sustainable development of the ocean. The Caribbean Development Bank (2018) stated that “The blue economy calls for the intelligent management of coastal resources to drive economic growth while protecting the ocean and coastal ecosystems.” (CDB 2018, p.26). Principles for a sustainable blue economy have been highlighted by the World Bank and UNDESA (2017) as providing social and economic benefits for current and future generations; the protection, restoration and maintenance of the marine ecosystems; investing in renewable energy, clean technologies and having a circular material flow; and the governance of the blue economy by public and private operations. Glegg et al. (2021) emphasize that the Caribbean countries will have to adapt their economies to resilience for climate change. This is highlighted by Glegg et al. (2021) as to be of key importance for ensuring current and future users of the ocean to support their communities which often are centered around the resources provided by these ecosystems. Glegg et al. (2021) highlight that “Leveraging a Blue Economy strategy will allow Caribbean countries to more effectively drive the triple bottom line of sustainable development: growing the economy, protecting the environment and advancing social wellbeing” (2021, p 143).

### 3. Method

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*The study examines the case of Bonaire by using a combination between primary- and secondary data as well as a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The triangulation of methods consists of six semi-structured qualitative interviews (appendix 1), document analysis of the strategic tourism master plan, an annual report and the destination company certification standards and criteria (appendix 8) and statistical analysis on the incoming air passengers, jobs, energy production and population of Bonaire (appendices 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13).*

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#### 3.1 Case study

The study is of a so-called case study characteristic. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that a case study research is a research that tries to explain, explore or describe a particular case. A case can then be described as a specific segment for analysis, a separated system, which to some extent is self-regulating, but which still is in connection with socially constructed external environments (David & Sutton 2011). The case of Bonaire was chosen due to its uniqueness of being the first blue destination. Here, the contribution of the blue destination strategy to the destination will be examined. The focus is thus on examining the internal dynamics of the case. On the other hand, Bonaire is as well a part of a larger system of climate change problematic. This means that the case could provide information about a destination development strategy policy contribution and how it can be used to reduce the negative effects of tourism to a greater extent. Smith (2017) emphasizes that a case study provides a summary of information of a certain phenomenon and believes that case studies provide a certain deep understanding of the phenomenon. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that the strength of the case study method lies in the time and attention required to understand the processes and interactions that take place within the case. According to them, this gives a deeper understanding of the particular case and event. By examining the case of Bonaire the study aims to find a deeper understanding of the contribution of the blue destination strategy for the destination.

#### 3.2 Abductive reasoning

The study has used an abductive approach, where the examined data has been the basis for the empirical data to then develop and compile empirical data and theory. The research process has

thus moved between theory and empiricism and has been in a constantly evolving process throughout the study. David and Sutton (2011) mention that an abductive approach is about discovering patterns between theory and empiricism that create a gradually growing understanding of the subject. The study began by looking for relevant scientific research to create a deeper understanding of the case. This concerned research on the blue economy, the relevance of natural resources to tourism, the destructive aspect of tourism, tourism as a driving force for development, the role of certification and the vulnerability of tourism. Based on this, new data was collected in the form of interviews and secondary data to increase the understanding of the case.

### **3.3 Choice of method**

In combination with the research characteristic of being a case study and its abductive approach, a combination of primary and secondary data, as well as qualitative and quantitative methods have been chosen. The primary data consists of 4 interviews with blue destination certified companies and an interview with Tourism Corporation Bonaire as well as STINAPA (appendix 1). This is to be able to examine what is being achieved with the blue destination strategy and how this is applied within their operations. The secondary data consists of the collection of registered data from the Central Statistical Office Netherlands (CBS) (<https://www.cbs.nl/>). From Tourism Corporation Bonaire, STINAPA and Good Travel Seal, planning documents for tourism on Bonaire will also be gathered. The secondary data will serve as an opportunity to create an understanding of what the tourism industry looks like on the island and will be used as a base on which the interviews are built upon. This should provide a basis for how tourism has developed over the years and provide an overview of what the communal destination development strategy towards being a blue destination may mean for the destination. This will create an understanding of what is being achieved with the blue destination strategy and what it contributes to on the island.

#### **3.3.1 Primary- and secondary data**

The research uses both primary and secondary data. Larsen (2009) emphasizes that primary data is data that the scientist collected themselves, while secondary data is the data that is collected by other scientists. The secondary data both consists of research and statistics. Larsen (2009) emphasizes that previous research data can be helpful in the analysis and interpretation of one's

own results. By using both primary and secondary data, the study aims to create a deeper overall understanding of tourism on Bonaire and the destination development strategy's contribution to its destination.

For the primary data, the study uses a qualitative method to gather and analyse the data. The data will be gathered by performing semi-structured qualitative interviews with different stakeholders in the tourism industry on Bonaire, who have a connection with the blue destination strategy. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that primary data has its value in that the researcher themselves have collected the information for the purpose of the study. The gathered information, therefore, is highly relevant to answer the research questions.

For the secondary data, the study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the secondary data. Document analysis will be used to analyse the textual data of the tourism planning documents. Statistical analysis will be used to analyse numerical data about Bonaire and tourism on Bonaire. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that secondary textual data has its value for a researcher in the possibility to easily access those who created the texts. They highlight that people respond in one way or another on the fact of them being researched. The secondary textual data provides an opportunity to take part of the information without the extra value added due to the interaction between the researcher and the informant. The use of secondary statistics can provide the researcher with information that they themselves due to time and other circumstances would not be able to gather (David & Sutton 2011). The secondary data analysis is thus conducted to gain a better and wider understanding of the destination and its resources, as well as the tourism on Bonaire and the destination strategies contribution.

### **3.3.2 Qualitative and quantitative method**

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to answer the study's questions. A qualitative method is described by David and Sutton (2011) as a research method where non-numerical data is collected, an interpretation of text. Quantitative research methods are instead described by David and Sutton (2011) as the collection of measurable data, an interpretation of numbers. The qualitative method in this study is thus the interpretation of non-numerical data collected through the interviews and document analysis. The interviews are of a semi-structured characteristic with open and follow-up questions. The quantitative method in this study is the numerical collection of data through the collection of register data. Larsen (2009) describes data collected through qualitative methods as soft data where non-numerical characteristics of the

research subject are collected. The data collected by quantitative methods are instead described by Larsen (2009) as hard data where the data is measurable and reported in numbers. The purpose of the combination of methods is to create a certain generalization of the result while capturing a deeper validity. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that qualitative research can be used to deepen and nuance quantitative data.

### **3.4 Semi-structured qualitative interview**

The research uses qualitative semi-structured interviews with open questions and where follow-up questions can be asked. A list has thus been created with specific questions that are asked to all informants. Unlike the structured interview, the semi-structured interview offers the opportunity to ask additional questions during the conversation to examine a topic in more detail (David & Sutton 2011). The semi-structured qualitative interview also offers the opportunity to compare respondents' responses between one another, to examine whether there are any interrelations in the answers given (David & Sutton 2011). With this, the interviews can also be adapted to each activity in order to get as deep an answer as possible without losing the opportunity for comparisons.

#### **3.4.1 Selection of respondents**

David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that a selection of informants is a group selected by the researcher to participate in the research study. They emphasize that selection takes place when the population for the research is too large to be able to examine each individual case without a representative group being selected. This should make it easier to achieve results representing the entire population. Informants are selected according to the researcher's consideration of them being relevant for the study and representative for the answer of the population. The informants chosen for this study are blue destination certified companies, the Tourism Corporation Bonaire and STINAPA. Together they provide a wide nuanced vision of the contribution of the destination development strategy to the destination.

These stakeholders play an important role in the implementation of the destination development strategy in the destination. STINAPA is an organisation commissioned by the island's government to manage Bonaire's two national protected parks and has its mission to manage, share, protect, restore, promote, educate and value the nature of Bonaire. The Tourism

Corporation Bonaire is the leading organisation implementing the strategic tourism plan in the destination. The blue destination certified companies are of importance for the implementation, practising and contribution of the destination development strategy in the destination.

### **3.4.2 Conduct of the interviews**

Prior to the interviews, interview guides were created with themes and pre-formulated questions. The themes simplify formulating follow-up questions as well as additional questions during the interview to prevent relevant information from being lost (David & Sutton 2011). Themes included "tourism in Bonaire", "the blue destination" and "sustainability". Because the interview is of a qualitative nature, the respondents have the opportunity to answer all questions openly, which gives depth to the answers and captures their own reflections. The interview begins with opening questions which according to David and Sutton (2011) should provide trust between the informants and the interviewer, the questions are of a lighter characteristic, which can create a comfortable feeling for the respondent to answer. After the opening questions, core questions with follow-up questions have been formulated to deal with the subject of the study and obtain extra information on the subject around the core questions as well as any other perspectives on the subject. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that these types of questions should create a deep understanding of the subject of the study. Lastly, end questions were formulated, simpler questions that lead one away from the core questions and highlight the subject from a different perspective. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that the combination of the formulation of core questions, follow-up questions and end questions increases the researcher's ability to react creatively to different perspectives during the interview. Furthermore, the interviews end with a thank you for the interview and the giving of information about how the study will continue as well as asking if they would like to have the finished research report sent to them.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted via the digital platform of zoom due to the large geographical distance and the current ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This as well means that the respondents are in their own natural environment, which according to Larsen (2009) usually creates a feeling of comfort for the respondent. The interviews are held in Dutch, which is one of the official languages of Bonaire, unless another language is requested by the respondents. This means that the respondents are offered the opportunity to hold the interview in their own mother language, which facilitates contact, reduces misinterpretations and creates a feeling of comfort in the conversation. The respondents were contacted in advance, by email, with

information about the purpose of the study, the question of whether they would like to participate in an interview and the question of agreement. The interviews are recorded with the recording web tool of zoom for the transcription process. Smith (2017) highlights that the recording of an interview can make the interview more effective and allows the researcher to better concentrate on the interview. Furthermore, the researcher has the opportunity to listen back to the answers and be able to reflect on them in more depth. Smith (2017) as well emphasizes that not everyone is comfortable with the interview being recorded and that the question of permission is therefore of extra importance. The respondent will therefore in the email contact be informed about the recording of the interview and asked again about permission if the respondent is comfortable with it before the interview begins. If the respondent is not comfortable with the interview being recorded, then written notes will be taken during the interview. See appendix 1 for the interviews, and see appendix 2; 3; 4; 5; 6 and 7 for the interview questions for each interview. Transcriptions are translated into English for the research.

### **3.4.3. Processing, analyzing and coding the interviews**

After the interviews, the collected material is transcribed. The transcripts then follow the three identified themes based on the literature and research questions "tourism in Bonaire", "the blue destination" and "sustainability". David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that a characteristic feature of qualitative data is that meaning can be obtained from its content. The process seeks to identify meaningful themes, common and / or different ideas, beliefs and practices. Transcribing and listening back to the interviews is part of the analysis process where one tries to interpret and make a selection of the meaning of the answers. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize the importance of going through one process at a time to capture the full meaning of each part. Therefore, each interview was transcribed separately to capture the meaning of each interview.

After this, the transcripts are read through again to identify the underlying themes in the interviews. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that coding is about the identification of common themes in order to be able to create comparisons between the coded material. According to David and Sutton (2011), the analytical process of the data is about reducing material through selection and organization. The study uses a so-called open coding method where themes and codes emerge through the processing of the material. The themes "tourism on Bonaire", "the blue destination" and "sustainability" are the starting point from the previously analysed literature and research questions. By constantly further developing and identifying

themes and codes based on the analysis of the collection of the materials, an gradually growing understanding of the subject is trying to be obtained. After the coding and analysing of the interviews, its results have been analysed together with the study's other data sources, document analysis and statistical analysis, so that an understanding could gradually grow out of all three data sets and the study's major themes. See figure (2) for a visualised representation of the interview's themes, underlying themes and codes.

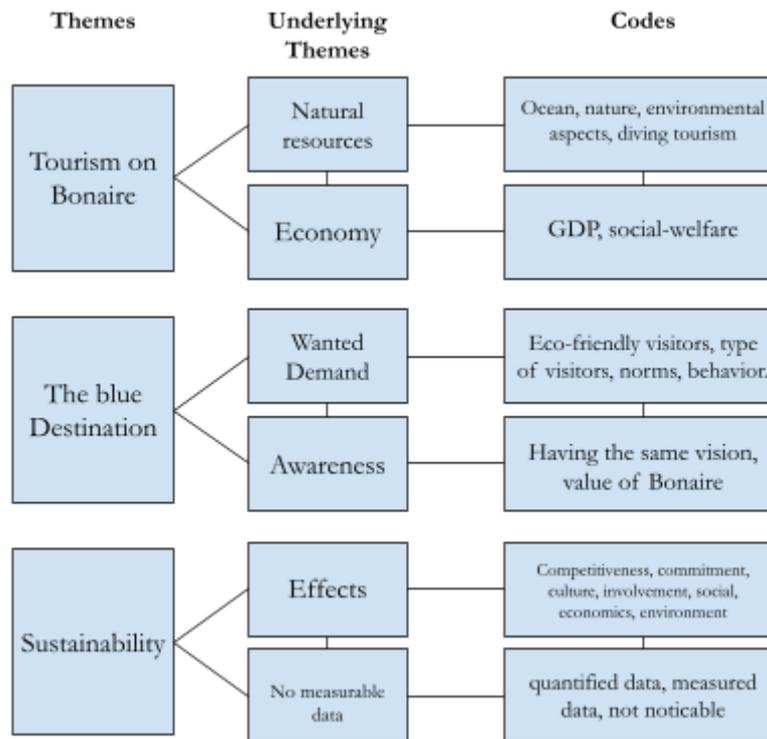


Figure 2: Visual representation of the interview's themes, underlying themes and codes. (Source van Bremen 2021)

### 3.5. Document analysis

The study tries to gain a deeper understanding of a destination development strategy's contribution as well as its stakeholders' contribution towards a sustainable tourism industry. This is trying to be obtained by combining multiple data sources through different methods. Bowen (2009) identifies 5 functions of documents as part of a research. The first is that documents can provide information about the context and insight of the research problem. This can be used to contextualise other data collected from other sources and methods. The second function is that it can provide further research questions that can complement the other methods of a study. The

third function is that it can provide additional knowledge to the research data. Fourth, documents can be compared to identify changes over time and generate an understanding of the development of the research problem. Fifth, documents can validate findings from other sources and methods. In this study, the document analysis provides a background of the case Bonaire, the blue destination strategy and its tourism industry, tracks the development over time, and is used to further develop the other methods' findings as well as validating them.

### **3.5.1 Selection of documents**

Bowen (2009) emphasizes that documents should be selected critically. According to Bowen (2009), one needs to determine a document's relevance to a study as well as determining if the document fits the overall theoretical framework of the study. Bowen (2009) further emphasizes that the researcher will have to determine the document's credibility, accuracy, representativeness and authenticity, which as well is being highlighted by David and Sutton (2011). Documents have therefore been examined by looking into the questions of how relevant they are to the study, who the author is, if the claims of the document can be trusted, the purpose which the documents are made for and its context, and how authentic the information is. The search for documents started with an examination of the document archives of the official websites from TCB and STINAPA. Here, the strategic tourism master plan, as well as the annual report of STINAPA were found. Furthermore, emails have been sent to other responsible stakeholders of the blue destination strategy with the question for information. The data of the Bonaire blue destination company certification standards and criteria were, by this, obtained.

### **3.5.2 Conduct of document analysis**

Document analysis is described by Bowen (2009) as a systematic procedure where one reviews or evaluates documents to develop an understanding and gather the meaning and empirical knowledge of the provided information from the documents, both electronic and printed. For this study, electronic documents have been analysed to gain an understanding, and gather empirical knowledge about the case, the blue destination strategy and different stakeholders' contributions. The analysis process consists of a procedure of finding and selecting the material, analysing the data, and evaluating the findings. Bowen (2009) emphasizes that document analysis can be of great use for case studies, where the document analysis can produce a rich description of the case. Documents can be useful for the researcher when trying to discover insights and meaning relevant to the case, as well as developing an understanding of it.

The study reviewed 3 documents, identified their frame of reference, and coded them for analysis. These included the 2017-2027 strategic tourism plan Bonaire from the TCB (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017), The 2019 annual report of Bonaire's national marine park (STINAPA 2019) and the standards and criteria for the blue destination company certification (Good Travel Seal u.å). The data was downloaded from the official websites from TCB, STINAPA and Good Travel Seal, see appendix (1) for a table of the document analysis.

### **3.5.3 Processing, analyzing and coding of the documents**

First, one document each were fully read through in order to interpret the overall meaning of the information. After this, the documents were read through again to identify the underlying themes. As well as for the interviews, a so-called open coding method was used to find the underlying themes and codes. The themes "tourism on Bonaire", "the blue destination" and "sustainability" are as well as with the interviews the starting point obtained from the previously analysed literature and research questions. By constantly further developing and identifying themes and codes based on the analysis of the collection of the materials, a gradually growing understanding of the subject is trying to be obtained. After the coding and analysing of the documents, its results have been analysed together with the study's other data sources, interviews and statistical analysis, so that an understanding could gradually grow out of all three data sets and the study's major themes. See figure (3) for a visualised representation of the interview's themes, underlying themes and codes.

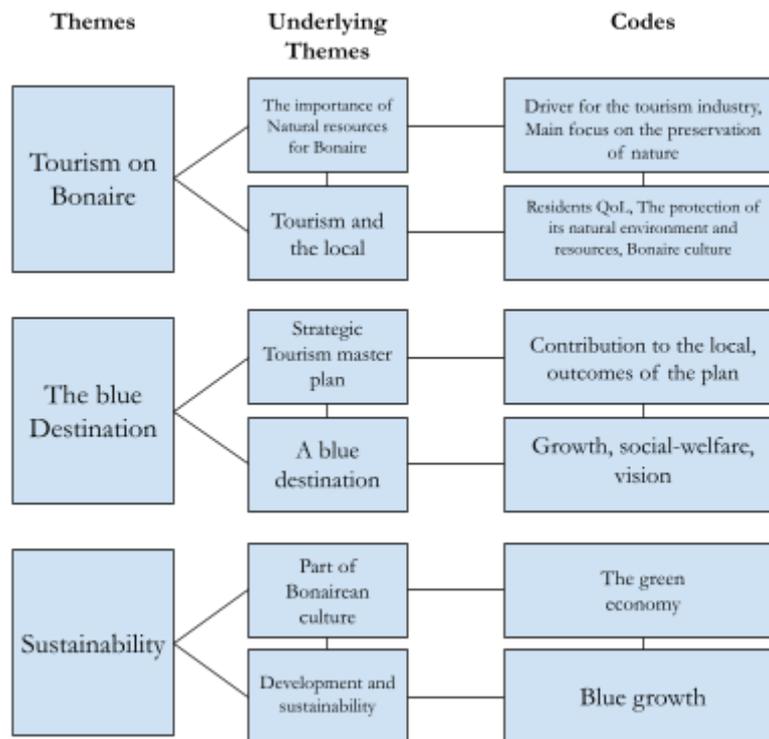


Figure 3: Visual representation of the document's themes, underlying themes and codes. (Source van Bremen 2021)

### 3.6. Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis in this study is used as a complementary data resource for the qualitative methods. According to Fekjær (2017) statistics provide general information about a society. The numerical data analysed in this study will provide a generalised perception of the tourism industry on Bonaire and the contribution of the blue destination strategy. In this study numerical data is obtained from the registered open database from The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), from the Netherlands. Fekjær (2017) emphasizes that one with the help of registered data can follow developments in society over time. This can help in discovering changes over time that could be an effect of the blue destination strategy. By complementing the data provided by the statistical analysis with the data from the interviews and document analysis the study aims to see if there are any causations linked to the blue destination strategy.

### **3.6.1 Selection of statistics**

The selection of statistics is built upon the understanding of the problem provided by, and the questions developed in the process of the interview- and document analysis as well as the literature review. Data has been found by using the codes from the document- and interview analysis as keywords in the search engine of the CBS website. Data has been obtained from the CBS which has an open database where one can use the provided data if CBS is named as the source of the information (CBS 2017). Statistics that have been obtained are passenger arrivals by air, energy use, jobs and information about the population on Bonaire.

### **3.6.2 Conduct of statistical analysis**

The codes defined by the interview analysis (figure 2) and document analysis (figure 3) as well as literature review form the base for defining the observable and measurable values. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that the operationalization process is the process where theoretical concepts are changed to measurable values. The operationalization process is explained by David and Sutton (2011) in the three stages of identifying the concept, defining its different dimensions and formulating an operational dimension that is measurable (see figure 4 for the study's operationalization process). After this, statistics have been downloaded from the CBS website (<https://www.cbs.nl/>) that include the measurable data.

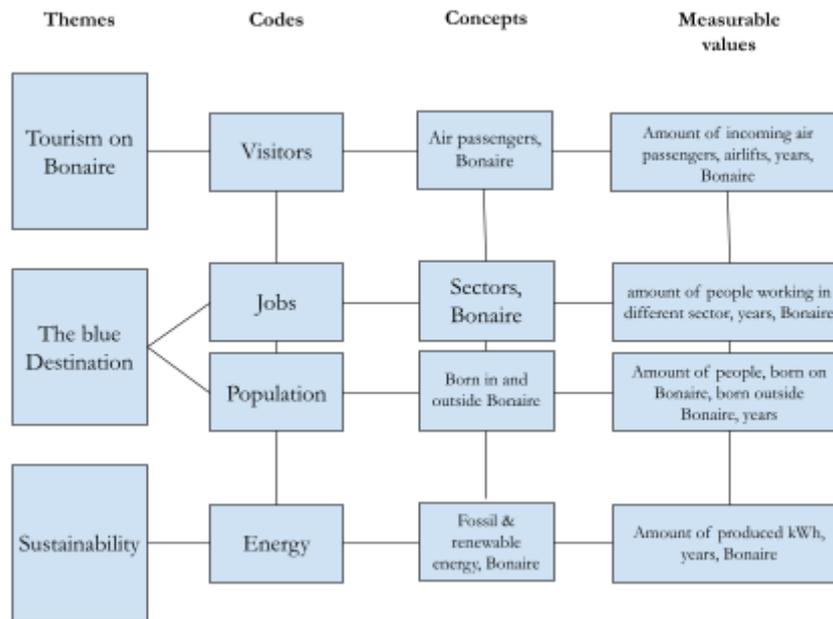


Figure 4: Visual representation of the study's operationalization process. (Source van Bremen 2021)

### 3.6.3 Processing and analyzing statistics

The downloaded statistics are then analysed by cross-tabulation and trend analysis. The cross-tabulation provides the opportunity to draw inferences between data-sets such as the amount of fossil produced energy in kWh compared to the amount of renewable produced energy in kWh over time (see appendix 2) (David & Sutton 2011). The trend analysis provides information about the collected data's change over time (David & Sutton 2011). This will help understand changes in the variables. Furthermore, averages and percentages are calculated in order to gain a wider understanding of the data's meaning. The average value of the variables from the measurable values by adding up all the variables and dividing them by the number of variables. The formula for the mean is as follows; where  $\bar{x}$  is the average,  $\Sigma$  the sum of  $x_i$  (the individual observed values),  $\Sigma x_i$  between  $i$  and  $n$  the sum of all values of  $x$ , and  $n$  the amount of the selection.

The formula for the mean:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i}{n} \quad (1)$$

The formula for percentages is as follows; where  $n$  is the total and Category value the observed category's value.

$$\% = \frac{\text{Category value}}{n} \times 100 \quad (2)$$

The processed and analysed data is then visualised into diagrams and compared to the results from the interview- and document analysis. This to obtain an understanding out of all three data sets and the study's major themes. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that visualised presented data provide the researcher with the possibility of gaining a better understanding of the gathered data due to the fact that differences and trends are easier to analyse and interpret.

### 3.7. Reliability and validity

A researches' quality is expressed by its validity and reliability, the questions about how trustworthy the research is and if the research holds a certain type of quality (Veal 2018). These are according to Veal (2018) a result of the methods used in the research as well as the amount of care the methods have deployed.

Validity is described by Veal (2018) as the extent to which the presented information truly reflects the research phenomena. David and Sutton (2011) highlight validity as the extent to which the research data and collection methods are relevant for measuring and investigating the problem. External validity is then described by Veal (2018) as the extent to which the results are generalised and account up for the greater population. This is highlighted as a result of the selection group made by the research. The research group has been selected for its connection with the blue destination approach and blue destination company certification. The research group is therefore relevant for the study's purpose. The study aims to describe the case at the specific time and moment, of the now, which means that when the study is repeated later on the research findings may vary. Internal validity is described by Veal (2018) as the result of the accuracy of the phenomenon's characteristics and how well the variables of the collected data represent these as well as how well the study identifies and measures the variables. The questions for the semi-structured interviews are based on the existing literature and the research questions.

Furthermore, the collection of other methods' data is based on the previously collected empirics and theory. The results of the research are in a constantly evolving process where results emerge out of the research problem and where all data cooperatively answers the research questions. By this, the study aims to gain a certain amount of deep validity in the results by providing relevant data to answer the research problem.

Reliability is considered to be the extent to which the results of the survey are trustworthy (David & Sutton 2011). According to David and Sutton (2011), a study's reliability is assessed according to the consistency of the answers and whether the study's results can be repeated at a later time, if it contains a consistency measure over time. Veal (2018) describes reliability as to the extent to which the research findings can be repeated later on or with a different selection group. Semi-structured interviews can identify certain recurring themes between the different responses (David & Sutton 2011). Through the abductive approach, an attempt is made to achieve a certain reliability in the results of the study by constantly weighing and complementing the collecting empirics with each other and constantly developing it together with theory. Leisure and tourism research, have been discussed by Veal (2018) as often experiencing difficulties in obtaining high validity and reliability due to that the empirical research data often includes people's behaviour and attitudes. A person's report could change over time due to a change in its social surroundings, according to Veal (2018). This means, according to Veal (2018) that the findings only can be seen as the results of the research group at the given place and time. This research aims to complement different findings from different methods with one another to provide an answer on the research questions and to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the researchers' purpose and its case in the specific time and place given when the study was conducted. This means that the social circumstances in which the study took place could change over time and could provide other answers.

### **3.8. Critization of methods**

The study uses the three methods of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and statistical analysis. This is a combination between qualitative- and quantitative methods as well as primary- and secondary data. Furthermore, the results have been obtained by an abductive approach, which means that results have gradually grown out of all three datasets together with the theoretical framework of this research. All of the three methods have been criticised, and this needs to be taken into consideration. Interviews have been highlighted by David and Sutton (2011) as being problematic due to their nature of being a social interaction. Ethics, gender and

social status can create tensions between the respondent and interviewer as well as a feeling of social distance. This could in its turn affect the data provided by the interviews. David and Sutton (2011) therefore highlight that it is important that the interview takes place in a time and place where the respondent feels most at ease. In this research, respondents have gotten information about the research in advance so that they, if they wanted, could prepare themselves for the interview, to make them feel more at ease when being interviewed. Furthermore, the interviews have been held in Dutch, which is an official language on Bonaire, as well as in English when this was preferred by the respondent. For the interviews, the local time has been taken into consideration when planning for the interviews. Interviews have further been criticized for its difficulty for other researchers to get to the origin of the data as well as for that it is harder to repeat the research (David & Sutton 2011). Document analysis has instead been criticized for its easiness for researchers to obtain data due to the overload of information (David & Sutton 2011). Bowen (2009) highlights that documents often are produced and published for other purposes than one's own specific research purpose. In this research, the documents' credibility, representativeness, authenticity and accuracy have been examined. Furthermore, Bowen (2009) emphasizes that documents give the opportunity for the researcher to collect data without a social interaction between the author and the researcher. On the other hand, Bowen (2009) emphasizes that documents alone can not provide an in-depth understanding of an organisation's day-to-day operations. The statistical analysis functions, in this study, instead as a complement to both of the other methods in order to see if there are measurable varieties in the research questions variables. Fekjær (2017) highlights that it still is important to consider that even if  $x$  and  $y$  occur simultaneously, it does not necessarily mean that  $x$  is the cause of  $y$ . A third factor,  $z$ , could be causing the change simultaneously when  $x$  occurs together with  $y$ .

By performing a triangulation of methods, the study aims to minimize the criticisms of which each method alone bears with them and aims to complement methods within the flaws of the other. The study tries to identify emerging and reoccurring themes in all three datasets to obtain a gradually growing and evolving understanding. The final results are then a result of the data provided by all three datasets which then is discussed by the alongside gradually grown and evolved literature framework of the research. See figure (5) for a visualized representation of the triangulation of the study methods.

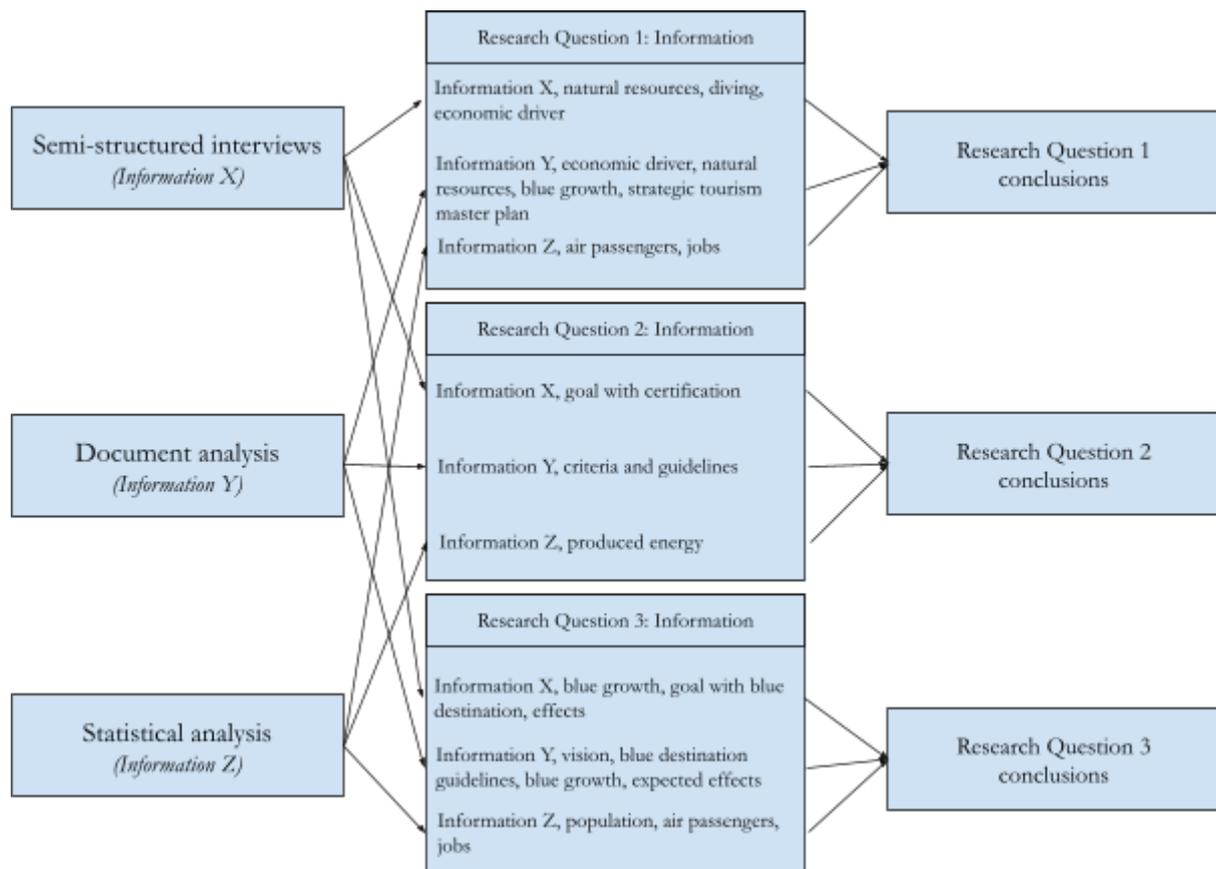


Figure 5: Visual representation of the study's triangulation process. (Source van Bremen 2021)

### 3.9. Ethical reflection

Ethics can be seen as the behaviour between right and wrong, to behave according to a certain normative good behavior (David & Sutton 2011). The issues of anonymity and a subject's freedom of choice have been important considerations in this research. Respondents have been asked for consent for their participation. They have been informed, in written text, about how the data will be proposed, the purpose of the research, its problem formulation as well as the research questions. They further have been informed, in written text, that participation is completely voluntary and that they at any time can revoke their consent without needing to give any given reason. The ethical question arises for the subject's freedom of choice when it comes to the gathered secondary data from the document- and statistical analysis. David and Sutton (2011) emphasize that even if the data is officially published and is allowed to be used by the institution where the data was gathered, the subjects from the secondary data may not be aware that they have become a subject for research. The question of if the documents from the

beginning were meant to be spread then arises. For this, the study uses the source of CBS to gather its statistics where data is gathered to spread information and where one is allowed to use the data for research. The documents that have been used in the study have as well been considered with this question.

David and Sutton (2011) further emphasize that anonymity can be obtained when there is no direct link between the data and one's identity. According to them, this can include names, age and positions within an organization. In this study, the interviews raise ethical questions of anonymity were, to provide background and relevance, the title of a blue destination certified company, STINAPA or TCB are named. See appendix 1 for a table of the interviews. This provides no direct linkages to the interviewed person in questions. By excluding names and excluding job positions in the organizations, anonymity is trying to be obtained. The data has further been stored and handled according to the GDPR law.

## 4. Results

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*Chapter four includes the results of the interviews, document analysis and statistical analysis. First, results on tourism on Bonaire, its importance of natural resources and tourism being the driving force for the bonairian economy are presented. After, the results of Bonaire's history with preservation and conservation of its environment are presented to then further look into the results of its vision of a blue destination, Bonaire as a blue destination and the strategic tourism master plan. The blue destination company certification program, its contribution towards a blue destination are then presented. Lastly, the effects of the blue destination strategy, the creation of awareness and a way to create a wanted demand are presented.*

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### 4.1 Tourism on Bonaire

Tourism on Bonaire has been highlighted in the documents as well as in the interviews as highly important for the island. Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) highlighted that it is one of the most important economic drivers of the island. Respondent 6 stated that the majority of tourists contribute to the budget of the nature management organization. Nevertheless, respondent 6 highlighted that this does not come without negative impacts due to trampling, physical damage and the disruption of nature. A good destination development strategy is therefore needed in order to protect the island and develop growth and welfare.

#### 4.1.1 The importance of natural resources

The island of Bonaire is being highlighted, by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017), as being well known for having one of the world's best ocean activities and natural areas. Its coral reefs are considered to be the main attraction for the island. The tourism industry on Bonaire is highlighted by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) as being highly dependent on the consumption of its natural resources. Furthermore, all respondents stated that they find the natural resources of Bonaire as being important for the tourism industry and Bonaire. For instance, respondent 1 emphasized that "... we are dependent on our natural resources. Our tourists come to the island for our natural resources". Respondent 2 stated that people mainly come to the island for the reefs and nature of Bonaire. That the tourism industry on the island is based on its nature and that "if that disappears, the value of Bonaire will disappear". Respondent 3 highlighted that "without nature, we would be nothing" and highlights the importance of Bonaire still having its natural resources compared to other touristic destinations and means that

“we still have our coral”. Respondent 5 highlighted instead that tourists come to the island to enjoy the underwater world and that this underwater world is highly dependent on the health of nature. Respondent 5 further stated that “the health of nature is vital for my company, but actually for the entire tourism sector”. This is further explained by respondent 4 who said that Bonaire is sold as a tropical picture together with its nature and a healthy reef. The respondent highlights that the nature of Bonaire, and mainly its waters, are what makes Bonaire unique compared to other sun and sea destinations. Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) highlighted that Bonaire is mainly known as a diving destination and that its main market segment is considered to be diving tourism. The interviews indicate that diving and other water activities are of real importance for Bonaire. Respondent 6 stated that approximately 50 000 people visit Bonaire to dive. Respondent 4 stated that “If you have removed the divers from the island here, you will not have much left”. Respondent 1 highlighted that “people come for the weather and for the ocean, for diving, the wind, for windsurfing”. Respondent 6 further stated that Bonaire’s natural resources are as well considered to be highly important for the Bonairean society. This, for its fishing community as well as a form of relaxation.

#### **4.1.2 Driving force for the bonairian economy**

Its economy is seen as being driven off its natural resources by its tourism industry. According to Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) the industry generated approximately US\$229 million in 2017. Respondent 1 highlighted that 30% of the economic Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the island is contributed by tourism. Indirectly, the respondent thought that this may be around 70%. This can as well be seen in the document analysis where the strategic tourism master plan (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017) shows that the tourism industry contributed in 2017 to the economic Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with an estimated 30%. Indirectly, this percentage is estimated at around 80% in the strategic tourism master plan (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). Respondent 1 stated that the importance of tourism for the island has been real visible during the Covid-19 pandemic where all incoming flights from America were cancelled and only a limited amount of flights were allowed from the Netherlands. The government of Bonaire together with the Netherlands have, according to respondent 1, financially under-stained the tourism industry in order to help them through the pandemic. The respondent highlighted that a lot of businesses such as hotels, restaurants and shops have been closed as an effect of the pandemic. Statistical analysis shows that accommodation and food services provided the most

jobs to Bonaire between the years of 2017 - 2019 (Appendix 10). This accounts for 1 503 jobs out of the total of 10 223 jobs on Bonaire, a percentage of 14,70%.

## 4.2 Bonaire's history with preservation and conservation of its environment.

Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) emphasizes that Bonaire has devoted much work to the preservation of its natural resources due to the resources' close connection of supporting the livelihood of Bonaire. This can as well be seen in the interviews. All respondents stated that they, before the implementation of blue destination in Bonaire, already were working with sustainability questions. It is seen as something that Bonaire already was and is before the implementation of the blue destination strategy. Respondent 3 informs that they themselves already from the beginning of their build of their resort tried to build as ecologically friendly as possible. This vision has then further stayed with them in their everyday work. The blue destination certification then came afterwards, but the vision was already there. The respondent stated that "no new steps have been taken, we already were". Respondent 4 mentioned that being blue already was a part of their DNA and that "The two stars that we got is really based on what we already did.". Respondent 5 highlighted that they as well already from day one have been focusing on sustainability.

The effort of protecting Bonaire's natural resources can as well be seen with Bonaire's, Bonaire National Marine Park. Bonaire protects, since 1979, all waters surrounding the island and Klein Bonaire to a depth of 60 meters (STINAPA 2019). This includes the protection of coral reefs, seagrass and mangroves. This has as well been highlighted by respondent 6 who stated that the whole sea around Bonaire to a depth of 60 meters is the marine park. The Washington Slagbaai National Park, established in 1969, is a protected area in the northwest tip of Bonaire where the island's native species such as parrots, flamingos, parakeets and green Iguanas live (STINAPA 2019). This has as well been highlighted by respondent 1 who mentioned that STINAPA has been protecting the island since "forever". Respondent 6 further mentions that Washington Park accounts for up to 17% of the island land area. Respondent 6 mentions that they work with the monitoring of the parks, they look after human activities in the areas, play a role in communication and contribute to nature restoration such as mangrove areas and restoration of coral. According to respondent 1, visitors have to pay a nature fee in order to dive in the waters

around Bonaire. That visitors have to pay a nature fee in order to recreate in the Bonairian waters can as well be seen in the annual document of STINAPA of 2019 (STINAPA 2019) where tag prices have been raised in order to better protect the marine ecosystems. Furthermore, respondent 1 highlights that certain types of fishes, the un-habitat island of Klein Bonaire, Washington park as well as the coral reefs of Bonaire are protected. Furthermore, Tourism Corporation Bonaire (n.d.) states that there has been an active work on Bonaire in the protection of its sea turtles since 1991; the protection of the yellow-shouldered Amazon Parrots (Loras) since 2010; that there is a reef renewal foundation since 2012, and that there has been an active work on protecting the flamingos on Bonaire. Moreover, Tourism Corporation Bonaire (n.d.) highlights that Bonaire is striving to become a carbon-neutral destination. Statistical analysis shows that in 2007 only 0,94% of the produced energy on Bonaire was renewable energy. In 2019 this percentage was 26,95%. In 2014, the percentage of produced renewable energy was at its highest accounting for 42,34% of the produced energy on Bonaire (Appendix 9). The respondents themselves work to a great extent with sustainability. Respondent 2 highlighted that they are involved with a project that maps the state of nature over a larger period of time. The project then could help to change the policy in order to better protect the reef. Respondent 4 mentions that they are producing their own energy with solar power and sorting their waste materials as well as involving in a project to take away the throw-away supplies. The respondent also highlights that they tried to start a project with electrical vehicles but that, due to the environmental assets of Bonaire such as the combination of sun, sea, sand and salt, the project was not durable on the island. Even though the project did not work out, the respondent mentions that “...our intention is of course as much as possible to ensure that the island remains beautiful.”. The respondent mentioned that they are involved in clean-up dives and clean-up walks. Respondent 5 highlights that they actively work with recycling, limiting the use of water, producing energy with solar power as well as limiting the amount of used energy by using led lightning and energy-efficient air conditioners. The solar panels produce as much of, to almost the needed amount of energy during the day. The respondent further mentions that they restrict the use of certain sunscreen and have the right sunscreen without the damaging chemicals for the reefs available for their guests. They further are involved with projects that protect and restore nature, such as coral restoration.

### 4.3 The vision - A blue destination

Before the implementation of the strategic tourism master plan on Bonaire, the tourism industry has been highlighted by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017), as benefitting relatively few and having a strong green economy focus. The protection of nature as well as its dependence on the consumption of natural resources have been discussed as limiting the potential of tourism on Bonaire.

According to Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017), the World Bank stated that the purpose of the blue economy is to highlight the connection between human activity and the marine ecosystem that takes place in the ocean economy. They further state that about 75% of all Caribbean coral reefs are at risk from human activity, while many Caribbean destinations remain inactive when it comes to adopting a blue growth strategy. For Bonaire, Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) emphasizes that they must protect their most valued resources for tourism attraction, mainly its coral reefs. The importance of protecting Bonair's most valued natural resources is as well being highlighted as highly important by the respondents to retain the touristic attractiveness of Bonaire. The main focus on the conservation and protection of the island's areas has on the other hand led to an underdevelopment of the island's other sectors such as the education system (Tourism Bonaire 2017). The tourism sector has before been known for only contributing economic welfare to a selected few. This has, according to Tourism Bonaire (2017), led to migration from the island where now nearly 60% of the population is from outside Bonaire. This amount can as well be seen in the statistical analysis where on average 62% of the population between the years 2011 to 2020 has been born from outside Bonaire (see appendix 11). The strategic tourism master plan was therefore created to ensure a tourism industry that generates economic welfare and stimulates sustainability for the whole island (Tourism Bonaire 2017).

#### 4.3.1 Bonaire as a blue destination

“The thing is about blue destination, it is something that Bonaire already is” (respondent 1). This can be seen in Bonaire's history with preservation and conservation of its environment. However, respondent 1, highlighted that people will have to stand still and become even more aware of the beauty of their island and see that it has value, a value that one can use to support the livelihood and share with the rest of the world, sustainable. Respondent 1 mentions that “it is not just for marketing purposes at all, but it is more for the people, more for the island.”. The

respondent as well mentions that the blue destination strategy is made from a marketing perspective but that it, at the moment, has devolved into something different, something way bigger. That blue makes the statement about who they are, that Bonaire is sustainable and that Bonaire makes the decision to stick to it. This again is being highlighted in that the respondent says that it is important for Bonaire to “Be itself”. Respondent 2 highlights that in order for the blue destination to have its effects, all stakeholders, everyone needs to be working together. The respondent highlights the importance that something needs to be done in order to push Bonaire in the right direction. That one needs to be able to see, island-wide, that Bonaire is working with sustainability. The respondent as well highlights that only a small step has been taken and that there still is a long way to go. Respondent 1 further mentions that:

“You know, the developments and changes of Bonaire are changing really fast, it is very important to remind people what we stand for and also to teach people to enjoy Bonaire as it is, you know, that’s how I see blue destination. I appreciate it [the island] and I understand why it is so important to protect it and teach others to protect it and teach others the same vision, you know, having the same vision and working together to be better.” - respondent 1

According to Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017), the blue destination strategy could make Bonaire a leading destination in the protection of the resources provided by the blue economy. The blue destination strategy is therefore emphasized to increase Bonaire's competitive position and to make the destination a progressive destination in terms of the harmonization between people and nature. The question of competitiveness has been highly discussed in the interviews. According to respondent 1, the blue destination does not make Bonaire more competitive. This has as well been mentioned by respondent 2 who highlights that the company is not getting more competitive, or gaining more visitors due to the blue destination certificate. The respondent further mentions that this may be due to the ongoing global pandemic and thinks as well as hopes that it, in the end, will help them become more competitive. Respondent 3 highlights instead that the blue destination only makes them more competitive for a specific target audience. Respondent 5 highlights as well that this could make Bonaire more competitive for a specific group of visitors. The respondent highlights that this group comes from the increasing concern about sustainability, that there is an increasing awareness among visitors about the choices they make. The blue destination certification and strategy can therefore make, according to the respondent, Bonaire more competitive. Still, the respondent mentions that it does not necessarily make people choose between certified and uncertified companies but it could make the island, as one, more competitive.

### **4.3.1 The strategic tourism master plan**

Tourism will be used to build a sustainable and resilient Bonairian economy as well as increasing the residents' quality of life, this by turning the Bonairian economy into a blue economy. The economic benefits from the sustainable nature-friendly tourism activities should benefit the locals' quality of life (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). Tourism has before been highlighted as only benefiting a few, it will now need to benefit the greater population of Bonaire. This will be achieved by engaging the locals with the tourism sector. All economic sectors will have to integrate to build a high-quality travel product and increase the competitive position of Bonaire. Improved human capital is needed to identify and reap the opportunities. Even though tourism is being highlighted as being the economic driver of the Bonairian economy, it has been discussed by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) that competition around the island has increased while Bonaire's product portfolio has stayed the same. The diving segment seems to no longer grow according to Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017). This is highlighted by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) as being an effect of the lack of marketing possibilities and a fragmented small hotel sector. With the tourism strategic master plan, Bonaire tries to increase its visitor arrivals by 60 000 during the years 2017-2027 as well as building 600 new 4-star hotel rooms (Tourism Corporation Bonaire). This will, according to Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) make the destination Bonaire a high-end destination.

### **4.4 Blue destination company certification program**

The certification contains 12 themes with several criteria (Good Travel Seal n.d.). Topics include the use of local, regional and environmentally friendly products, social welfare and local employment, prevention of community exploitation, providing a safe and healthy environment for visitors and the local community, accessibility, contributing to energy conservation and non-fossil energy, waste reduction, water savings and contributing to clean water, works towards the prevention of environmental pollution, contributes to the preservation of nature, landscape and local culture, and the public reporting of one's efforts towards sustainable tourism (Good Travel Seal n.d.). The goal with the blue destination certification program has been highlighted by the respondents as a way to examine their own work towards sustainability, an opportunity in marketing as well as a way to inspire others. Respondent 2 mentions that their goal with the blue destination company certification is to support the efforts made to make Bonaire a blue destination as well as to gain from the marketing efforts behind the certification. This is

highlighted as attracting more visitors as well as a different kind of visitor, the more eco-friendly minded and higher quality visitors. The respondent as well mentions that they at this moment do not see any effects from it. This is highly seen as due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, “if there are no tourists, you will not see any marketing results”. The interview stated that the blue destination company certification “It is actually a tool that we can use to give blue destination more body and give it more substance”. Respondent 2 mentions instead that it is the perceptibility to the outside that is what they find being the most important. Being perceived and being able to show that they work in a sustainable manner. Respondent 5 mentions that their goal with the certification was to again be able to look into their company with a magnifying glass and to be able to pay close attention to all details in order to better their work with sustainability and score more points in the certification. Further, the company had, as a goal, to “... make visible to the outside world how seriously we are working with sustainability” as well as “... to inspire and stimulate other companies to try to be as serious as possible with sustainability” so that they as well can receive that certificate.

Respondent 1 highlights the blue destination certification as, that there has been “... made a commitment and that they stick to it, and that they want to continue in a sustainable manner. We care about our people, our culture, we care about Bonaire. I think that’s the statement they make by being certified a blue destination.”.

#### **4.4.1 The certification programs contribution towards a blue destination**

Some small differences have been noticed by the blue destination certified companies in the companies’ activities. respondent 2 highlights that one, realistically, is trying to gain as many stars as possible and that this leads to small differences being implemented in the way companies work with sustainability. The respondent also mentions that the rough lines of working with sustainability already were there but that small details, such as improvement of waste separation and the awareness of how to save water and electricity, now have been implemented in their activities in order to score better on the chart. A complication that has been noticed by the respondent about the company certification is that many of the questions asked are not applicable on Bonaire. This is highlighted by the respondent in the question of electrical cars, that the respondent would like to have electric cars but that this due to difficulties with maintenance, and parts not being present on the island, have been seen as risky. That electrical cars are risky has as well been highlighted by respondent 4 that needed to stop its project with

electrical cars and send the cars back or scrap them due to the environmental assets of Bonaire being too harmful to the vehicles making it not durable on the island. Respondent 2 then highlighted that it at least means that they are watching at things like that and creating awareness as well as a wider perception of what it means to be sustainable. Respondent 5 highlighted that they have been able to fine-tune and arrange things better to be able to make the company more sustainable, and that they have seen that other companies have become inspired to work on this as well. As far as from the visitors, the respondent highlighted that visitors “are proud to dive with a dive company that is so serious about sustainability”.

#### 4.5 The effects of the blue destination strategy

Direct measurable economic, social and ecological effects have been highlighted by the respondents as minimal or not noticeable. Respondent 1 mentions that there have not been any studies about the economic or social impact on the island focussed on the blue destination. The respondent highlights that stakeholders have been sitting together and trying to determine what they are trying to achieve with a blue destination. The “blue destination” is more focused on gathering all stakeholders, getting them involved, letting them move towards and having them have the same vision of what the blue destination stands for, and what Bonaire stands for. It is changing or adding something to one's identity and becoming more aware of it. Respondent 6 states that a positive outcome from the blue destination strategy has been that stakeholders have periodically been communicating with one another. This has then led, according to respondent 6, to a better cooperation and a synergy on the island. Respondent 2 highlights that in order for the blue destination to have its effects, all stakeholders, everyone needs to be working together. The respondent highlights the importance that something needs to be done in order to push Bonaire in the right direction. That one needs to be able to see, island-wide, that Bonaire is working with sustainability. The respondent as well highlights that only a small step has been taken and that there still is a long way to go. Something that has been mentioned by the respondents is that it is not going fast enough or that they hoped that more should have been done by now. Covid-19 has been highlighted by respondents 2 and 6 as a possibility for change. It is helping by setting tourism to a zero point and could be used as a reset where one now has the opportunity to do things in a different way.

Respondent 3 mentions that time still will have to learn if any economic, social and ecological benefits can be addressed due to the blue destination strategy, nevertheless, the respondent

highlights that they think that there will be benefits. respondent 2 mentions as well that direct specific economic, social and ecological benefits are hard to be seen. Respondent 4 highlights instead that the direct benefits in the form of gaining more visitors or people choosing to visit them specifically for the label had not yet been noticed. The respondent highlighted that this group of visitors, at the moment, is considered to be little but could become a potentially growing market segment. Respondent 1 mentions instead that it is almost impossible to say if there are any direct benefits from the blue destination strategy.

From the statistical analysis on the incoming air passengers (appendix 13) it can be seen that before the year 2017, the island of Bonaire has had an average decrease of 2,05% of incoming air passengers between the years of 2012 and 2017. From the year of 2017 until 2019, Bonaire experienced an average increase of 18,44% of incoming air passengers, accounting up to 29 880 incoming air passengers more than the year of 2017. Between the years of 2019 and 2020, incoming air passengers can be considered to be really low, with a decrease of 58,36%. The decrease of the amount of visitors, the year 2020, has as well been highlighted by the respondents as an effect of the global covid-19 pandemic. The 600 estimated and recommended new hotel rooms should, according to the tourism strategic master plan (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017) generate up to 2400 new jobs for the island. Looking into the statistics, this means that there should be an average increase of 2,2% of the amount of jobs each year, from the starting point of 2017. 1 out of 4 jobs should, according to tourism corporation Bonaire (2017), be generated in the hotel and servicing sector, representing 600 new jobs by the end of 2027, an average increase of 3,6% from the starting point of 2017. From the year 2017 to 2019 an amount of 190 new people, representing an increase of approximately 12%, have started working in the accommodation and food serving sector (appendix 12). However, it is hard to define if these increases are a result of the blue destination strategy or if there are any other circumstances causing them.

#### **4.5.1 Creating awareness**

The creation of awareness has by many respondents been highlighted as a difference in how they planned for tourism compared to before Bonaire being a blue destination or before gaining the blue destination company certification. Respondent 1 highlighted that the destination development strategy has come from a marketing strategy but that it has grown to something way bigger than that. The respondent highlights that it is about being more aware and, to work

towards the mentality of being a blue destination. That it is about moving people in a different direction and becoming more sustainable:

“So not only in marketing, we have exactly not been marketing Bonaire as a blue destination that much anymore, because we also want our locals to feel it before we market it, we want our locals to feel blue. ... But we definitely hear people talking about it and what it stands for and how we want to protect our island, not only our island but also our culture and our people and heritage and seeing value in that. ... Seeing the value of Bonaire and then seeing that this is why tourists come to our island and by being that, you attract only that type of tourist on our island.”

- respondent 1

Respondent 3 highlighted the effect of creating more awareness among the company and its employees as an effect of the blue destination company certification. They highlight that the company as one has become much more aware of sustainability and how to work with it. The respondent highlights that they have added a number of things, such as a recycling center where everything is separated. Further, they mention that by working towards the detailed guidelines of the blue destination company certification that visitors are becoming more aware and that other companies are getting more aware of sustainability. Respondent 5 mentions that they think that “blue destination, in general, contributes to Bonaire because it highlights the connection between nature, ocean and the economy very clearly and visible”. The respondent further mentions they have started paying more attention to details in order to become more sustainable due to the fact that the certification is highly detailed. One benefit that has been highlighted by respondent 1 is that, by this approach, people are working together to let Bonaire stay the same by protecting it and engaging more people to help create good norms that the island can continue to have. By cooperating and having everyone following the concept of the blue destination, respondent 4 highlights that there in the end definitely will be economic, social and ecological benefits. This again if all companies and stakeholders cooperate and follow the guidelines. The respondent mentions that just one company alone can't make it happen and if there is no support from the government then it will become very difficult to achieve the goal of a blue destination. The respondent highlights that it importantly is, that it should not just be a marketing thing, that it needs to be real. One could be throwing away one's own trash sustainable “but if you go and look at the garbage dumpster here the big garbage heap, then everything blows neatly from the garbage heap into the sea again”. The respondent highlights that much still can be done in the education of people so that trash is not just thrown at the ground and that people think about what their habits have as consequences.

#### 4.5.2 A way to create a wanted demand

An effect of the blue destination strategy could become the creation of a wanted demand. Respondent 1 highlights that they work with promoting the blue destination strategy, they try to build the strategies better, in line with what Bonaire stands for and in line with the type of tourist they want as well as how the tourists are expected to behave. To make the tourist aware of Bonaire's value towards and in nature and make them aware that they want them to treat the island as to how Bonaire treats the island. The respondent as well highlights that this is something that they always have done and that it is not something that has come due to Bonaire being a blue destination. Respondent 4 further highlights that it should not become a marketing picture. It should be presented as to how Bonaire is and that the most important part is to stay realistic in the way the island is promoted. The blue destination should therefore show a picture of what Bonaire really is and what type of visitor and behaviour they expect from the people visiting the island. Respondent 3 states that the idea behind blue destination has been to attract a higher-class audience but highlights as well that the respondent is afraid that the all-inclusive resort may not attract the right people due to the fact that economics may be more important than the quality. From the document analysis, it can be seen that Bonaire is trying to become a high-end destination by building 600 new 4-star hotel rooms (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). Respondent 3 states that they themselves, in order to attract this higher-class audience, will have to deliver high quality and organizing events directed to this audience. This problem has as well been highlighted by respondent 2 that states that "we have to stop fighting with prices, but actually prices just have to go up" and says that this mainly will have to happen so that people will have to make a more aware choice of where they want to go and what they want to do with their money. It should not be about as cheap as possible but that it should be about as good as possible. The respondent as well states that people are willing to pay for it. The respondent highlights that this could lead to that fewer tourists are needed and that this could lead to that nature can be preserved or even make it more beautiful.

"And if you do it as well as possible and you ask more money for it, you can also go to fewer tourists and therefore less burden on nature on the island and so you can keep everything as beautiful as it is or make it even more beautiful. And I think that is really the future of Bonaire."

- respondent 2

## 5. Analysis and discussion

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*Chapter five includes the analysis and discussion on the results from the interview-, document- and statistical analysis with the study's theoretical framework. The chapter includes a discussion and analysis on tourism on Bonaire, the blue destination company certification and the blue destination development strategy with its effects.*

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### 5.1 Tourism on Bonaire

From the interviews, it could be discussed that tourism on Bonaire could be causing damaging effects on the island if not managed correctly. As highlighted in the results, tourists could leave a negative impact by trampling, disrupting and / or causing physical damage to nature. Nevertheless, tourism could be considered to be an important driver of economic and social development for the island where it directly contributes to 30% of the GDP of the island and indirectly up to 80%. The sector tends to play an important part in the island's economy and thus has a great influence on society, mainly by providing job opportunities. This can be seen in the statistical analysis where the most jobs are generated in the accommodation and servicing sector (appendix 10). The tourism industry on Bonaire could therefore be seen as a driving force for development and for the island's whole economy. Many sectors are seen as directly or indirectly dependent on the tourism sector. That the tourism industry can be considered as being highly important for Caribbean economies has as well been highlighted by Glegg et al (2021) who stated that it is the primary driver of economic growth and societal development for the majority of the Caribbean countries. Importantly to consider here is that the study has had a limited amount of respondents, all based on Bonaire. In order to fully know the effects of tourism in the wider Caribbean, more research should be needed.

On Bonaire, the tourism industry has been highlighted as being highly dependent on the island's natural resources. The island has been highlighted in the document analysis as being well known for having one of the world's best ocean activities and natural areas. Results from the interviews and document analysis indicate that natural resources, mainly the coral reefs of Bonaire, are considered to be the main attractions for the island. The island's main market is therefore as well considered to be diving tourism. Natural resources as tourist attractions have been discussed by Fennell (2015) as being the perception between the tourist, the place and the tourist marker. The

value of the natural resources is then considered to be the experience that one receives rather than the consumption of the product. Esparon et al. (2015) emphasize that it is the product's assets that are experienced and not the product itself. This means that Bonaire, as a diving destination, is considered to be the tourist product while its coral reefs, fish species and other ecological and marine attributes are considered to be the characteristics of the product that affect the satisfaction of the visitors. Fish and coral-related attributes such as the condition of the corals as well as its color and the number of fish are then considered to be the most important factors for the visitor's satisfaction when diving (Uyarra et al. 2009). This indicates that in order for Bonaire to keep its tourist attractiveness, a healthy ecosystem is needed. The importance of the health of nature has as well been highlighted in the interviews where the respondents emphasized that if nature was gone that the value of Bonaire would be gone and that Bonaire without its nature would be nothing. The health of nature has been highlighted as being vital for the entire tourism industry on Bonaire and as being the factor of what makes Bonaire unique compared to other sun and sea destinations. The interviews further indicate that the natural resources are considered to be highly important for Bonaire's society as well.

Nevertheless, these resources have been discussed by UNWTO (2008) as being highly sensitive to climate change, making the tourism industry a highly sensitive economy. Island and coastal zones have especially been discussed as being highly vulnerable to climate change. Clegg et al. (2021) emphasize that the Caribbean is seen as a highly vulnerable area to coastal flooding, extreme weather, loss or reduction of beaches and losses in coastal ecosystems. For Bonaire, the coral reefs, and the overall nature of Bonaire, have been discussed as being of crucial importance for the attractiveness of the destination. Climate change could affect the environmental resources available at the destination, critical for its attractiveness, leaving negative impacts on its economy and society. Visitors tend to experience differences in satisfaction levels between different sites in connection with the actual conditions and their attributes (Uyarra et al. 2009). This by experiencing an emotional conflict between the expectation and the experience. Since Bonaire is the product and its natural resources the attributes providing the experience, this will lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the whole definition. Clegg et al. (2021) then emphasize that the returning of visitors is linked to the visitor's sensitivity to environmental degradation. The health of nature is therefore of crucial importance for the tourism industry on Bonaire as well as for the economic and social development of the island. On the other hand, if sea levels continue to rise due to increasing temperatures caused by global warming, threats affecting the natural resources of Bonaire negatively will continue to affect the island (UNWTO 2008).

Tourism has been discussed as being a contributor to climate change due to its emissions of greenhouse gasses. Long-haul and luxury cruises have been highlighted as generating up to 35 times as much CO<sub>2</sub> than the average trip (UNWTO 2008). Tourism Corporation Bonaire (2017) highlighted that long-haul trips and cruises are mainly the trips taken by tourist while visiting Bonaire. Long-haul flights can as well be seen in the interviews where the Netherlands and America have been highlighted as being the main visitor market segments. If no management over the negative outputs of tourism on nature are applied then the tourism industry could be negatively impacting their own resources and become a destructive factor towards its own industry. The UNWTO (2008) as well emphasizes that one destination alone, and even the whole tourism industry alone can not undertake all problems of climate change. They also emphasize that all destinations should manage and adapt their activities to climate change regardless of their impacts in order to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. A strategic tourism strategy is therefore needed in order to protect the natural resources of the destination and in order to become economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

## 5.2 The blue destination company certification

Companies could be seen as the driving force for the development and innovation of a destination's brand (Syssner & Kvarnström 2013). Companies implement the idea in their everyday activities and create the condition needed to be able to conduct business and drive the economy forward. The behavior of the companies is therefore of great importance for the development of the island. With the help of the blue destination certification program, companies and organizations on Bonaire should be able to play an active role in Bonaire's job towards being a blue destination (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017).

Certification has been highlighted by Esparon et al. (2014) as a tool to ensure that sustainable criteria are met by the certified company. Results indicate that the blue destination company certification includes a highly detailed list of criteria that companies need to follow in order to become certified. The interviews indicate that the stakeholders' perspective, with what is trying to be achieved, has been seen as a way to examine their own work towards sustainability as well as an opportunity in marketing and inspiring others. For the marketing effort, the stakeholders hope to not only attract more visitors but hope to attract a specific group of visitors, the more eco-friendly minded and higher-quality visitors. These certifications are then discussed to be

created as a way to improve environmental performance and to help guarantee a certain quality (Esparon et al. 2014). Attracting the higher quality visitors could according to Esparon et al. (2014) be achieved when the visitor is interested in the specific sustainable criteria. For blue destinations, this indeed could be the fact but more research about the visitor's perception and experiences are needed to conclude this theory. The certification has been highlighted as a tool that one can use to give blue destination more body and give it more substance. A way to let the outside know what could be expected when visiting. This as well could lead to more satisfaction, according to the theory of Uyarra et al.(2009), and a more wanted demand from the visitors. The results indicate that the base of the blue destination already was implemented by the stakeholders' activities but that small details such as the improvement of waste separation and the awareness of how to save water and electricity, now have been implemented in their activities in order to score better on the chart.

Results as well provide an indication that stakeholders have found difficulties with some questions and criteria not being applicable for Bonaire. This has mainly been highlighted as a problem with electrical cars. Results from the document analysis indicate that Bonaire is striving to become a carbon-neutral destination. If stakeholders are interested in becoming 100% carbon neutral then the resources should be there as well, at the moment respondents highlighted that due to the environmental assets of Bonaire being too harmful to electrical vehicles it has not yet been durable on the island. Other changes have been the awareness of the use of energy by the stakeholders. Statistics showed that in 2019 the renewable produced energy on Bonaire accounted for 26,95% of all produced energy on Bonaire (Appendix 9). In 2007 this percentage was only 0,94%.

### **5.3 Blue destination and its effects**

Tourism has been discussed as being heavily influenced by internal and external factors as well as contributing to negative effects impacting the environment and social sustainability of its surroundings and resources. Glegg et al. (2021) emphasized that Caribbean countries will have to adapt their economies to resilience to climate change. The blue destination strategy could be defined as the sustainable use of ocean resources for growth, well-being and jobs, while working to protect the oceans' ecosystems' health (Tourism Corporation Bonaire 2017). Bonaire has a national marine park protecting the whole sea around Bonaire to a depth of 60 meters. The Washington Slagbaai National Park covers around 17% of the island's land area. Visitors have to

pay a nature fee in order to recreate in the Bonairian waters. This again is used to finance a part of the protection and preservation effort made on Bonaire. Moreover, the results from the document analysis emphasize that Bonaire is striving to become a carbon-neutral destination. Statistics showed that in 2019 the renewable produced energy on Bonaire accounted for 26,95% of all produced energy on Bonaire. The main focus on the conservation and protection of the island's natural resources has on the other hand been discussed as having led to an underdevelopment of the island's other sectors such as the education system and only contributing welfare to a selected few. Migration has been an issue in Bonaire for many years. Statistics showed that on average 62% of the population of Bonaire has been born outside Bonaire (Appendix 11). Blue destination was implemented to create and ensure a tourism industry that generates economic welfare and stimulates sustainability for the whole island.

Bonaire as a blue destination has been highlighted in the interviews as already being a part of Bonaire. Bonaire has had a long history with the preservation and conservation of its environment in order to protect it from exploitation while supporting the livelihood of Bonaire. This is something that as well has been highlighted in the interviews where the respondents stated that they, before the implementation of blue destination in Bonaire, already were working with sustainability questions and being involved with projects for the protection, preservation and restoration of Bonaire's natural resources. It is seen as something that Bonaire already was and is before the implementation of the blue destination strategy. The interviews and document analysis provide an indication that the protection and preservation of nature could be seen as being a part of Bonaireian culture. This could indicate that visitors already expect that Bonaire is working with sustainability while visiting. If this is not noticed or not being the real image of Bonaire then visitors could experience a difference in their satisfaction levels according to Uyarra et al. (2009) theory. The blue economy has been highlighted as having a purpose to highlight the connection between human activity and the marine ecosystem that takes place in the ocean economy (Glegg et al. 2021). That one needs to be able to see, island-wide, that Bonaire is working with sustainability. For Bonaire, to highlight this connection and the protection connected to this can be seen in the results as being highly important. The interviews provide an indication that it is highly needed for people to stand still and become even more aware of the beauty of their island and see that it has value, value that can support their livelihood, and value that needs to be protected.

As for the effects of the blue destination strategy, results indicate that direct measurable economic, social and ecological effects have been seen as minimal or not noticeable. No studies have been done before with a focus to address the direct measurable effects of the blue destination strategy. From the statistical analysis, it can be seen that from the year that blue destination was implemented the average decrease of 2,05% had changed to an average increase of 18,44%, with its zero point in the year of 2017, of the amount of incoming air passengers. Furthermore, more jobs have been generated on the island in the accommodation and servicing sector than originally planned. However, it is hard to define if these increases are a result of the blue destination strategy or if there are any other circumstances causing them due to that, which respondent 6 as well stated, no measures have been taken specifically focused on the blue destination development strategy approach in order to determine the effect of the strategy. Time still has to learn if any economic, social and ecological benefits can be addressed due to the blue destination development strategy, nevertheless, the stakeholders are positive that there in the future will be benefits addressed to the blue destination strategy.

An effect that could be addressed by the blue destination strategy is the creation of awareness along with the stakeholders. Stakeholders are becoming more aware and changing small details in their everyday activities in order to become more sustainable. Further, the respondents provide an indication that by working towards the detailed guidelines of the blue destination company certification that visitors are becoming more aware and that other companies are getting more aware about sustainability. People are starting to work together to protect and preserve Bonaire while engaging more people to help create good norms that the island can continue to have. An effect that has been noticed by some respondents is that stakeholders have been sitting together leading to a better cooperation and synergy on the island as well as starting to have the same vision. Something that has been mentioned by the respondents is that it is not going fast enough or that they hoped that more should have been done by now. Covid-19 has been highlighted as a possibility for change. It is helping by setting tourism to a zero point and could be used as a reset where one now has the opportunity to do things in a different way. Respondents highlight that if the whole island is cooperating and following the guidelines, benefits will definitely be noticeable one day, this again if it will be measured.

The blue destination strategy has been highlighted as being developed for marketing purposes. Nevertheless, the results from the interviews indicate that this at the moment is much bigger than just marketing, that it is for the people and for the island, “blue” just only makes the

statement and shows who Bonaire is as well as that there has been a decision made on how the island wants to continue. In order for blue destination to have its full success, it has been highlighted that all stakeholders will have to be working together. Something needs to be done in order to push Bonaire in the right direction. Interviews provide an indication that only a small step has been taken from the perspective of the stakeholders and that there is still a long way to go. The blue destination strategy has been highlighted in the document analysis as having the potential of making Bonaire a leading destination in the protection of the resources provided by the blue economy. The blue destination strategy is therefore emphasized to increase Bonaire's competitive position and to make the destination a progressive destination in terms of the harmonization between people and nature.

Interviews provide an indication that Bonaire has not yet been gaining much in its competitive position. Respondents indicate that they have not yet noticed or experienced the effects of becoming more competitive due to Bonaire being a blue destination or achieving the blue destination company certification. This has been highlighted as may being an effect of the global ongoing covid-19 pandemic. Besides this, the respondents indicate that they think and believe that it one day will make them more competitive. This may be for a specific group of visitors. Respondents highlighted that this group comes from the increasing concern about sustainability, that there is an increasing awareness among visitors about the choices they make. The results indicate that even if it does not necessarily make people choose between companies it could make the island one more competitive if all stakeholders work together. All economic sectors will have to integrate to build a high-quality travel product and increase the competitive position of Bonaire. The strategy could be used to create a wanted demand. The strategy should be in line with what Bonaire is and how they expect others to behave when visiting. It should be a message to the outside about what to expect on Bonaire. To make the tourist aware of Bonaire's value towards and in nature and make them aware that they want them to treat the island as to how Bonaire treats the island. Important here is that it should not be a marketing picture, it should be real. The blue destination could therefore show a picture of what Bonaire really is and what type of visitor and behaviour they expect from the people visiting the island. The results indicate that the idea behind blue destination was to attract a higher-end audience by providing more quality. Stakeholder indicates that when attracting the right visitors, and delivering great quality, more money could be asked resulting in that there would be a less need for more tourist and thus less burden on the nature of the island.

## 6. Conclusions

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*Chapter 6 includes the conclusions on the research questions of the study to then further highlight the conclusions with the purpose of the research and problem formulation in order to summarize the outcomes of the study. Furthermore, the chapter includes reflections and recommendations for future research.*

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The study has been seeking an answer to the three research questions of “what does the tourism industry look like on Bonaire?” “what is trying to be achieved with the blue destination company certification?” and “what is the blue destination strategy for Bonaire and what effect has it had on Bonaire so far?”

- Tourism on Bonaire has been highlighted as being an important driver for growth for the island. Tourism, on the island, is seen as highly dependent on the natural resources, mainly the ocean where diving tourism is seen as the main market segment for Bonaire.
- The blue destination certification has been highlighted as a tool for companies to examine their own work towards sustainability as well as an opportunity in marketing and inspiring others to become more sustainable.
- Blue destination has been highlighted as the image to the outside of the work that Bonaire has done towards using the ocean resources for growth, well-being and jobs, while working to protect the oceans’ ecosystems’ health. A way to create and ensure a tourism industry that generates economic welfare and stimulates sustainability for the whole island while highlighting the connection between human activity and the marine ecosystem that takes place in the ocean economy. As for the effects of the blue destination strategy, results indicate that direct measurable economic, social and ecological effects have been seen as minimal or not noticeable. No measures have been taken specifically focused on the blue destination strategy approach in order to determine the effect of the strategy. One thing that could be addressed as an effect of the blue destination strategy is the creation of awareness along with all stakeholders. Stakeholders have become more aware of how to work in a sustainable way. Further stakeholders have been sitting together leading to better cooperation and synergy on the island as well as starting to have the same vision.

The purpose of the study was to examine the contribution of a destination's development strategy towards a sustainable tourism industry within a tourism oriented society and, to highlight a stakeholder's perspective of the contribution of the destination development strategy. The blue destination can be discussed as something that Bonaire has been working on already for a long time. Something that Bonaire already did before the implementation. Bonaire has had a rich history with the preservation and protection of its natural resources. Blue destination, therefore, contributes to that one will be able to see, island-wide, that Bonaire is working with sustainability. This could as well help to attract a certain type of visitor. This group is being highlighted as the more aware and sustainable visitor. Important to consider is that for visitors to be satisfied, their expectations should match their experience (Uyarra et al. 2009). It should not just become a marketing strategy. This is highly emphasized by the respondents as well as that the blue destination should show who Bonaire really is. Blue should make the statement. In order for blue destination to have its full success, it has been highlighted that all stakeholders will have to be working together and that something needs to be done in order to push Bonaire in the right direction. The blue destination contributed by bringing key stakeholders together and contributing to more cooperation and synergy between them. Stakeholders will have to continue to work together in order to build this high quality travel product and thereby attract the wanted demand. With the certification, the companies hope to attract a more eco-friendly minded and higher-quality visitor as well as hoping to inspire others to become more sustainable. Nevertheless, the respondents highlighted that some questions and criteria were not applicable for Bonaire. More research is needed in order to confirm this theory.

Tourism could be discussed as being a damaging phenomenon if not managed correctly as well as being destructive towards its own industry by its contribution towards climate change. Nevertheless, the tourism industry can be of great importance for economic and social development for destinations. For Bonaire 30% of the GDP is directly contributed by tourism and up to 80% of the GDP is considered to be indirectly contributing. The tourism industry on Bonaire can be considered to be highly dependent on its natural resources, mainly its ocean. Fish and coral-related attributes such as the condition of the corals as well as its color and the number of fish are then considered to be the most important factors for visitors' satisfaction when diving (Uyarra et al. 2009). Visitors tend to experience differences in satisfaction levels between the characteristics of the product's health, leaving a perception of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the whole island (Esparon et al. 2015; Uyarra et al. 2009). This indicates that in order for Bonaire to keep its tourist attractiveness, a healthy ecosystem is needed. The natural resources have been

highlighted as the value of Bonaire, if these would be gone then the value of Bonaire would be gone. The health of nature on Bonaire is therefore of great importance due to that it is what makes Bonaire unique. Nevertheless, these resources have been discussed as being highly sensitive to climate change, making the tourism industry a highly sensitive economy. A strategic tourism strategy is therefore needed in order to protect the natural resources of the destination and in order to become economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The companies of Bonaire could be seen as the driving force for the island's development. The certificate could therefore function as a tool to ensure that sustainable criteria are met by the certified company. It has helped the certified companies in order to examine their own work towards sustainability as well as that it has been an opportunity in marketing and inspiring others.

Something that has been mentioned by the respondents is that it is not going fast enough or that they hoped that more should have been done by now. Covid-19 has been highlighted as a possibility for change. It is helping by setting tourism to a zero point and could be used as a reset where one now has the opportunity to do things in a different way. Respondents highlight that if the whole island is cooperating and following the guidelines, benefits will definitely be noticeable one day, this again if it will be measured.

## 6.1 Recommendations for future research

More research about what is applicable and achievable on Bonaire is needed in order to better develop the strategy according to the resources available on Bonaire.

Furthermore, more research is needed on visitors' experience compared to their perception of the island in order to better determine if the strategy attracts the more eco-friendly and more aware visitor as well as to better understand if their satisfaction levels are met.

Moreover, the study calls for the need for measurement of the effects of the blue destination strategy since no measures have yet been taken specifically focused on the blue destination strategy approach in order to better determine the effects of the strategy and to further develop the approach.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Interviews

<b>Respondent (number)</b>	<b>Organisation / blue destination certified company</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interview questions</b>
Respondent 1	TCB	English	30 minutes	2021-05-20	Appendix 2
Respondent 2	Blue destination certified company	Dutch	15 minutes	2021-05-21	Appendix 3
Respondent 3	Blue destination certified company	Dutch	20 minutes	2021-05-21	Appendix 4
Respondent 4	Blue destination certified company	Dutch	20 minutes	2021-05-24	Appendix 5
Respondent 5	Blue destination certified company	Dutch	15 minutes	2021-05-24	Appendix 6
Respondent 6	STINAPA	Dutch	20 minutes	2021-05-29	Appendix 7

## Appendix 2:

### Interview question respondent 1

- Would you say that the tourism industry is dependent on the natural resources of Bonaire such as its coral reefs and mangroves? And in which way are they important?
- What does the TCB do in order to protect these resources? And in what way did the TCB contribute to the sustainable development of tourism before being a blue destination?
- Are there any differences in the way that the TCB planned for tourism compared to before Bonaire being a blue destination?
- Would you say that the blue destination contributes to the overall image of Bonaire?
- How much of the island would you say is dependent on the tourism industry?
- How did Bonaire cope with the covid-19?
- Does it make Bonaire more competitive in the comparison with other non-blue destinations by being a blue destination?
- Have you noticed a change in the visitors' attitude towards sustainability? Are they more, looking out for the natural resources on Bonaire?
- Would you say that Bonaire benefits from being a Blue Destination?
- Are there any economical, social and ecological impacts due to that Bonaire is a blue destination now?
- How would you say that the blue destination company certification contributes to Bonaire?
- What would you say is the overall goal of the blue destination & certification?
- Are there any other things that you would like for me to know about the involvement of the TCB with the blue destination approach?

## Appendix 3:

### Interview question respondent 2

- Hoe belangrijk acht u de gezondheid van de natuur op Bonaire voor de werkzaamheden van uw bedrijf? Op welke manier is dit belangrijk en welke stappen zet u voor het behoud van de natuur?
- Zijn er verschillen in de manier waarop uw bedrijf werkt met duurzaamheid en behoud van de natuur op Bonaire in vergelijking met voordat u uw blue destination bedrijfscertificaat kreeg?
  - Welke stappen zijn er ondernomen om van uw werkzaamheden binnen uw bedrijf een blue destination gecertificeerd bedrijf te maken?
- Op welke manier zou u zeggen dat het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat bijdraagt aan uw bedrijf en Bonaire? Hoe en waarom?
  - Maakt het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat uw bedrijf competitiever in vergelijking met niet-blauwe gecertificeerde bedrijven?
- Zijn er economische, sociale en / of ecologische effecten dat u ziet voor Bonaire door dat u werkt naar de richtlijnen van het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat? Als ja, welke?
- Wat is uw doel met het certificaat? en heeft het effect gehad?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over uw betrokkenheid bij het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat en de eventuele impact het certificaat heeft gehad op uw bedrijf en werkzaamheden?

## Appendix 4:

### Interview question respondent 3

- Zou u zeggen dat uw bedrijf afhankelijk is van de natuur op Bonaire zoals de koraalriffen en mangroven? Als ja, op welke manier zijn deze belangrijk?
  - Welke maatregelen treft u om deze natuur te beschermen? Op welke manier droeg u met uw bedrijf bij aan de duurzame ontwikkeling van toerisme op Bonaire, voordat Bonaire een Blauwe bestemming werd?
- Zijn er verschillen in de manier waarop uw bedrijf werkt met duurzaamheid in vergelijking met voordat u uw blue destination company certificaat kreeg?
  - Welke stappen zijn er ondernomen om van uw werkzaamheden binnen uw bedrijf een blue destination gecertificeerd bedrijf te maken?
- Zou u zeggen dat de “blue destination” bijdraagt aan het totaalbeeld van Bonaire? Hoe?
- Maakt het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat uw bedrijf competitiever in vergelijking met niet-blauwe gecertificeerde bedrijven?
- Op welke manier zou u zeggen dat het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat bijdraagt aan uw bedrijf en Bonaire? Hoe en waarom?
- Zijn er economische effecten voor uw bedrijf door het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat? Welke?
- Zijn er sociale effecten voor uw bedrijf door het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat? Welke?
- Zijn er ecologische effecten voor uw bedrijf door het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat? Welke?
- Wat zou u zeggen dat het algemene doel van het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat is?
  - Wat is uw doel met het certificaat? en heeft het effect gehad?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over uw betrokkenheid bij het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over de impact dat het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat heeft gehad op de werkwijzen van uw bedrijf?

## Appendix 5:

### Interview question respondent 4

- Hoe belangrijk acht u de gezondheid van de natuur op Bonaire voor de werkzaamheden van uw bedrijf? Op welke manier is dit belangrijk en welke stappen zet u voor het behoud van de natuur?
  - Zou u zeggen dat uw bedrijf afhankelijk is van de natuur op Bonaire zoals de koraalriffen en mangroven? Als ja, op welke manier zijn deze belangrijk?
- Zijn er verschillen in de manier waarop uw bedrijf werkt met duurzaamheid en behoud van de natuur op Bonaire in vergelijking met voordat u uw blue destination bedrijfscertificaat kreeg?
  - Welke stappen zijn er ondernomen om van uw werkzaamheden binnen uw bedrijf een blue destination gecertificeerd bedrijf te maken?
- Op welke manier zou u zeggen dat het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat bijdraagt aan uw bedrijf en Bonaire? Hoe en waarom?
  - Maakt het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat uw bedrijf competitiever in vergelijking met niet-blauwe gecertificeerde bedrijven?
  - Zou u zeggen dat de “blue destination” bijdraagt aan het totaalbeeld van Bonaire? Hoe?
- Zijn er economische, sociale en / of ecologische effecten dat u ziet voor Bonaire door dat u werkt naar de richtlijnen van het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat? Als ja, welke?
- Wat is uw doel met het certificaat? en heeft het effect gehad?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over uw betrokkenheid bij het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat en de eventuele impact het certificaat heeft gehad op uw bedrijf en werkzaamheden?

## Appendix 6:

### Interview question respondent 5

- Hoe belangrijk acht u de gezondheid van de natuur op Bonaire voor de werkzaamheden van uw bedrijf? Op welke manier is dit belangrijk en welke stappen zet u en uw bedrijf voor het behoud van de natuur?
- Zijn er verschillen in de manier waarop uw bedrijf werkt met duurzaamheid en behoud van de natuur op Bonaire in vergelijking met voordat u uw blue destination bedrijfscertificaat kreeg?
- Op welke manier zou u zeggen dat het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat bijdraagt aan uw bedrijf en Bonaire? Hoe en waarom?
  - Maakt het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat uw bedrijf competitiever in vergelijking met niet-blauwe gecertificeerde bedrijven?
- Zijn er economische, sociale en / of ecologische effecten dat u ziet voor Bonaire door dat u werkt naar de richtlijnen van het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat? Als ja, welke?
- Wat is uw doel met het certificaat? en heeft het effect gehad?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over uw betrokkenheid bij het blue destination bedrijfscertificaat en de eventuele impact dat het certificaat heeft gehad op uw bedrijf en werkzaamheden?

## Appendix 7:

### Interview question respondent 6

- Hoe belangrijk acht u de gezondheid van de natuur op Bonaire voor het toerisme maar ook voor de samenleving? Op welke manier is dit belangrijk?
- Welke stappen zet STINAPA in het behoud van de natuur op Bonaire?
- Welke impact heeft het toerisme op Bonaire?
  - Op welke manier draagt blue destination hieraan bij om de negatieve impacts te minimaliseren?
- Zijn er verschillen in de manier waarop STINAPA werkt met het behoud van de natuur op Bonaire in vergelijking met voordat het blue destination geïmplementeerd werd?
- Op welke manier zou u zeggen dat het blue destination bijdraagt aan Bonaire?
- Wat is het doel van STINAPA met blue destination?
- Zijn er ecologische effecten dat u ziet voor Bonaire door blue destination?
  - Zijn er ook economische of sociale effecten?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over de betrokkenheid van STINAPA bij blue destination?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen die u mij zou willen laten weten over de impact dat het blue destination wellicht gehad heeft op Bonaire?

Appendix 8:  
Document analysis

Used documents:	Analysed data:	Responsible Publisher:
Strategic Tourism Plan: 2017-2027 Tourism: Synergizing people & nature for a better tomorrow; The Caribbean's 1st Blue Destination	- Chapter 1 - 13.	Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB)
Annual Report 2019: Bonaire National Marine Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protected areas and species</li> <li>- Bonaire National Marine Park</li> <li>- Washington Slagbaai Park</li> </ul>	Stichting Nationale Parken Bonaire (STINAPA)
Bonaire BlueDestination Company Certification: Standard and Criteria	- Standard and Criteria	Good Travel Seal

## Appendix 9:

Table 1, Energy production Bonaire

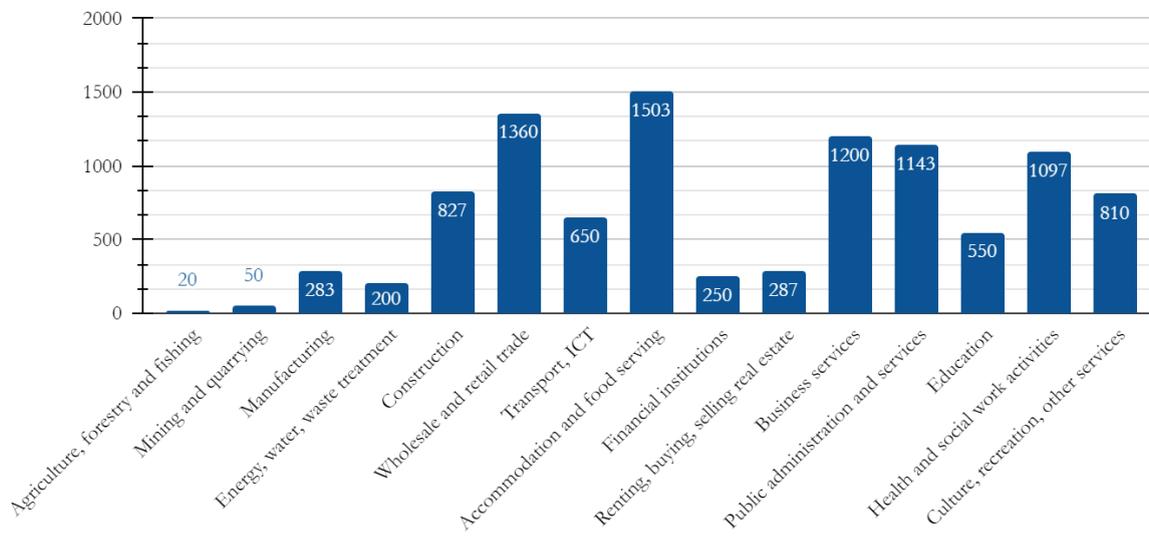
<b>Years</b>	<b>Electricity/Production/Fossil (mln kWh)</b>	<b>Electricity/Production/Renewable (mln kWh)</b>
2007	73,50	0,70
2008	70,80	1,40
2009	73,90	1,50
2010	77,30	4,90
2011	58,80	26,30
2012	58,60	32,50
2013	56,90	36,70
2014	56,10	41,20
2015	63,40	40,10
2016	73,30	35,10
2017	81,90	31,50
2018	76,00	37,10
2019	88,10	32,50

Source: CBS (2020a)

## Appendix 10:

### The average jobs per sector of the years 2017-2019 on Bonaire

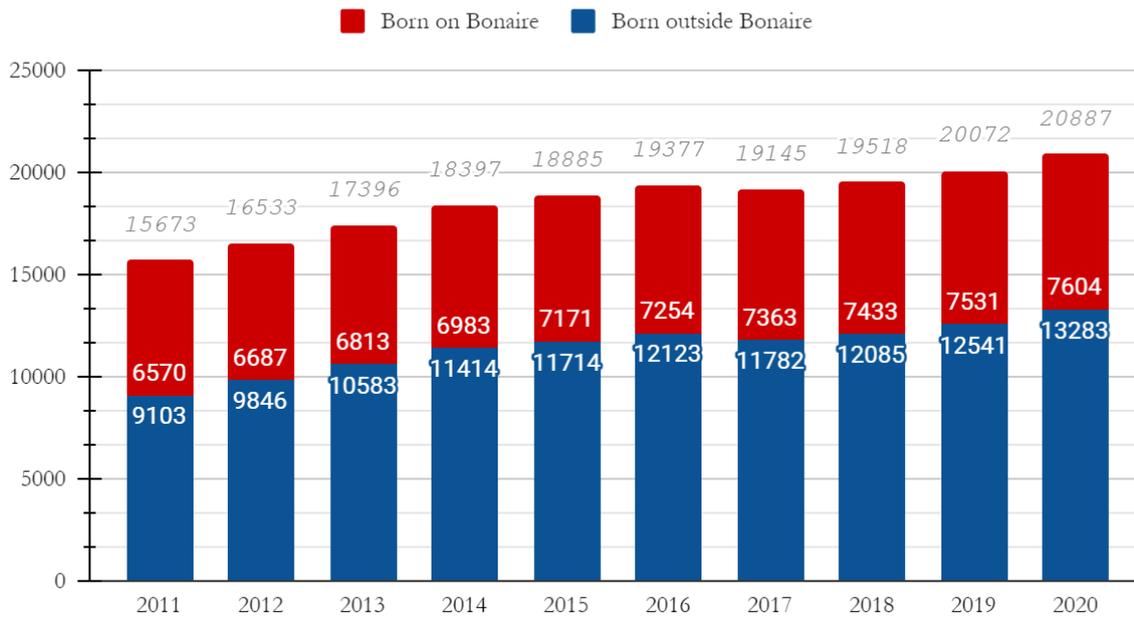
The average jobs per sector of the years 2017 - 2019



Source: CBS (2020b)

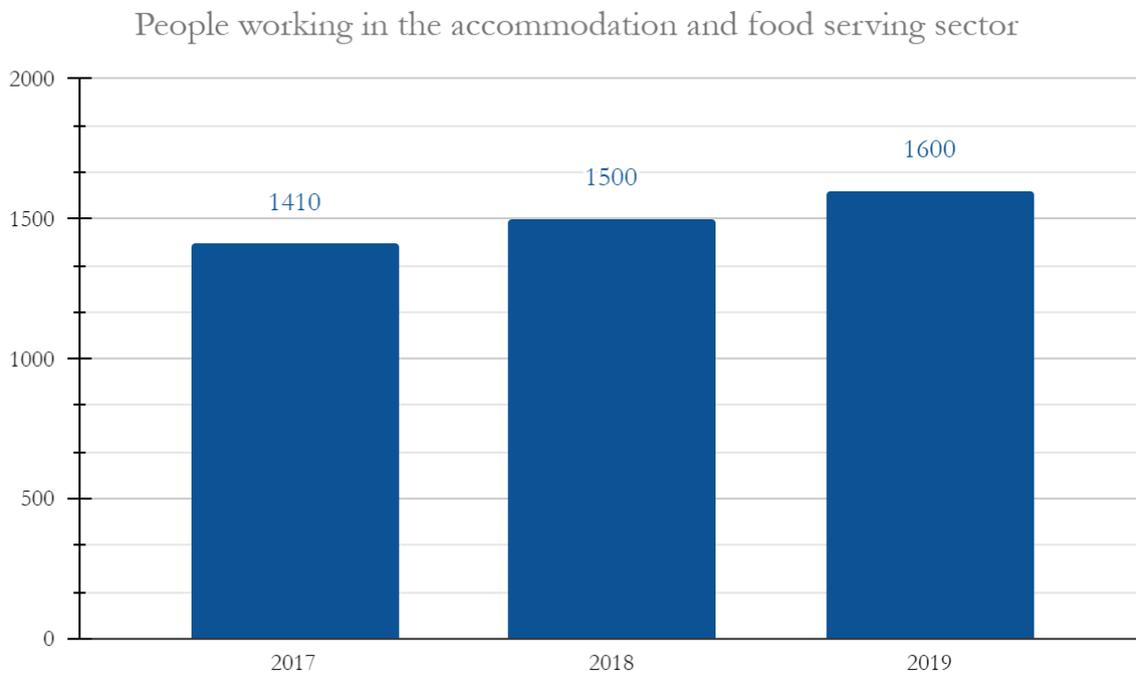
## Appendix 11: Population of Bonaire

Population of Bonaire



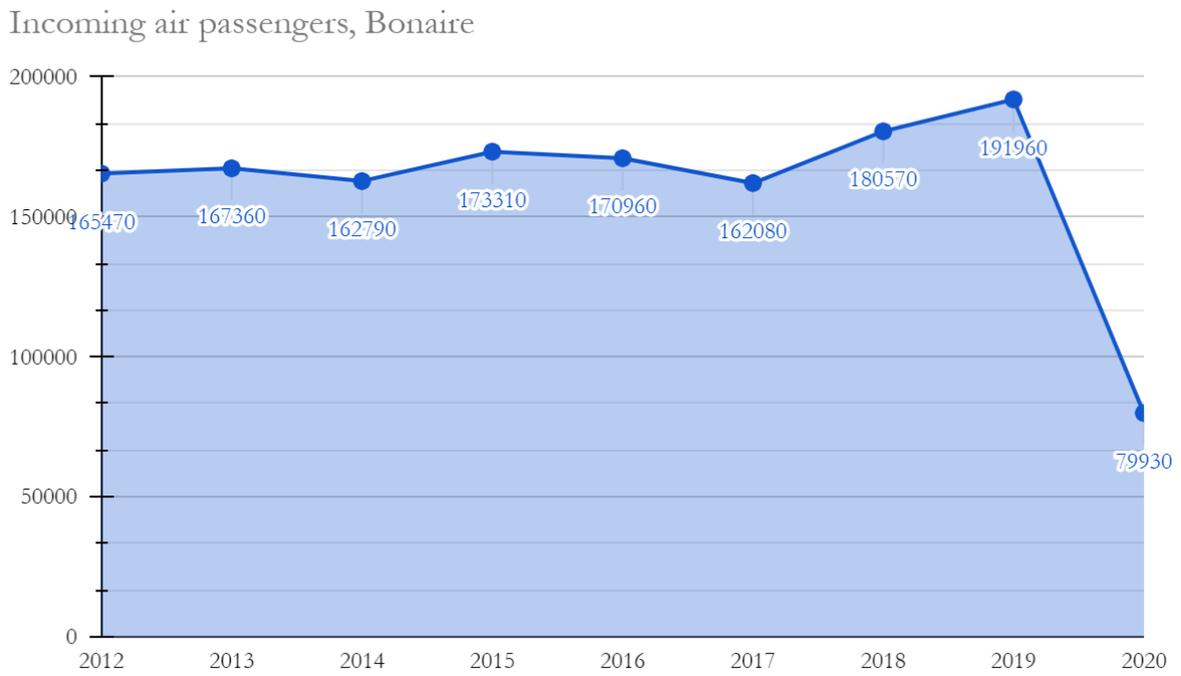
Source: CBS (2020c)

Appendix 12:  
People working in the accomodation and food serving sector



Source: CBS (2020b)

Appendix 13:  
Incoming air passengers, Bonaire



Source: CBS (2021)

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