



1191R4

European Cultural Routes
Transferring Experiences,
Sharing Solutions



Mod. 5B-CRT-10

GOVERNANCE INSTRUMENT FORM

*This Governance Instrument has been documented by CERTESS Partner
and has been given the reference code*

P7

6C-GI-P7-02

(codes above are for Lead Partner use only)

1. GENERAL

1.1. Title of the instrument

Criteria System (path) / Quality seal route

1.2. Proprietary Organisation /Developer

European Ramblers' Association (ERA)

1.3. Typology ¹

- A. Hard Law
 B. Soft Law

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Objective/s ²

A criteria system with its use (e.g. 'Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe') is an instrument that renders the attractiveness of routes measurable and guarantees a high quality walking experience. Such a system has to capture the complexity of different landscapes, infrastructures and route character in comparable dimensions. To allow the variety and uniqueness of the landscapes and walking routes in different regions of Europe, the criteria system has been constructed with maximum flexibility. It uses the years of experience in countries that already use quality criteria to plan and upgrade walking trails.

2.2 Affected/interested parties ³

Regional stakeholder such as:
Tourism body, National Park, walking group, cultural routes

2.3 Content

Special Quality Certification for Walking Trails.

Walking is very popular. All over Europe more and more people tie their boot laces during their holidays and leisure time, and discover a variety of natural beauties on foot.

The special quality certificate of "Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe" offers a transparent system of criteria for the improvement of trail quality throughout EU.

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What constitutes a good walking route?

- winding paths
- public transport
- hardly any tarmac or sealed surface roads
- variety
- quiet and attractive natural landscapes
- cultural sites
- close to nature
- resting areas

How is it possible to ensure this?
Through the creation of a system of assessment that takes into account the needs of walkers!

A criteria system and the use of it (e.g. 'Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe') is an instrument that renders the attractiveness of routes measurable and guarantees a high quality walking experience.

Such a system has to capture the complexity of different landscapes, infrastructures and route character in comparable dimensions. To allow for the variety and uniqueness of the landscapes and walking routes in the different regions of Europe, the criteria system has been constructed with maximum flexibility. It uses the years of practical experience in countries that already use quality criteria to plan and upgrade walking trails.

The rating/grading as "Leading Quality Trails- Best of Europe" is an award as well as a transparent method to optimise the overall route infrastructure. The criteria can be used as a checklist and help countries that have to build up their walking route network. In countries that already have a functioning route network, such a system can strengthen walking tourism further.

The logo "Leading Quality Trails- Best of Europe" is used on national as well as international trails. Certification is only available for complete trails. Prerequisite is a distance of at least 50km with three daily stages. Exceptions to the rule are the European Long Distance routes. They can be certified in part, as long as the minimum length is given.

With the "Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe",
the ERA sets a European standard bringing multiple uses for walking tourism:

- giving the walking tourist an overview and decision aid
- giving regard to ecology and nature preservation
- involvement of all affected/interest parties in the quality process
- trained and competent trail experts in the area e.g. from walking groups, wildlife reserves and tourism
- competitive edge for the walking region in marketing



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Step by Step to Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe

The process

1. An interested region (tourism body, National Park, walking group, etc.) contacts the ERA to start the quality process.
2. The ERA offers a 2-day European-wide uniform course for assessors in the region.
3. The trained persons gather the data necessary for the quality assessment on the trails and assess them initially (analysis of strength and weakness). Thus shortcomings in the quality of the route can be identified quickly and possibilities for upgrades can be found.
4. When the route fulfills the 'Quality route' criteria, an application for certification can be applied for with the ERA.
5. The data gathered on the route are independently assessed and analysed by the ERA. Qualified ERA personnel carry out spot checks on the route locally.
6. When the results of the checks are positive, the route gets the certification 'Leading Quality Trails' for the period of 3 years. After this time, the quality of the route has to be tested again. The quality mark can be used in printed matter and on the internet to market the walking route.

The ERA appointed the Deutscher Wanderverband Service Ltd. with the implementation of the 'Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe'.

Sustainability

Nature conservation

The proposer confirms that the route of the walking trail complies with all environmental protection regulations (particularly in sensitive areas like natural reserves, biotopes, etc.).

Maintenance

The proposer guarantees for the complete period of use of the certification that maintenance of the trail - surface and furniture - is ensured. The ongoing regular inspections and care has to be documented and sent to the ERA. The fundamental principles of ERA [General Principles for Marking](#) (Bechyně/ Czech Republic, 2004).

Validity period

The certification period starts with the handing over of the certificate and runs for 3 years.

Co-operation

All affected interest groups that are part of the quality process in the trail region have to be involved by the proposers from the very start. Interested parties can include forest services, NPWS, tourism groups, mountaineering organisations, walking clubs, land owners, local authorities and communities.

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Choice and core criteria - an overview

A walking route is examined on three levels: 4-km sections (= ca. 1 hour walking time), daily stages, overall length of route. This multi-dimensional assessment assures that the route is attractive throughout, offering the walking tourist the most variety possible.

Every 4-km section will be assessed and judged by using the following 23 criteria. To achieve full accreditation each 4-km section must achieve 11 points for the choice criteria. Throughout the overall length and all daily stages all core criteria must be met.

choice criteria - based on 4-km sections

<u>trail surface format</u>	limit
1. natural trails natural, non-engineered paths without artificial fortification, easy walking	at least 1,000m counts double over 2,000m
2. fortified trails paths with artificial non-sealed surfaces	without limit
3. uneven but passable trails e.g. rough loose stone/boulder cover, heavily eroded paths	maximum 300 m
4. sealed surfaces tarmac, concrete, pavement as tread way	maximum 500 m
5 paths trail width less than 1m 5.1. natural paths: non-engineered paths 5.2. safety secured paths: paths that have to be fortified for safety reasons	altogether at least 500m counts double over 1,500m
6. on busy roads including unsecured crossings	maximum 50 m
7. alongside busy roads up to a distance of one lane to the side of the road	maximum 300 m
<u>trail routing system/ visitor guiding</u>	limit



<p>8. marking recognition of the national marking system, as long as they comply with the fundamental principles of ERA way marking (Bechyn“ / Czech Republic, 2004)</p>	<p>complete, without gaps, correctly aligned and without errors</p>
<p>9. signposting with details of destination, direction, distance or time as well as number or trail identification mark</p>	<p>at least 2</p>
<p>10. network integration with other walking trails</p>	<p>at least 2</p>
<p><u>nature / landscape</u></p>	<p>limit</p>
<p>11. variety distinctly different landscape formations</p>	<p>at least 3</p>
<p>12. natural quietness no machine or traffic noises</p>	<p>at least 1,000m continuous</p>
<p>13. attractive natural landscapes special biotopes or geotopes, impressive forests, coastal landscapes, rock formations, horticultural areas, etc.</p>	<p>at least 1 (more counts double)</p>
<p>14. natural waters e.g. natural wells, streams, rivers, lakes, bogs, etc.</p>	<p>at least 1 (more counts double)</p>
<p>15. points of natural beauty e.g. summits, gorges, ravines, rocks, caves, waterfalls, natural heritage sites</p>	<p>at least 1 (more counts double)</p>
<p>16. impressive panoramas continuous free views (at least 3 years guaranteed) min. 45 degree openings and 2,000m visibility</p>	<p>at least 1 (more counts double)</p>
<p><u>culture</u></p>	<p>limit</p>



17. pleasing urban scenes e.g. old town areas, representative buildings and squares, rural village scenes	at least 1 (more counts double)
18. local attractions cultural and historical sites of local and/or regional importance	at least 2
19. national attractions e.g. castles, monasteries, national monuments	at least 1 (more counts double)
<u>civilisation</u>	limit
20. intensively developed environment intensively built up areas , industrial parks, water treatment plants, high tension power lines	maximum 300 m
21. service provision gastronomy or shops for catering provisions open from midday and at least 5 days per week	at least 1
22. access points for public or private transport regular service, at least a connection every 2 hours	at least 1
23. resting places e.g. benches, picnic tables, service areas, huts, etc.	at least 2

core criteria - based on daily stages

core criteria	Characteristic
safety	on all daily stages the safety regulations/requirements have to be in accordance with national law/ legal framework
grading of the daily stage	easy, moderate, strenuous, very difficult
walker friendly entry, walking portal, walkers' car park	availability of information about the trail



mobility villages/ towns (daily stage access points) along the route are connected to the trail by public transport (bus, train, taxi, cab)	at least 2 connections daily, or access via signposted access routes no further than 2-3 hours walking distance to trail
accommodation hotel, questhouse, B&B, hostel, campsite, pick up transfer	at the start and end of each daily stage there has to be overnight accommodation or transfer possibility available
luggage transport	can be booked through a local provider (accommodation provider, taxi company, tourist information, etc.)
private property/access	access to private property (restricted by gates, fences, walls, hedges, etc.) has to be guaranteed from 9am to 5pm
core criteria - based on the total route	
core criteria	Characteristic
natural trails	at least 35% of the overall route and half of the safety secured paths can be counted as natural trail
uneven but passable trails	max. 5% of the overall route max. 1,500m continuously
sealed surfaces	max. 20% of the overall route max. 3,000m continuously
on busy roads	max. 3% of the overall route max. 300m continuously
alongside busy roads	max. 10% of the overall route max. 3,000m continuously
marking	100% of overall route
variety	at least 2 formation changes per 8km



Experience/Adventure potential	at least 4 points per 8km for the choice criteria 13-19
Intensively used environment	max. 10% of the overall route max. 3,000m continuously
walker friendly entry at start and end point of trail	at least 1 head board with information about the route, at least 2 languages (local language + 1 other; English, French or German)
mobility at start and end point of trail start and end point of trail are serviced by public transport (bus/train, alternative walkers; taxi)	at least 2 services daily

2.4 Expected results ⁴

The attractiveness of routes becomes measurable and their certification guarantees a high quality walking experience.

2.5 Relevance to RIP development stages ⁵

- A. Theme selection & justification
- B. Route promoters legal setup
- C. Local stakeholders' involvement & support
- D. Route physical setting & infrastructuring
- E. Route marking & signposting
- F. Route technical support facilities (water points, rest benches, etc.)
- G. Route hospitality services (hostels, rest houses, hotels, etc.)
- H. Route food & beverage services (restaurants, bars, hotels, etc.)
- I. Route tourist services (info-points, travel agents, etc.)
- J. Points of interest → Cultural & historical heritage (monuments, archaeological areas, etc.)
- K. Points of interest → Cultural & historical services (museums, exhibition centres, etc.)
- L. Points of interest → Environmental heritage (protected areas, parks, etc.)
- M. Trade elements of interest → Local typical products
- N. Immaterial elements of interest → Cultural events, local folklore, etc.
- O. Branding & promotion strategies → Route/theme & logo
- P. Branding & promotion strategies → Route section areas
- Q. Branding & promotion strategies → Interterritorial/transnational sectoral networking
- R. Development of tourist products & services (card, packages, gadgets, etc.)
- S. Development of ICT products & services (thematic websites, virtual tours, etc.)



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- T. Development of educational/learning tools
- U. Development of printed information products

Additional information and notes

- ✓ See also CERTESS Good Practice form: 6A-GP-P7-3.
- ✓ [Brochure eng.](#)

Source of information ⁶

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N.B.

The present form is to be accompanied by relevant supporting information (original document in national language, translation into English, .ppt presentations, ...).

Compiled by KIT, P7 on 10.06.2013.

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Explanatory notes

- ¹ Typology → ‘Hard laws’ are ... (regulatory), while ‘soft laws’ are ... (incentive | promotion | information).
- ² Objectives → Describe the general and specific objectives that the Governance Instrument (GI) intends to pursue.
- ³ Parties → Identify here the entities (organizations, categories, individuals etc.) that are expected to be interested/involved/affected in the application of the GI of reference.
- ⁴ Results → Describe the results that are expected from the application of the GI of reference.
- ⁵ RIP stages → Indicate the stage of the RIP development process which the GI of reference could be associated to.
- ⁶ Source → Provide details of the official source of information (legal bulletin, private agreement, etc.) from which the information on the GI of reference has been obtained.

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