



1191R4

European Cultural Routes
Transferring Experiences,
Sharing Solutions



Mod. 5B-CRT-5

GOOD PRACTICE FORM

*This Good Practice has been documented by CERTESS Partner
and it has been given the reference code*

P7

6A-GP-P7-3

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Name of the practice

Quality Path Evaluation System (Qualitätswanderweg)

1.2. Organisation/s carrying out the practice

German Hiking Association (Deutscher Wanderverband)

1.3. Contact person/s

Name of contact person: Frau Jordan

E-mail: l.jordan@wanderverband.de

1.4. Location

Country: Germany

Region: several states

Area: several areas

1.5. Classification according to the component targeted primarily of a route development process (see Application Form, sect. 3.3.2)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Route identification, reconnaissance and mapping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | Route physical infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Promotion of route enterprises and products |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | Development of instruments and services (e.g. media, ICTs, other fruition tools such as tourist pass/cards) |

If more than one classification type is chosen, please use 1 for primary category, 2 for second category.



2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

2.1. General definition of the practice

<i>Main activity</i>	<p>The Quality Path Evaluation System is a German Certificate for high quality hiking trails in Germany. What makes this certificate special is the project initiator's definition of quality. This definition is not restricted to the rating of the physical infrastructure or safety of a route. It is also intended to give tourists the opportunity to experience the route and route specific natural or cultural particularities.</p> <p>To get the certificate, routes have to meet a set of 23 quality criteria. These criteria are divided into the following 5 main topics: 1. The condition of the path, 2. The condition/user-friendliness of the path guidance system, 3. The attractiveness and the degree of variety of natural and cultural assets along the path, 5. The proximity to local facilities (public transport, resting places etc.).</p> <p>The routes are evaluated by trained evaluators and the routes will be re-checked every 3 years. Apart from the Quality Path Evaluation certificate, the German Hiking Association does also evaluate high-quality hosts (with regard to service quality but also in regard to local and regional cuisine). Furthermore a website (www.wanderbares-deutschland.de) was established for tourists to explore the route online, plan their hiking trail and inform themselves about hosts (certified and non-certified ones) along the route.</p>
<i>Main objective</i>	<p>In order to promote and further establish the German hiking tourism, the project's main objective is the quality improvement of German hiking trails. Quality according to the initiator's perception does, as described above, also mean to give people the opportunity to experience the particular region and its specific particularities.</p> <p>In summary, the project could serve as a good practice idea to support the following EU 2020 tourist destination/Cultural Routes targets: Development of evaluation tools and sustainable tourism standards; development of coordinated promotional strategies and brand images; development of ICT tools</p>

2.2. Time-span

<i>Started on</i>	2003
<i>Completed on</i>	-
<i>Ongoing</i>	until today

2.3. Main objectives of the practice

Apart from the apparent objectives described above, the German Hiking Association defined some key principles as a basis for inventing the quality certificate. These key principles were: 1. The quality certificate (the process to get and keep it) has to be designed in a way that it strengthens the collaboration of people who are in charge of the hiking route or tourism activities in the region. 2. The evaluation process has to be designed in a way that it helps to fill information gaps of decision makers in policy and planning, 3. The certificate has to be designed in a way that it facilitates the quality improvement of hiking products as well as the corporate presentation and marketing of high-quality German hiking trails.



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2.4. Achieved results

Describe both qualitative and quantitative results of the practice:

Qualitative results:

- The certification helps to raise national attention on local/regional hiking trails.
- Because of the success of the quality certificate in Germany, the German Hiking Association was chosen as an expert and partner to help to invent the European tourism quality label 'Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe' (<http://www.leading-quality-trail.eu/>).

Quantitative results:

So far 86 high quality hiking trails and approximately 1350 high-quality hosts have been certified. According to a survey, there is a demand on certified hiking trails which is 80% stronger compared to non-certified. Furthermore a study carried out by the German Hiking Association in 2009 showed that after the certificate was gained by the regions, an average increase of hiking tourists of approximately 30 per cent took place.

2.5. Partnership

List of partners involved in the practice:

Partner 1

<i>Name of Institution</i>	German Hiking Association (Deutscher Wanderverband)
<i>Description</i>	<i>The "German Hiking Association" is the umbrella organization of 57 (March 2010) regional member clubs with about 600,000 members in total. The clubs offer guided tours for all ages, look after hiking trails and hiking shelters, publish hiking literature and maps. They are committed to the local culture, foster the tradition, engage nature protection and offer a variety of programs for those who enjoy being outdoors. The clubs guarantee the integration of local expert knowledge. As an umbrella organization, the German Hiking Associations represents the entire local hiking sections and the interests of all hikers. Furthermore, the German Hiking Association is a member of many national organizations and bodies, for example within the German Tourism Association and the Association of German Nature Parks.</i>
<i>Contact Person</i>	Liane Jordan
<i>E-Mail:</i>	l.jordan@wanderverband.de
<i>Role in the practice</i>	Initiator, lead partner, coordinator of the practice

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2.6. Target groups

Identify target groups/customers of the practice:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	National authority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional authority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Private companies (large)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Private companies (SMEs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chamber of Commerce / Economy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Innovation Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financing institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business incubator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology transfer institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Development Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational institution / training centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Association (e.g. friends of the theme)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employers' association
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade union
<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental interest group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural initiative group / organization
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non Governmental Organisation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other interest groups (<i>provide details</i>)

1. Hikers

2.7. Instruments and services

Describe specific instruments and services I developed in the framework of the practice (i.e. websites, newsletters, catalogues, software, agreements or other regulations, etc.):

The 'Quality Path Evaluation System' (Qualitätswanderweg) is clearly promoted in wording and criteria.

The website is the central source of information (<http://www.wanderbares-deutschland.de/>). It offers a variety of information about the already certified trails. Furthermore the criteria for getting the certificate are shown and explained.

Apart from the website, a brochure (online and printed version) provides all necessary information concerning the certified hiking trails as well as concerning the selection criteria. Hiking friends can find helpful information to plan their hiking trips and the brochure can also be of help for trail operators to inform themselves about which steps to follow in order to receive the certificate.

Information can also be found on nearly all websites of regions within Germany which are already in the possession of certified hiking trails. They usually explain their trails within the region and give general



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information about the certificate and the selection process. Furthermore several tourist information agencies, especially around certified trails, provide information. Apart from that the certificate is also mentioned in several online hiking forums and blogs. The regional media reports regularly about new and already existing certified trails. The certified trails are often mentioned and promoted in articles about regional places of excursion.

3. RESOURCES

3.1. Financial resources

Specify the resources utilized for financing the different stages of the practice:

When developing the certificate, the project was funded by the Ministry of Economics and the German Hiking Association which was the main project initiator together with the German Tourism Association (Deutscher Tourismusverband).

Today the project is a self-financing project. Interested regions (which mean trail operators) have to pay for workshops in which they are trained how to full fill the quality criteria in regard to their specific path. These workshops have to be paid by the interested trail operators. A single workshop costs around 1.800€ (plus travel costs). In addition to this, the path evaluation process itself has to be paid by the trail operators. The costs vary according to the trail's length but amounts to at least 1.380 €.

Specify the source/s of financing (divided between public and private funds, in % terms):

100% public funds in initial phase
100% financing via interested trail operators

3.2. Human resources

Specify the persons (type & n°) engaged in the practice, including their specialization / background:

3.3. Legal framework

The certification is a product of the German Hiking Association. The contractual issues are relatively easy to describe as trail operators have to pay for the certification process and also for a re-evaluation every three years. If the evaluation is successful, the trail operators are able to use the certification sign either in print media or online media to promote their path as a 'high quality trail'.

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4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Insert: If the practise has not been assessed yet, please enter NONE:

4.1. Assessment methods and tools

There is no elaborated set of assessment tools and monitoring methods for the practice itself (of course the certification consists of 23 quality criteria). Nevertheless the German Hiking Association is in permanent contact with its local institutions and the trail operators, so that experiences are exchanged directly. The quality criteria were developed based on hiker's desires. Those desires were collected from various studies and in 2010 the German Hiking Association launched its own (and the first comprehensive) study on hiking tourism in Germany. The quality criteria (which were elaborated before the study was analyzed) were assessed against these study results and it became clear, that the criteria are still relevant and fit to the hiker's needs and desires.

4.2 Indicators

Specify the qualitative and quantitative indicators used to assess the practice:

- Number of paths evaluated
- Number of institutions/trail operators interested in the certification
- Study on hiker's needs and desires in 2010 available on
<http://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/Publikationen/Studien/grundlagenuntersuchung-freizeit-und-urlaubsmarkt-wandern,property=pdf,bereich=bmwi2012,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>

4.3. Monitoring material available: Yes/No

In some way yes

If Yes, please specify

The quality criteria against the paths are evaluated were assessed against the results of a study launched by the German Hiking Association in 2010. This study is available on
<http://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/Publikationen/Studien/grundlagenuntersuchung-freizeit-und-urlaubsmarkt-wandern,property=pdf,bereich=bmwi2012,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>



5. SUCCESS FACTORS / DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

5.1. Enablers of the practice

List of enablers involved in the practice:

N° 1

Name of Institution	German Hiking Association (Deutscher Wanderverband)
Description	<i>The "German Hiking Association" is the umbrella organization of 57 (March 2010) regional member clubs with about 600,000 members in total. The clubs offer guided tours for all ages, look after hiking trails and hiking shelters, publish hiking literature and maps. They are committed to the local culture, foster the tradition, engage nature protection and offer a variety of programs for those who enjoy being outdoors. The clubs guarantee the integration of local expert knowledge. As an umbrella organization, the German Hiking Associations represents the entire local hiking sections and the interests of all hikers. Furthermore, the German Hiking Association is a member of many national organizations and bodies, for example within the German Tourism Association and the Association of German Nature Parks.</i>
Contact Person	Liane Jordan
E-Mail:	l.jordan@wanderverband.de
Role in the practice	Initiator, lead partner, coordinator of the practice

N° 2

Name of Institution	German Tourism Association (Deutscher Tourismusverband)
Description	The German Tourism Association (DTV) - founded in 1902 - is the umbrella organization of many local, regional and national tourism organizations in Germany. In its function as umbrella organization, the German Hiking Association is involved in the coordination of German tourism policies and acts as advisory board for the successful development of tourism strategies in Germany'. Among the members of DTV, there are thirteen provincial tourism organizations, two city-states and three regional tourism organizations. The DTV provides primarily classifications, certifications and promotes quality projects and events.
Contact Person	
E-Mail:	
Role in the practice	



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N° 3

<i>Name of Institution</i>	Wirtschaftsministerium Baden Württemberg
<i>Description</i>	The Ministry of Finance and Economy governs the substantive issues of the organization and financial management of the State of Baden-Württemberg as well as its economic policy. The aim is to maintain and expand the high employment and prosperity of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The minister’s work is assisted by the Office of the Minister. Furthermore, the Office for Press and Public Relations as well as the central office with its coordinating, and exculpatory function are also mapped directly to the Minister.
<i>Contact Person</i>	
<i>E-Mail:</i>	xxx
<i>Role in the practice</i>	xxx

5.2. Success Factors of the practice

Describe success factors:

The main success factor of the practice is its conceptualization. The certification process is divided into two parts. If a region is interested in getting the certificate, the German Hiking Association trains representatives from the interested institutions/trail operators/municipalities locally, which means directly on the spot. All the expert knowledge will therefore be transferred directly from the German Hiking Association to the people responsible for the respective hiking path, so that the interested trail operators are able to work constantly on the quality improvement and assurance on the spot. Usually the workshops are not only addressed to the trail operators but to all institutions working on or around the path e.g. forest administrations, local hiking associations, nature conversation associations. After the knowledge transfer is done, trail operators are given time to initiate quality improvement processes and actions to enhance the quality of their paths. Only after that, the second step starts and the German Hiking Association carries out the evaluation process on the spot and decides whether the path receives the quality certificate or not. If not, path operators are given another chance to improve the quality of their paths.

5.3 Difficulties encountered

Describe difficulties encountered and solutions adopted to overcome them:

Due to the fact that the certificate was established to evaluate and assess all kinds of hiking routes in the whole German country, some field tests were carried out at the beginning of the practice to get more knowledge on regional particularities and needs. In most cases, if there is a criteria that does not fit to a particular route, the problems are solved in direct conversations between the German Hiking Association and the trail operators.

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6. INNOVATION AND OTHER SUCCESS FACTORS

Assess the innovation and other success factors according to the effect they have had or may have on the region or the group of the stakeholders:

There are three main aspects that can be regarded as innovative:

- At first, the evaluation is not restricted to the rating of the physical infrastructure or safety of a route as it is usually the case in many other evaluation systems. It is also intended to give tourists the opportunity to experience the route and route specific natural or cultural particularities.
- The second aspect has already been described under the section success factors in 5.2. and is related to the conceptualization of the practice: Before a path evaluation process takes place, local trail operators and other people responsible for the path are directly trained by experts from the German Hiking Association. This means that trail operators are not left alone in improving the quality of their hiking route – the knowledge on how to do it is directly transferred to them within the locality. This does also strengthen the cooperation of various stakeholders working on or around the path so that the whole group of stakeholders is able to work together on the common purpose of achieving the path certificate.
- The third aspect regards the usage of innovative ICT-tools. New and innovative ICT tools are implemented on two levels:

First: The website shows an overview of all certificated trails within Germany and offers detailed information about requirements, level of difficulty, the consistence of the trail, service, contact information and pictures. For an easy usage the website provides interactive maps with a detail description of the trail, the character (in percentage), a vertical profile, single stages of the trail (lengths and duration), certificated hosts along the trail, places of interest, arrival and departure information, and reviews.

Second: for an efficient Administration of the certificated trails a digital route administration system is implemented. The software (“digitale Wegeverwaltung”) addresses the needs of a sustainable work on the trails. It provides uniform standards for the trail administration, central data backup and integration of nature protection etc. Furthermore fast and direct communication within the system is possible, which reduces time, effort and administration costs. The software is a developed product.

6.1. Innovative content of the practice

Specify additional information useful to justify the practice under review as innovative, compared to similar route planning and implementation practices:

see above at 6. Assess the innovation and other success factors according to the effect they have had or may have on the region or the group of the stakeholders

Describe the innovation content in relation to one or more of th following :

Process: 2-steps-process consisting of knowledge transfer and evaluation process

Product:

Result: Local trail operators are able to gain more knowledge on quality standards and improvements and they are trained to directly implement this knowledge on the spot.

Partnership:



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Other (indicate)

6.2 Excellence of the practice

Specify additional information useful to justify the excellence of this practice being potentially selected as a best practice/practice of excellence:

The 'Quality Path Evaluation System' is unique in Europe as it follows a two steps process (see description in 5.2.) and contains of an extensively elaborated criteria set that responds to the needs and desires of hiking tourists. Due to the fact that there is no other comparable evaluation process of hiking trails in Europe, the 'Quality Path Evaluation System' serves as a Good Practice example for the newly invented European quality certificate 'Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe' (http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/?page_id=170)

6.3 Influence on development of cultural route in the area and regional development at large

Specify the influence exerted by the practice on the development of cultural route in the area and on the regional development at large

The project does not directly intend to develop a cultural route or have an influence on regional development strategies. But it aims to set up a quality standard where issues like the security and guidance system are combined with cultural and natural assets. Since the evaluation system was launched more and more regions are interested in getting the certificate and so they are willing to improve the quality of their hiking paths.

6.4. Profitability of the practice

Specify returns, generated revenue, other results as applicable:

The practice contributes to the increase of hiking tourism in Germany which means that trail operators are able to attract more tourists and therefore increase their revenues. Because of it successful implementation in Germany, the project and the idea is an example for establishing a similar evaluation system on the European level.

7. TRANSFERABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY

7.1. Transferable activities and features

According to the representative of the German Hiking Association the whole criteria set is transferrable to European countries and was already transferred to create the European certificate 'Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe'. Of course it has to be examined if special region-based criteria are needed in addition.

7.2. Conditions required for the practice to be developed in other contexts

According to the German Hiking Association no special conditions are required.

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7.3. Previous transfer experience (if the practice has been transferred already to another context)

Yes, the practice was transferred to establish a European certificate called 'Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe'

7.4. Other information

List articles, press notes, links to available information:

- Website of the practice: <http://www.wanderbares-deutschland.de/>
- Study on hiker's needs and desires: <http://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/Publikationen/Studien/grundlagenuntersuchung-freizeit-und-urlaubsmarkt-wandern,property=pdf,bereich=bmwi2012,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>
- Website of the European certificate based on the Quality Evaluation Path criteria set: http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/?page_id=170

Specify any achieved public recognition of the practice:

As described above the public recognition of the practice is very high. Usually the press reports about newly evaluated and assessed quality trails. Furthermore the hiking tourism on already evaluated paths could have been increased and the European Hiking Association was interested in transferring the practice in order to establish a European certificate.

7.5. Sustainability

Specify factors which can make the practice sustainable:

In this context the term sustainability means maintaining the quality of a hiking path. For keeping up the quality, a re-evaluation of each certified path takes place every 3 years.

Compiled by KIT, P7

The report was written by:

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