



Core criteria – based on the overall route

natural trails	min. 35 % of the overall route
uneven but passable trails	max. 5 % of the overall route
sealed surfaces	max. 20 % of the overall route
on busy roads	max. 3 % of the overall route
alongside busy roads	max. 10 % of the overall route
marking	100 % of the overall route

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

- giving the walking tourist an overview and decision making aid
- giving thought to ecology and the preservation of nature
- ensuring involvement of all interested parties in the quality process
- trained and competent trail experts in the areas such as walking groups, wildlife reserves and tourism
- competitive edge for marketing of the walking region

The European Ramblers’ Association (ERA) is a European network organisation representing more than 60 walking organisations from 34 countries.

ERA coordinates 12 European long distance paths across Europe (E1 – E12) stretching from Nordkapp to Cyprus and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Carpathian mountains.



The process

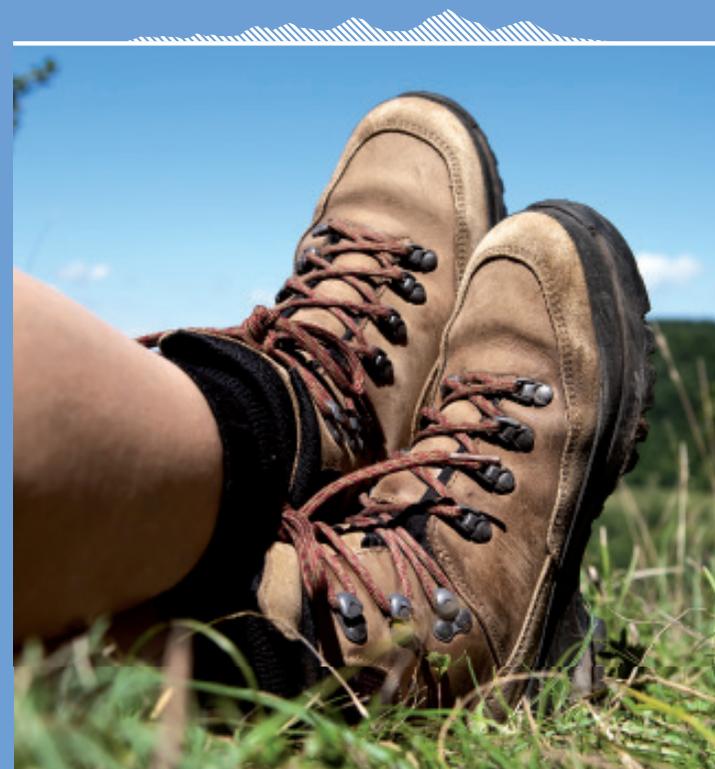
1. An interested region (e.g. tourism body, national park, walking group, etc.) contacts ERA to start the process.
2. ERA offers a 2-day European-wide uniform course for assessors in the region.
3. The trained representatives gather the data necessary for the quality assessment process on the trails and assess them by the analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Thus shortcomings in the quality of the route can be identified quickly and the possibilities for upgrades can be found.
4. When the route fulfills the “Quality route” criteria, an application for certification can be sent to ERA.
5. The data gathered on the route is independently assessed and analysed by 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 a 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 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 50 kms with three daily stages.

Leading Quality Trails Best of Europe

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 Europe.



EUROPEAN RAMBLERS’ ASSOCIATION

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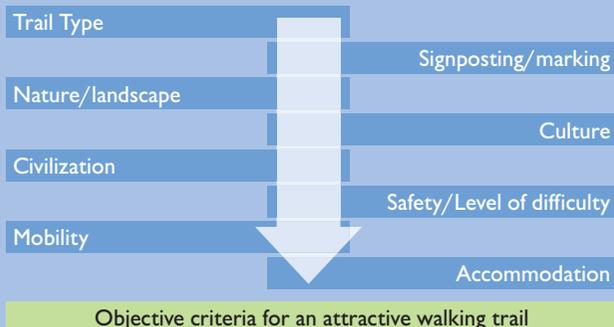


ERA-EWW-FERP



www.leading-quality-trail.eu

Criteria categories



“Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe” is an assessment and accreditation system offering a clear set of quality criteria for walking trails throughout Europe.

The system makes it possible to measure the attractiveness of trails in a consistent way and acts as a guarantee of a high quality walking experience.

It has been designed with maximum flexibility to capture the complex characteristics of different landscapes and trails, considering the variety and uniqueness of Europe’s diverse landscapes. It draws on many years of practical experience in countries that already use quality criteria in planning and improving their trail networks.

The “Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe” – programme provides a standard accreditation helping walkers identify high quality trails. The system is equally useful in areas that are just beginning to develop trail networks and in places with an existing network that are working to strengthen walking tourism.

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

Evaluation Levels

Overall length – from start to the end

Sections – daily stages with transportations and accommodation

4 km section – continuous quality for one walking hour



Comprehensive evaluation on different levels in consideration of scenic and regional characters



www.lechweg.com

Juliane Rohde: „Das Label Leading Quality Trail hat uns bei der Planung des Lechwegs gute Hilfestellung geleistet. Wir hatten klare Kriterien, anhand dessen der Wegeverlauf ausgerichtet werden konnte. Auch heute noch, und das ist viel wichtiger, dienen die Kriterien als Argumentationsgrundlage für eine Wegeverlegung oder die Ausweisung von Rundwegen, sogenannten Lechweg-Schleifen. Aufgrund der Ausrichtung an den Bedürfnissen des Wandergastes können wir einen hohen Qualitätsstandard gewährleisten.“



www.escapardenne.eu

Sébastien Este: “The proposed approach by Leading Quality Trails is a true objective method to analyze and evaluate the quality of a whole itinerary (trails, signposts, accommodation, environment,...). This is a real breakthrough in the field of hiking. Beautiful landscapes aren’t enough to create a route ... there’re many factors to take into account for the needs of hikers.”



www.mullerthal-trail.lu

Sandra Bertholet: “The certification process has brought dynamics into the whole region in terms of quality of the paths.”

Marc Diederich: „Wir sind stolz, mit dem Mullerthal Trail nun zu den besten Wegen in Europa zu gehören. Die Zertifizierung ist die gerechte Belohnung der Anstrengungen und einer beispielhaften Kooperation einer ganzen Region über Jahre hinweg.“



www.kullaleden.se

Ann-Margreth Larsson: “Many actors with great ideas have helped to create over local boundaries a varied and really nice trail”.

Göran Lock: “The LQT criteria gave us the guidelines we needed to understand what we had to do to create an attractive walking trail also for international guests.”

Britt-Marie Andren: “It was easy to communicate the advantage for a LQT certification to politicians and representatives at municipalities – and in return also receive engagement and resources to fulfil the high ambitions.”