QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the appropriate box or, where relevant, specify your answer

1. THE PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT

ARE YOU RESPONDING TO THIS CONSULTATION AS:

☐ **Individual**

☐ **Enterprise**

☐ **Public administration**

☒ **Professional Association/Federation**

☐ **Other**

Please scroll down for some initial specific questions of your category.

IF YOU ARE AN INDIVIDUAL

What is your name?

Your age:

☐ -18

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-45

☐ 46-65

☐ 66+

What is your citizenship?
Which country you live in?

IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS

The registered name of your business

You are responding to this consultation as:

☐ Tourism enterprise

☐   Non-tourism enterprise

What size is your business? Please refer to the table below.

☐   Micro-enterprise

☐   Small-enterprise

☐   Medium-sized enterprise

☐   Large enterprise

Company category	Employees	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m

How long have you been operating your business?

☐   Less than a year

☐   1-2 years

☐   3 years or more

Do you, as a business, participate in any kind of tourism-related evaluation system / labelling scheme? (please do <u>not</u> consider hotel classification ("star") systems)

☐   **Yes (please specify which one)**

Because of:

☐ I gain more visibility

☐ I measure up to the other tourism businesses

☐ I benefit from more experience exchange

☐ Other (please specify)

☐   **No, but I'm planning to**

☐ And I have a clear view over the choice of labels applicable to my business

☐ But I do not know which would be the most appropriate to join

☐   **No, and I do not have the intention to do so either.**

Because of:

☐ Lack of resources (I would not be able to make any adaptation to new criteria)

☐ I don't think I would gain anything from the participation

☐ I don't think that such label would attract more visitors

☐ I don't think that such label would ensure better quality of my services

☐ Other (please specify)

IF YOU ARE A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The official name of your administration

Are you responding to this consultation as:

☐ **National public administration in charge of tourism**

☐ **National public administration <u>not</u> in charge of tourism (please specify responsibility areas)**

☐ **Sub-national public administration**

– Is tourism administration decentralised to sub-national authorities in your country?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ **Regional public administration**

– Is tourism administration decentralised to regional authorities in your country?

– ☐ Yes

– ☐ No

☐ **Local public administration**

Does your administration currently operate a quality evaluation system / labelling scheme for tourism services? (please do <u>not</u> consider hotel classification ("star") systems)

☐ **Yes**

– How long has it been in place?

☐ Less than a year

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3 years or more

– Participation in the system/label is:

☐ mandatory

☐ voluntary

– How many certified members does it have? (please specify)

– How much does it cost for businesses to obtain certification? (please specify)

☐ **Its development is currently in progress**

☐ **Not yet, but planning to establish one**

☐ **No and not planning to establish one in the foreseeable future either**

Because of:

☐ Lack of resources

☐ Lack of political support at national/sub-national/regional level

☐ Lack of support from the industry

☐ Lack of added value

☐ Other (please specify)

IF YOU ARE AN ASSOCIATION / FEDERATION

The name of your association/federation:

Euromontana

Are you responding to this consultation as:

☐ An association active in the area of tourism

☒ An association active in an area <u>other</u> than tourism (please specify your activity)

Multi-sectoral association for mountain areas

How many members your association/federation have?

65 organisations (professional organisations, public bodies, development agencies, environmental agencies, research and training bodies, etc.)

How many EU Member States and Candidate Countries do you cover with your activities?

12

> *Does your organisation operate an evaluation system / labelling scheme for tourism services? (please do __not__ consider hotel classification ("star") systems)*

☐ **Yes**

– How long has it been in place?

☐ Less than a year

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3 years or more

– How many certified members does it have? (Please specify)

– How much does it cost for members to obtain certification? (Please specify)

☐ **Its development is currently in progress**

☐ **Not yet, but planning to establish one**

☒ **No and not planning to establish one in the foreseeable future either**

> Because of:

☒ Lack of resources

☐ Lack of support from the members

☐ Lack of added value

☐ Other (please specify)

IF YOU BELONG TO ANY OTHER CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

> *Please specify which organisation /entity you represent*

> *Why is responding to this consultation important/relevant to you?*

Please scroll down for the common questionnaire

QUESTIONS

1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The European Commission has identified a number of problems related to quality evaluations of tourism services, which it intends to address with this initiative.

Please specify to what extent you agree to the following statements. Please use the following scale:
1   Fully agree
2   Somewhat agree
3   Neutral
4   Somewhat disagree
5   Fully disagree
0   Don't know
If you don't have any opinion, please state "don't know" by indicating "0".

Nr	statement	Your opinion
1	The wide variety of public and private quality systems for tourism services in Europe often show little consistency and coordination.	1
2	The implementation of consistent and comparable quality-related principles and criteria by tourism businesses at European level is currently not achieved.	2
3	This fragmentation could be an obstacle to achieving consistent quality of tourism services at EU level.	2
4	This fragmentation could potentially cause detriment to the competitiveness of the European tourism sector.	3
5	Consumers often do not trust existing quality labels, which is generated by possible confusion caused by the complex variety of quality evaluation systems.	2
6	Information on the principles and methodology of the existing evaluation systems is not always available in a language that consumers understand.	2
7	The vast variety of quality evaluation systems and labels ensure different quality-levels, which creates confusion for the consumers.	2
8	Tourism businesses, and in particular SMEs, may not have adequately trained and informed employees at their disposal to ensure quality management.	2

9	Inbound tourism from non-EU countries to Europe is lagging behind the opportunities at global level, due to the incoherent approach towards high-quality service provisions.	4
10	Europe as a whole lacks a clear image as a set of high-quality destination towards tourists arriving from other regions of the world.	1

2. THE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INITIATIVE

The objective of the initiative is to provide support and thus added-value to actions undertaken at transnational, national and regional level through a comprehensive approach to quality evaluation at EU level. Several possible options for its development are being reflected upon.

Please indicate to what extent you agree to the following statements. Please use the following scale:

1   *Fully agree*

2   *Somewhat agree*

3   *Neutral*

4   *Somewhat disagree*

5   *Fully disagree*

0   *Don't know*

If you don't have any opinion, please state "don't know".

Nr	Statement	Your opinion
1	The Commission should **not initiate any future action** in the field of quality evaluation of tourism services, apart from acknowledging the work of private and public stakeholders in this field.	3
2	The Commission should **encourage and support with its actions the current and future public and private initiatives** in the area of quality evaluation, without presenting a proposal for a quality label at EU level itself.	2
3	The Commission should introduce a **<u>mandatory</u>** label which recognises quality systems and sets common quality criteria for tourism services.	5
4	The Commission should introduce a **<u>voluntary</u>** label which recognises quality systems and sets common quality criteria for tourism services.	2
4a	− This voluntary label should only focus on **quality criteria** for tourism services.	5

4b	– This voluntary label should, besides the quality criteria, incorporate **other types of criteria** in the voluntary umbrella label, such as:	5
4b1	– Environmental sustainability criteria;	1
4b2	– Criteria on accessibility;	1
4b3	– Criteria on corporate social responsibility;	0
4b4	– Criteria on employee satisfaction;	2
4b5	– Other (please specify);	
4c	– This voluntary label should create **synergies** with other existing EU initiatives (e.g. EU Ecolabel, EMAS, etc.) by incorporating some of these initiatives criteria in its own set of criteria.	3
4d	– This voluntary label should create **synergies** with other existing EU initiatives (e.g. EU Ecolabel, EMAS, etc.) by requiring its recognised members to participate in these EU initiatives.	3
4e	– This voluntary label should incorporate **references to** other existing EU initiatives related to tourism (e.g. EU Ecolabel, EMAS, etc.) without requiring its members to participate in them.	0

3.   THE POSSIBLE CRITERIA

Participation in the European Tourism Label for Quality Systems would be **voluntary and free of charge**. However, according to the initial research carried out by the Commission, the majority of the existing systems will have to adapt their criteria to comply with the European requirements. This consequently means that possibly their recognised members will also need to adjust their everyday business operations accordingly. In the majority of the cases, these adjustments have either financial implications or impose administrative burden of various extent. (Please refer to the topics of the possible criteria in the introduction).

Please indicate to what extent the following criteria you would find:
a)   **relevant (please check appropriate box)**
b)   **costly/burdensome to implement (please use the following scale):**
1   Very expensive / burdensome
2   medium expense/ burden
3   low expense / light burden
4   already complying with it
5   I don't know
0   Irrelevant criterion

Nr	Members of the recognised quality systems should:	Relevance	Cost/burden
1	Undergo **regular quality assessment**;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	2
2	Keep and follow up a **documented action plan** according to the outcome of the quality assessments;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	2
3	**Involve the employees** in the quality process;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	3
4	Identify a **quality coordinator**;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	3
5	Carry out **consumer surveys** and systematically take them into account;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	3
6	Establish a **complaints handling** mechanism;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	3
7	If a website is available, allow consumers to **submit complaints via the internet**;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	3
8	Respect and follow **national/regional/local customs, heritage, traditions and identity;**	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	5
9	**Provide correct, reliable and clear information** accessible to consumers about services **in at least one relevant foreign language,** if appropriate to location and business concept, besides those required by law;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	2

10	If a website is available, apply the same rules to information provided over the **Internet;**	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	3
11	Provide **information on available local services/products,** for instance transport, activities, cultural and natural heritage, local food, as well as on possible sustainability aspects, accessibility, etc…	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	0
12	Provide **evidence of trained or experienced employees** relevant to the business activities at all levels of the hierarchy;	☐ High ☐ Medium ☒ Low ☐ Don't know	2
13	Keep a **training plan** for the personnel It should include planning for further training course at least once a year for every work position;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	2
14	Provide **customer oriented services and processes** including maintenance, safety and cleanliness;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	4
15	Keep and follow a **preventive maintenance plan** identifying the elements and equipment to be periodically maintained;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	4
16	Keep and follow a **documented cleaning plan** for the facilities and/or equipment.	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	4

Several different types of criteria have been raised by stakeholders as potential additions to the basic list above. The relevance, effectiveness and feasibility of these types of criteria will have to be analysed.

Please indicate to what extent the following additional criteria you would find

a) **relevant (please check the appropriate box)**

b) **costly/burdensome to implement (please use the following scale):**

1 *Very expensive / burdensome*

2 *medium expense/ burden*

3 *low expense / light burden*

4 *already complying with it*

5 *I don't know*

	0	Irrelevant criterion

Nr	Type of criteria	Relevance	Cost/burden
1	Accessibility for disabled people	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	5
2	Employee satisfaction	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	2
3	Environmental sustainability	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know	1
4	Corporate Social Responsibility	☐ High ☐ Medium ☒ Low ☐ Don't know	5
5	Other (please specify)	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☒ Don't know	

4.   THE IMPACTS OF THE INITIATIVE

The initiative will be assessed for its economic, environmental and social impacts, as well as its costs and benefits. A number of aspects have been identified, which could be influenced by the possible initiative.

Please indicate to what extent you find the following impacts relevant. (Please check the appropriate box)

If you don't have any opinion, please state "don't know" by indicating "0".

Nr	Possible impacts	relevance
1 - Economic impacts		
1a	– competitiveness of tourism businesses.	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know

1b	– property rights of the recognised quality systems.	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☒ Don't know
1c	– costs for consumers.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
1d	– the innovation capacity of enterprises.	☐ High ☐ Medium ☒ Low ☐ Don't know

2 - Environmental impacts

2a	– waste production;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
2b	– the use of renewable and non-renewable resources;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
2c	– an influence on the use of energy;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
2d	– an influence on air quality;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
2e	– an influence on water quality and resources;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
2f	– an influence on land and maritime space use.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know

3 - Social impacts

3a	– an influence on employment and labour markets;	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

		☐ Don't know
3b	– social inclusion and protection;	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
3c	– ethics;	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☒ Don't know
3d	– an influence on public health and safety;.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
3e	– an influence on culture (including traditions and heritage);	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know
3f	– choice of consumers.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Don't know

5. ANY OTHER REMARKS

Please let us know if you would like to add something.

Euromontana supports the concept of Policy based initiatives that increase the opportunity for improvement of quality in tourism. At the same time our request would be for:

- A bottom up approach to developing any new quality schemes across Europe to adequately recognise and take into account the regional and territorial differences and strengths
- Recognition of the wide variety of sector specific needs when developing any new quality mark and especially in the development of criteria and evaluation methodology.
- A recognition of the growth of social networking sites and comparison sites offering customer experience reports to consumers. This explosion of sites has changed the way many consumers make their tourism choices and at the same time is often uncontrolled. Such platforms have become a key part of the tourism sectors resources and this should be a consideration in developing any new quality labelling model.
- Recognition and active inclusion of the private and sectorial labelling initiatives already available to establish credible best practice models.

Euromontana accepts and understands that this is an initial consultation but at the same time would urge the Commission to carry more detailed investigations into the existing Quality schemes and look at what benefits could be gained by any future EU wide scheme.

THANK YOU