



## Quality Agreement and award of a Quality Label to enterprises within the jurisdiction of the Samaria National Park Management Body (SNP-MB), in agreement with its terms and conditions.

### What is a quality agreement?

The establishment of certification procedures leading to the award of quality labels has for many years been a widespread practice (e.g. Italy, France). There, the national and local authorities (ministries, chambers, etc.), having come to an early realisation of the importance and role of quality in the development of local products and tourism services, established special labels for their certification.

Based on this rationale and through financing from the Green Fund, the SNP-MB has conducted a comprehensive study on the development of a **quality agreement** and on the subsequent award of a **quality label** to enterprises operating within its jurisdiction.

### Who may participate?

All enterprises coming under one of the following five categories, which are differentiated by the corresponding required specifications, may participate: 1. Catering, 2. Accommodation, 3. Food and Drinks in the primary and secondary sectors, 4. Tourism Services, 5. Wholesale and Retail Trade. There are three levels of distinction for each category: **adequate**, **superior** and **full**, for enterprises meeting the minimum, average and all criteria respectively. The criteria by category of enterprise are specified on the SNP-MB website.

### What is the cost?

During the phase of development (until 2016), the quality label will be granted free of charge. Following this phase, the cost will be recalculated according to the prevailing circumstances at the time. Based on the data available to date, the cost will range from no charge to a minimum annual contribution by enterprise, which is not expected to exceed €200.

### Who benefits from this and what is there to gain?

One can only gain from such a quality agreement: the first parties that stand to gain are **the Natural Environment and Culture**. The award of the quality label indicates an enterprise that carries out its operations with respect to these elements of the environment, and to the culture and traditions that make a region appealing to Greek and foreign visitors, consumers and service users. Enterprises and the area's economy in general have just as much to gain, considering the actions and activities being planned, which involve collaboration between the SNP-MB and enterprises.

Indicative examples:

- Promotion of the Label on the SNP-MB website and creation of links to certified enterprises;
- Promotion of actions and objectives of the Label and certified enterprises in the media through press releases and articles;
- Publication of promotional and information pamphlets that will promote the Label and local enterprises;
- Promotion of Label and certified enterprises through travel agents in order to include them in vacation and excursion packages;
- Networking:

- between certified enterprises through the creation of a Network of Certified Enterprises, to which it will provide information and support on a regular basis for the improvement of the services provided;
- between producers of local products and certified enterprises for economies of scale in terms of supplies;
- sale of local products of certified enterprises, which will result in direct financial gains for both producers/manufacturers and the enterprises selling these products
- Enhancement of visibility through the promotion of the Quality Label in domestic and foreign markets;
- Adoption of good practices and methods for the constant improvement of services and products provided by the SNP-MB and enterprises/members of the Label;
- Promotion of the values of local/traditional products and services;
- Coordinated advertising, consumption and final sale of products on domestic and foreign markets with value for money;
- Protection of entrepreneurs, consumers and visitors against profiteering practices;
- Enhancement of the prestige of enterprises, given that the label is proof that the quality of their services / products is not random, but the result of systematic and documented procedures, finally resulting in the increase of their market share;
- Protection of the environment from economic activities in all sectors;
- Preservation of the aesthetic and consumer standards of the region;
- Enhancing the region's sustainable development;
- Combination of local products and services with the natural and cultural heritage of the Lefka Ori (meaning 'White Mountains');
- Positive impact on economic development (tourism, infrastructure, etc.), the upholding of local cultural traditions and the enhancement of social cohesion, especially in isolated areas

### **What does the award procedure involve?**

The Quality Agreement relies on an oral agreement of honour, hence the use of the ancient shepherd oath 'ni Za', which has survived to this day. A candidate enterprise first conducts a **self-evaluation** based on the criteria applying to it, in the first, second or third category. It then contacts the SNP-MB, which in turn determines the compatibility of the enterprise with the criteria and recommends, if necessary, ways in which it can advance to a higher category. The enterprise immediately receives the relevant label, which it can post in its establishment, and is included in the relevant lists and promotion areas created by the SNP-MB. **The agreement of honour has two irrefragable requirements: the enterprise binds itself and complies with the agreed provisions. The SNP-MB commits itself to offering the enterprise all the aforementioned promotional privileges, and to protect the validity of the agreement by cancelling these privileges and announcing any such cancelation in the event that an enterprise ceases to meet the criteria under which it bound itself.** It is important to point out that the proposed criteria are not absolute. In the first phase of development of the Agreement they will form the subject of consultation between the parties involved for the purposes of finalising and upgrading them. In no way will there be a unilateral change of the criteria on the part of the SNP-MB.

### **Why 'ni Za'? What does it mean?**

The term 'ni Za' literally means 'by Zeus!' The ancient oath of the inhabitants of the mountains and mainly of shepherds has survived to this day, usually beginning with the phrase '**ni Za fasko sou kai katehe to...**' (By Zeus, I am saying for you to know...) and ending with e.g. 'I do not know anything about this matter', which was usually used in cases of animal theft. This oath had and continues to have such deep-rooted force, that if the potential culprit dared to voice it, he would be cleared of any suspicion. We believe that an agreement of honour could not have a more appropriate title than this ancient oath.

## **And now what?**

The development of the agreement begins with informing enterprises through publications and direct meetings with staff of the SNP-MB. Once the minimum number of candidates has been reached, the first labels will be awarded, while at the same time there will be a series of publications in the media in order to inform the public of what the label means and to which enterprises it has been awarded. It is the responsibility of us all – the SNP-MB, enterprises and public – to achieve the value of the quality label so that, in time, the region will reap the full benefits.

For more information, please visit the SNP-MB website at

**[www.samaria.gr](http://www.samaria.gr)**

or contact us at

**[info@samaria.gr](mailto:info@samaria.gr)**