



QUALITÀ GREEN

Information note

The “Qualità Green” brand

Valle Sabbia - Parco Alto Garda Bresciano

The renovation project of the Quality Brands of the Comunità Montana Valle Sabbia (the Mountain Community of the Sabbia Valley) and the Parco Alto Garda Bresciano arises from the need to improve environmental performance and to promote and support green tourism in this area, particularly in the hinterland, as well as to be able to propose a more comprehensive offering to foreign tourists who have become more and more rural-holiday-oriented.

In order to meet these specific needs the mountain communities of Valle Sabbia and Parco Alto Garda Bresciano have drafted a territory development project consisting of three main steps. The first one regards the implementation, re-launch and upgrade of the two already existing quality brands, while the other steps entail territory and new brands promotion activities, the creation of a hotel booking portal, the composition of holiday packages, the construction of a pre-built mobile structure for brand promotion during trade fairs and/or events in Italy and abroad, the preparation of information material through computer modeling and mapping of the territory with indication of hiking, biking and riding trails.

The work began with the analysis of the existing quality brands of the two mountain communities. This analysis has highlighted the following weaknesses: a poor following, too much bureaucracy and regulations, discontinuity in the implementation of dedicated initiatives, insufficient visibility, lack of coordination and above all the fact that the brand and its rules had not been purposely studied for tourists and therefore lack of immediate comprehension.

The main target of this renovation activity was therefore making the understanding of requirements and procedures for brand acquisition easier, making the brand more accessible to operators in terms of costs and to tourists in terms of comprehension, considering that tourists are the real end users and any “Qualità Green” branded business activity should have added value compared to those without it.

An important change to note is the brand upgrade from territorial to green eco-friendly: this evolution can be noted not only in the brand name, that has become “Qualità Green” and where the underlying suffixes are simple specifications, but also in the majority of requirements that organizations must comply with and which require the operators to pay great attention to the environment. This change has been implicitly imposed by the tourism market, especially that of Northern Europe, whose demand for green-rural holidays is growing strongly also favored by the implementation of the Greenline project.

The Greenline project is a broader initiative that involves the entire Garda territory up to Sebino and Val Trompia and is focused on the development of rural tourism, now managed by GAL – GardaValsabbia.

For this reason a single brand has been created for the two adjacent and complementary areas: the graphics of the logo shows the continuity between the territories of Val Sabbia and lake Garda, with shapes and colors closely related to the world of ecology and rural life; the reference to territoriality is given by the “Land between the two lakes” (as this area is often named), represented by a line running from left to form first a smaller lake, Lake Idro, then climbing and shaping the mountains and finally descending to form a larger basin, lake Garda.

With the creation of a single brand it is possible to join forces to achieve the main goals set by this project and the two areas can hope to benefit from this combination, not only from a geographical point of view: for example the Valle Sabbia, which can offer a more dynamic holiday and products different from those of the Parco Alto Garda Bresciano, would be included in the lake Garda territory thus expanding its fame and attractiveness in the field of tourism.

A description follows of the main targets mentioned above, which are also specified in the brand General Rules:

1. Improving environmental performance in the territory of the mountain community of Valle Sabbia (CMVS) and the mountain community of Parco Alto Garda Bresciano (CMPAGB);
2. Officially recognizing producers and/or service providers whose activity has positive effects on the CMVS and CMPAGB territory;
3. Promoting and supporting the adoption of more environmentally-friendly production/operating techniques;
4. Contributing to improving the quality of life in CMVS and CMPAGB;
5. Distinguishing and giving greater visibility to the activities that have been awarded the Brand and that are involved in a continuous improvement of the territory;
6. Spreading and enhancing the image of CMVS and CMPAGB among citizens, service providers and users of the area;
7. Promoting and supporting green tourism in the territory of CMVS and CMPAGB;
8. Contributing to the integrated development of production systems, services and local facilities.

At present the brand is only assigned to the Organizations that carry out their activities in the 9 municipalities belonging to the Parco Alto Garda Bresciano (Gardone Riviera, Gargnano, Limone sul Garda, Magasa, Salò, Tignale, Toscolano Maderno, Tremosine, Valvestino) and the 25 municipalities of Valle Sabbia (Agnosine, Anfo, Bagolino, Barghe, Bione, Capovalle, Casto, Gavardo, Idro, Lavenone, Mura, Odolo, Paitone, Pertica Alta, Pertica Bassa, Preseglie, Provaglio Val Sabbia, Roè Volciano, Sabbio Chiese, Serle, Treviso Bresciano, Vallio Terme, Vestone, Villanuova sul Clisi, Vobarno). This territorial restriction is increased by some requirements which are obligatory in the guidelines of each sector – namely, that the structure be located and that most of the activities be performed within this territory and also that products coming from the same should be used.

However, we cannot exclude the possibility that, in the future, the use of the brand can be extended to neighboring areas just by adapting the territorial suffix under the logo and the related Guidelines, in order to increase the importance and recognition of the brand “Qualità Green” in Italy and abroad.

As already mentioned the correct use of the brand is described in the General Regulations and related Guidelines in which the requirements that the Operators must meet are listed. In order to obtain the brand, at least 50% of such requirements must be met.

There are 7 guidelines:

- Guideline for Hotel Accommodation
- Guideline for Catering facilities
- Guideline for Leisure
- Guideline for Beekeeping
- Guideline for Dairy Products Production
- Guideline for Plant Production
- Guideline for Animal Rearing.

Each of these Guidelines contains some mandatory and some non-mandatory requirements, divided by categories according to the examined aspects. Each operator must meet at least 50% of the total requirements, including the mandatory ones.

From 50% upwards, operators are classified in classes from E to A (the latter relating to those structures achieving a 91% to 100% score) that form a ranking for internal use only, aimed at encouraging the organizations to improve continuously.

Special rights are reserved to structures with the following certifications and/or which satisfy the following regulations: EMAS Certificate, ISO 14001 Certificate, CE Certification of Biologic Products 834/2007, Ecolabel Certificate. These structures, upon explicit request and after producing the documentation required for the issue of such certificates, acquire by right the brand “Qualità Green” and obtain Class A ranking.

Companies producing wine and olive oil are treated in a different way: since these products are registered designation of origin (RDO) and protected designation of origin (PDO) products, the word “Garda” can appear on the product label exclusively inside these trade names. So wine and/or olive oil producers are given the chance to obtain the brand “Qualità Green”, but without using the suffix Parco Alto Garda Bresciano, in order to avoid any disputes and possible penalties, according to the strict and predominant regulations of RDO and PDO registered marks.

Generally to obtain the brand “Qualità Green” operators must follow a precise procedure: first of all they must fill in the application form and file it with the GAL – GardaValsabbia, the organization that manages the brand.

Following the application an Evaluation Committee (certifier), accredited by GAL – GardaValsabbia, will start a verification procedure in order to assess achievement of the minimum score required by the reference Guideline, and then declare the compliance or non-compliance of the organization under examination. If the organization is deemed to comply, it will be granted the use of the brand and receive an initial ranking. In the event of non-compliance, the organization will have one year to comply with the provisions and will then undergo a second verification to ascertain achievement of the minimum score and avoid invalidation of the brand assignment request.

Once the Evaluation Committee has declared the compliance of the Organization, the Certification Committee, a body formed by a GAL – GardaValsabbia representative and two representatives for each of the two Mountain Communities, will issue the Certificate of brand use and enter the awarded organizations in the public register.

In order to ensure a high quality standard to local consumers and tourists, the companies awarded with the brand “Qualità Green” will undergo maintenance controls every three years, according to which the internal ranking is also updated.

In addition it is possible to apply for or to undergo additional checks for the following reasons:

- failure to achieve the minimum score;
- request for ranking update of the Organization;
- receipt of reports/complaints about the Organization;
- organization/corporate changes communicated by the Organization;
- requests from the Organization to extend/reduce the brand;
- procedures for suspending the brand use.

About checks, it is very important to note that the Mountain Communities, the Evaluation Committee, the GAL – GardaValsabbia and the Certification Committee have no responsibility for failure to comply with the applicable laws by any organization and each operator is directly responsible for that. Unlike in the past the Evaluation Committee will only verify that the requirements listed in the appropriate Guideline and Regulations are respected, thus streamlining the control process and making it less expensive than in the past.

As regards the process of brand award, the only exception is represented by the organizations that already held the Quality Brand of Parco Alto Garda Bresciano, who, unless they have explicitly requested a waiver, are automatically granted the authorization to use the brand “Qualità Green” and related Certificate. These organizations must comply with the regulation of the brand “Qualità Green” within three years of allocation. From the very beginning they regularly undergo the control procedure and the consequent ranking assignment; if 50% of the requirements is not achieved the organization will not be ranked and will, in any case, have to comply by the third year. The organizations in question also have the possibility of using the Quality Brand logo of the CMVS or CMPAGB for 3 years after being awarded the brand “Qualità Green” replacing them gradually.

After obtaining the Brand, the Organization is required to comply with the terms of use of the Certificate and logo, mentioned in the General Regulations and specified in the Brand Book.

If these rules, the General Regulations and/or the reference Guideline are not respected, the GAL – GardaValsabbia can decide to suspend and/or revoke the Certificate and the brand. However the organizations have a period of time during which they can rectify their deficiencies.

Of course each Organization can waive at any time the use of the Brand by sending a written notice to GAL – GardaValsabbia and then removing the logo (and any other reference to it and the Certificate) from any kind of information, promotional, technical material (on paper, computer or otherwise) within the time indicated.

Regarding the costs that the different applicants will have to incur, we have tried to create a brand able to survive and promote itself autonomously. For this reason variable annual operating costs have been defined according to the type of activity. In addition to management costs, the organizations shall bear inspection costs to be paid at every technical, maintenance and additional control, calculated from the average hourly cost of a professional inspection.

The Table of Costs, mentioned above, the General Regulations and the Guidelines, as well as the Brand Application Form are available at GAL – GardaValsabbia, via Brunati 9, 25087 Salò, or at the offices of the two Mountain Communities: Comunità Montana di Valle Sabbia, via Reverberi 2, 25070 Vestone and Comunità Montana Parco Alto Garda Bresciano, via Oliva 32, 25084 Gargnano.

Alternatively you can download all documents directly from the web sites of the three institutions: www.gal-gardavalsabbia.it, www.cmvs.it, www.parcoaltogarda.eu.

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