



# Network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains 2

Project Code: 0030380875

## Criteria Process Diagnosis for Lailias Mountain

**A4.1 – Implementing the EMbleMatiC tools to the new mountain**

**A4.1.2 – Transferring process ToR check**

*Version 1 – May 2024*

**Authors: Konstantinos Zapounidis, Alexis Sancho-Reinoso, Rosa Colomer – [pieriki@otenet.gr](mailto:pieriki@otenet.gr)**

## ***Executive summary***

This document summarises the process of the evaluation process to welcome future members in the Network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains. The focus area of the EMM2 project is Lailias mountain. Under the participation of LAG ANESER, an application of the process took place in order to define its applicability level and define possible corrective measures.

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## 1. Introduction

This document summarises the process of the evaluation process to welcome future members in the Network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains. The focus area of the EMM2 project is Lailias mountain. Under the participation of LAG ANESER, an application of the process took place in order to define its applicability level and define possible corrective measures.

LAG ANESER staff members have provided all the inputs of the evaluation process stages, as described in Deliverables D 3.3.4.: “STUDY REPORT ON THE EMBLEMATIC DIMENSION OF THE COASTAL MEDITERRANEAN MOUNTAINS-Part III of III SYNTHESIS”, of Activity A3.3: In depth study of the criteria composing the emblematic dimension of EMM, WP3 – Studying, of Project Ref:594|1MED15\_3.1\_M12\_272 “Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal destinations of excellence (EMbleMatiC)”, Final Version, 10/04/2018 and “Conduction of an in depth study on the criteria composing the emblematic dimension of the nine (9) areas of the project “Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal destinations of excellence - EmbleMatiC” that are members of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network PHASE 2. EMBLEMATIC DIMENSION – EACH TERRITORY PERSPECTIVE”, Final Version, December 2017, drafted in the framework the Interreg MED programme (2016-2019. From the consortium, the following experts have been appointed as evaluators/auditors:

1. Zapounidis Konstantinos, from LAG Pieriki Anaptixiaki
2. Rosa Colomer, from Agència de Desenvolupament del Berguedà
3. Alexis Sancho-Reinoso, external expert of LAG ANESER

The **aim** of this document is two-fold: (i) to examine the applicability and operability of the process defined in the aforementioned Deliverable and (ii) to propose corrective actions and suggestions in order the process to become more rational and applicable.

### *The context*

The EMbleMatiC-2 project has identified and incorporated a new mountain to the network: **Lailias-Vrontou**, represented by the **Development Agency of Serres** (ANESER S.A.). This mountain is located in northern Greece, specifically in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The mountain, which ranges around 1,600 to 2,000 meters above sea level, is part of the Rhodope range, which extends across Bulgaria and Greece. The mountain is known for its rich biodiversity, with diverse flora and fauna. It is covered with forests, including pine and beech trees, and is home to various wildlife species. Lailias-Vrontou attracts visitors for outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and nature exploration. The mountain offers stunning panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and opportunities for relaxation in a serene natural setting. As for its cultural significance, the area around Lailias-Vrontou counts with nearby villages and landmarks reflecting the traditional way of life in the region. Visitors can explore local customs, cuisine, and architecture while experiencing the mountain's natural beauty.



*Figure 1: View of the Vrontou Mountain (l.) and its location within Greece (r.) (source: [Wikipedia](#)).*

## 2. The evaluation process

Following the previous experience in the projects developed by the EMM Network, the following evaluation process has been defined that gives particular importance to certain qualitative prerequisites which precede and balance the quantitative scoring which is planned to follow then. According to this qualitative approach for the future applicants to enter the network, a two (2) stages and four (4) steps process is designed.

### Stage 1

#### ☒ Step1: Compliance with Eligibility map

Only mountains within the eligible area are accepted to submit application. For the North Med area, the Interreg-Med programme eligible area will be applied while for the South Med area the ENI CBC Med programme eligible area.

#### ☒ Step 2: Letter of motivation to join the network

Future applicants will have the obligation to submit a letter of motivation including a declaration to respect the values of the network:

- To apply global sustainable approach
- To preserve cultural and natural heritage
- To be an open mountain

#### ☒ Step 3: Well developed and illustrated arguments

The applicant should address well developed and illustrated arguments justifying how it is actively expressing these values on the policies developed and implemented on its territory.



As soon as the applicants complete step 1 to 3 and the assessors of the Network are satisfied with those first three steps, they ask the applicants to complete Step 4 on criteria answers and apply the self-scoring.

## Stage 2

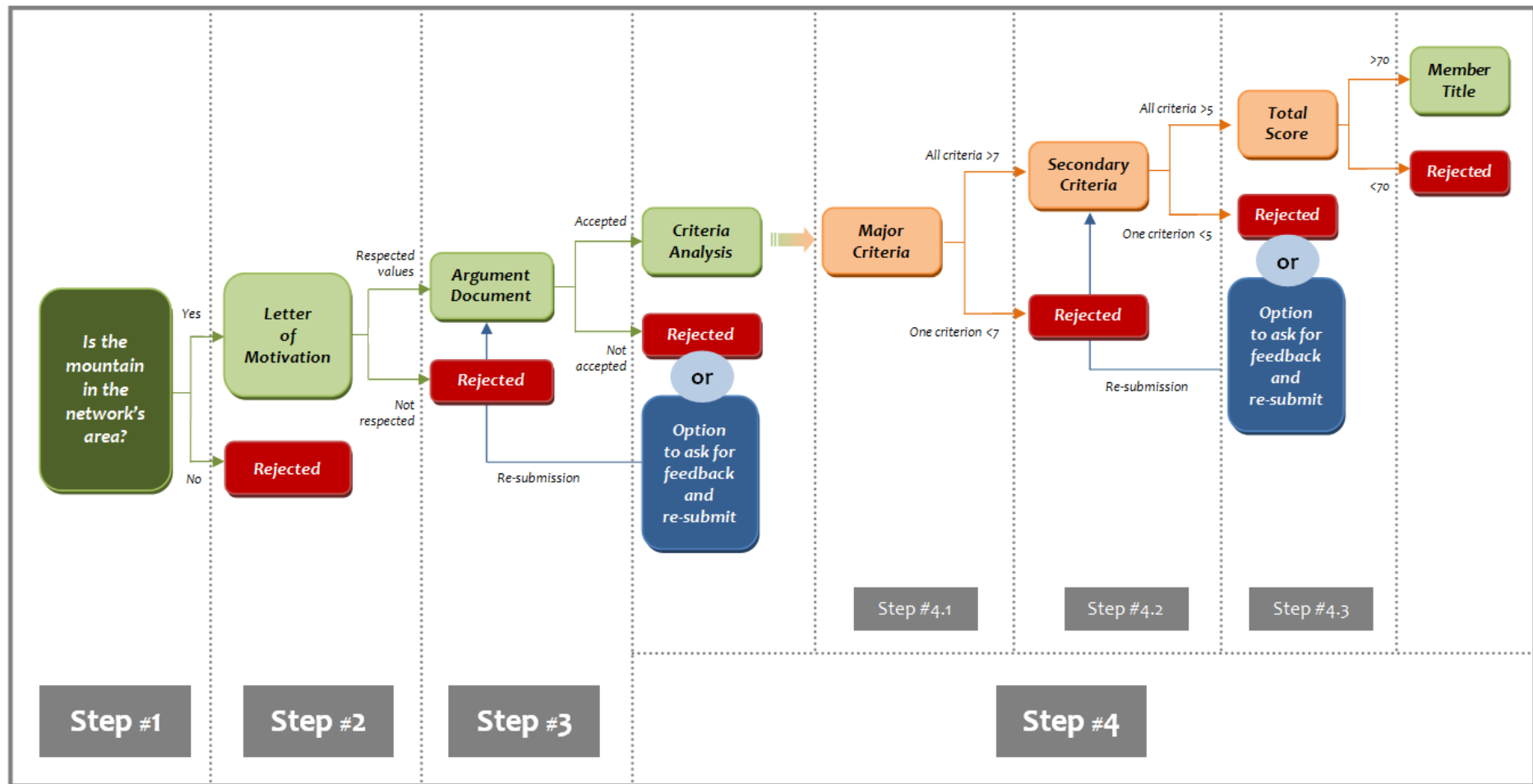
### ☒ **Step4: Criteria assessment**

The applicants will have to argue for the 10 criteria with concrete arguments on how well their mountain satisfies the necessary emblematic dimension as well as exercise a self-assessment and the respective scoring scale.

Regarding the ***quantitative assessment***, each candidate mountain will be evaluated by **key members of the existing Network or assigned experts** first with ***Individual Evaluation Reports*** and then with a ***Consensus Report***.

Rejected applicants will be **encouraged to apply again** in the future if they wish to and correct if possible the fields that substantiated the reasons for which they were initially rejected.

This evaluation process is summarized on the next flow chart diagram:



### 3. The application of the evaluation process

The partner of the project LAG ANESER has applied the evaluation steps for Lailias Mountain. It has to be clarified that this is a testing activity that aims in the testing of the process and not the evaluation as such.

#### Stage 1

##### ☒ Step1: Compliance with Eligibility map

Lailias Mountain lies in the Regional Unit of Serres, Region of Central Macedonia, which is an eligible area of the Interreg-MED programme. As a result the compliance with Eligibility map is being satisfied, and Lailias Mountain continues to the next step, of Stage 1.

##### ☒ Step 2: Letter of motivation to join the network

ANESER LAG has drafted a Letter of motivation including a declaration to respect the values of the network:

- To apply global sustainable approach
- To preserve cultural and natural heritage
- To be an open mountain

In order to support ANESER LAG, it was asked to provide initially a draft version of the Letter and after comments and suggestions by the reviewers/auditors. The following letter was finally submitted (full expanded version in the Appendix):



**LETTER OF MOTIVATION**

**Participating in the network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains**

ANESER s.a. was founded in December 1994. Its main shareholders are the local administration organizations of Serres Prefecture, the Region of Central Macedonia, the Regional Association of Municipalities of Central Macedonia the Chambers of commerce. ANESER s.a. as a collective body it expresses the collective will in the region. Our mission is to support local administration, private sector and other interested parties in the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies and programs for economic and social development of the region. More specific we seek the implementation of national and EU programs, as well as of every other initiative that enhances the local development with specific focus in tourism and agriculture, environment protection and establishment of efficient and stable partnership between local public authorities, private sector and society.

GAL ANESER S.A. with great enthusiasm joined the transnational cooperation project "Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network 2" taking into account that the objectives of the project correspond to the strategies that the LAG has implemented and is implementing in the area and also considering the opportunities for our mountain to become part of a greater network that will broaden its perspectives.

**With respect to the values of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains Network, we declare that:**

- **We are committed to applying a sustainable approach** that ensures the optimal use of environmental resources which are essential elements of tourism and it contributes to the development, maintenance of key ecological processes. An approach that respects the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities and provides sustainable, long-term economic activities and socio-economic benefits to all participants, equitably distributed.
- **We are committed to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and the experience associated to it**, through consistent local strategy and land use planning. The preservation of our natural and cultural heritage is a resource for our identity and the cohesion of our communities. Furthermore, preserving our cultural and natural heritage enhances our quality of life, keeps alive the memory and identity of the area we live in, and helps sustain sustainable activities. Historical landmarks, living heritage and natural sites enrich our daily lives in countless ways.
- **We are committed to be an open mountain.** Visitors are freely to explore our landscape and to share the spirit of the place whilst our territory is associated with the cultural legacy that has been passed down from generation to generation and makes it possible for the local communities to provide distinctive characteristics of our cultural identity.
- **We are committed to cooperate to transnational and interterritorial projects** to share and work on the common principles-values such as sustainable approach to tourism development, preservation of cultural and natural heritage.



[1]



[2]



The final submitted Letter of motivation was considered as sufficient for Lailias Mountain, and the candidature continued to Step 3 of Stage 1.

### ☑ **Step 3: Well developed and illustrated arguments**

ANSER LAG addressed well developed and illustrated arguments justifying how it is actively expressing the values on the policies developed and implemented on Lailias Mountain, on the following topics:

- I. Key aspects of Tourism resources/elements that attracted tourists in the hinterland coastal mountainous areas of Vrontou/Lailias Mountain
- II. Vision and principles of tourism development in territory of Vrontou-Lailias Mountain
- III. Goals for the Vrontou-Lailias Mountain region in the field of tourism
- IV. Planning for Tourism in territory of Vrontou-Lailias Mountain
- V. Motivation for participation in the Network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains

The following letter/document of arguments was finally submitted (full expanded version in the Appendix):



#### **Letter / document of arguments**

##### **I. Key aspects of Tourism resources / elements that attract tourists in the hinterland coastal mountainous area of Vrontou - Lailias Mountain.**

Tourism resources are considered the natural (climate, natural environment, etc.) and the cultural (tradition and customs, cultural events) aspects of the territory including infrastructure and services that directly or indirectly contribute to tourism experience.

Visitors are searching for quality that enriches the travel experience. There is a tendency for more "active" tourism, in relation to the "passive form" of tourism of the 3 s (sun, sand, sea.). Visitors interact more with local people and a key concern of tourism services is respect for nature and the local inhabitants of the destination, elements.

Priorities like environmental protection and upgrading, the preservation and revitalization of local cultural values, the promotion of local prosperity are important while at the same time the visitor is offered, a real participation in the cultural events of the society he is visiting.

The local dimension as expressed by local communities is crucial in the management and development of tourism resources, but also the priorities and dilemmas regarding their use and the involvement of local societies in decision-making is essential to ensure that development, benefits the local community and satisfies tourists.

##### **II. Having under consideration the above our vision and principles of tourism development in territory of Vrontou – Lailias mountain are:**

1. Tourism development based on the criteria of sustainability, environmentally friendly, economically viable and socially just for local societies.
2. Tourism development harmonized with the natural, cultural, and human environment.
3. Tourism development takes into consideration of its effects on cultural heritage and the tradition of the local communities.
4. Active contribution and participation of all shareholders in the tourism sector to sustainable tourism development.
5. Development of tourism that serves and improves the quality of life of the local societies and enriches the socio-cultural identity of the destination.

##### **III. Furthermore our goals for the Vrontou – Lailias mountain region in the field of Tourism are:**

1. The preservation, protection, and exploitation of the wealth of our natural and cultural heritage through cooperation, aiming to produce integrated planning and management tools for tourism development.
2. The formulation of tourism strategies and programs aiming simultaneously in maintaining the quality of the tourist destination and the ability to satisfy tourists.
3. Tourism based on expanding opportunities for the local communities contributing

the most to the local economy.

4. The adoption and implementation of environmentally friendly ethics important for all stakeholders in tourism.

##### **IV. Planning for Tourism in the territory of Vrontou – Lailias Mountain**

Our role as a local development agency is to guidance tourist development, towards a desired standard - according to the characteristics of the area, the possibilities and development prospects of the area.

The concept "tourism planning" is related to the continuous effort to regulate and control the future course of tourism development. This process is also combined with the approach of sustainable tourism development, helping to avoid and limit negative tourism impacts. An important element for the success of our tourism planning, but also for tourism sustainability itself, refers to the participation of local communities, during the decision-making process for the course of tourism development in their area.

Tourism and its development in the hinterland territories / zones, adjacent to areas where mass tourism develops, takes on a particular difficulty.

The Central Administration and the agencies involved in the area of mountain Vrontou – Lailias , as well as the NGOs undertake actions to achieve an integrated planning of the tourism development in the area.

Priority is given to actions for the protection and promotion of the environment and the mechanisms for integrating environmental aspects into investments and interventions for tourism.

Importance is also given to the creation of open information networks, for the exchange and dissemination of experiences and knowledge about actions and technologies that integrate sustainable development strategies into tourism.

##### **V. Taking into account what is mentioned above our motivation for participation in the network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains is based on:**

1. The need for preservation, protection, and exploitation of the wealth of our natural and cultural heritage through cooperation and integrated planning and the creation of management tools for tourism development.
2. The need of formulation tourism strategies and programs for maintaining the quality of the tourist destination and the ability to satisfy tourists.
3. The need to promote alternative forms of tourism which are in line with the principles of sustainability and to support sustainable tourism development, by applying environmentally friendly tourism management systems.
4. The need to develop a background/basis to support decision-making, both by public and private entities in the tourism sector of our area.
5. Our desire to share and work on the common principles-values such as sustainable approach to tourism development, preservation of cultural and natural heritage.
6. Our desire to share the spirit of the our place whilst respecting local rules and conscious.
7. Our desire, to strengthen cooperation and to find solutions to common problems through a spirit of mutual benefit.



[1]



[2]

The final submitted Letter/Document of arguments was considered as sufficient for Lailias Mountain, and the candidature continued to Stage 2 and step 4. As far as the applicant completed step 1 to 3





and the assessors of the Network are satisfied with those first three steps, the applicant was asked to complete Step 4 on criteria answers and apply the self-scoring.

## Stage 2

### ☒ **Step4: Criteria assessment**

The applicant (LAG ANESER) has argued with concrete arguments on how well their mountain satisfies the necessary emblematic dimension and the 10 criteria.

The assessors prepared a table, to be filled-in and submitted by the applicant. The filled-in table could be found below:

Criteria	Mimimum Requirements to achieve pass grade	Power assets	ANESER	Indicative examples
C1 Proud local people	1 argument for proving the pride of the local people	Strong pride and sense of belonging to the territory	Preserving Cultural Heritage and Identity. Local communities have unique traditions, customs, and practices that contribute to their cultural heritage. By celebrating and preserving these aspects, residents demonstrate pride in their local identity.	Local people across the 9 hinterland territories that strongly identify with the mountains.
C2 Institutional recognition	1 certification or designations or awards	Certifications, designations and awards	Lailias belongs to the Kerkini Lake National Park, which is located in the Nort West part of the Serres prefecture. The area is included in the NATURA 2000 network (GR 1260007), Part of the area is one of the seven Controlled Hunting Areas of Greece Sfagnonas an area in the forest of LailiaSerres has been established under the Forestry Code 656/B/1986 as a Preserved Natural Monument and has paleontological interest	“Countries of Art and History” (Canigò) “Most beautiful villages of France” (Canigò) Grand Site de France certification (Canigò, Sainte Victoire) Listed among the most beautiful villages (Canigò, Gran Sasso) UNESCO Geopark (Psiloritis), UNESCO heritage (Canigò, Gran Sasso, Etna, Serra de Tramuntana, Psiloritis), UNESCO Storage of Biosphere (Olympus)
C3 Reputation	1 example of reputation beyond local area	Globally knownand popular mountains	The complex of monasteries and especially the monastery of the TimiouProdromou, are an important religious attraction. Emperors of Byzantium Andronikos II Palaiologos, John VI Cantacouzenos and Andronikos III Palaiologos, proclaimed the monastery as Royal in June 1321 and January 1329 with a golden bull. The monastery of TimiosProdromos is known throughout Greece and receives thousandsof visitors both from Greece and from the Balkan countries.	Globally known(Etna and Olympus), Highest and only active volcano in Europe (Etna), Thousands of visitors
C4 Legends and myths	3 legends and myths (brief description+source)	Mythology and legendary references	Persian king Zal. In the dense forest of Lailia, the Persian Zal, the mythical Zarathustra, once lived or was worshiped there. This legend preserves memories of the once long presence of the Persians in the area of Serres. According to Herodotus (V 12-6) the Persians lived in the area of the plain of Serres twice The legend of Katiga. A girl who committed suicide by falling off a cliff, in order not to marry a Muslim.	Sacred mountain of Catalans, Dragons and 7 men of Canigò Paths of Forgiveness(Gran Sasso) Ancient Dion sacred city (Olympus) “witch’s mountain” (Pedraforca) Greek mythology (Olympus, Psiloritis, Etna)

Criteria	Minimum Requirements to achieve pass grade	Power assets	ANESER	Indicative examples
			<p>Today, this rock attracts the greatest interest of visitors. Its view is breathtaking and awe-inspiring as it sits on the edge of a deep ravine.</p> <p>The Devil's Bridge. A young man, Marinos, would win the daughter of a rich cheliga if he succeeded in roasting a lamb in the middle of the bridge at midnight. All was going well, when the goblins began to appear, chasing Marino. But the demonic Marine outwitted them and managed to escape and complete his mission</p>	
C5 Power of inspiration	To have inspired 1 poets/artists/etc.	Strongly inspired creativity Associated with emblematic personalities	<p>Connected with legends and stories, Lailias is one of the mountain complexes of Eastern Macedonia and in fact the most beautiful and beloved, while it did not leave the French consul and traveler Cousinery unmoved either, who when he visited Serres in 1814, devoted many pages to weave the eulogy of the enchanting forest of the same name.</p> <p>The wider area of Lailias Mountain, was associated with traditional poetry, music and dance and especially with the Vlach-speaking peoples of the area, through which the image of the area traveled to all the regions of the Balkans</p>	<p>"a Cezanne's site", Pablo Ruiz Picasso residence (Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>Artists and writers (Serra de Tramuntana)</p> <p>Incompatible traditional poetry, music and dance (Psiloritis)</p> <p>John Paul II (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Lord Byron (Cika)</p> <p>Homer (Olympus)</p>
C6 Picturesque landscape	1 argument explaining the singularity of the mountain landscape	High altitudes and alpine characteristics Superlative features Unforgettable spots and unique shapes Aesthetic enjoyment	<p>Covering an area of 33,000 acres, the forest consists mainly of Scots pine and beech. The massif of Lailia is located, north of the city of Serres and at a distance of 25 km, in a direction from NE to SW. The height of this mountainous zone, from sea level, ranges from 700m. up to the top of Ali Babas (height 1849m.). The topography of the mountain area, as a rule, presents series of smooth peaks, while, Geologically, Lailias is part of the crystalline schist mass of the Rhodope</p>	<p>5 peaks above 2,000 meters (Psiloritis)</p> <p>Begins to rise at sea level (Cika)</p> <p>Highest of Apennines (Gran Sasso), Highest peak of the Ceraunian range (Cika), Second highest mountain in the Balkans (Olympus)</p> <p>Lunar/desert landscape and forest/fertile land (Etna)</p> <p>Prominence of 1,563 meters (Cika)</p> <p>Referenced by Ptolemy, Strabo and Pausanias (Cika)</p>

Criteria	Minimum Requirements to achieve pass grade	Power assets	ANESER	Indicative examples
			massif and has rocks, mainly of a high degree of metamorphism, such as gneiss, marble, slate.	Terraces landscape (Serra de Tramuntana), unusual flat terraces on high altitudes (Canigó)
C7 Particular ecosystem	1 ecosystem certification (could be the same as C2) or/and 1 local specie (flora and fauna)	Territories consisting of a large variety of habitats with high ecological value	<p>The visitor to Lailia is impressed by its rich flora, in which 515 species have been recorded, of which 345 are perennial herbs, 44 are shrubs or saplings, 22 are trees and 104 are annual species, while twenty-one varieties of plants and lower plant units, from the flora of the forest, are unique, some in the whole of Greece and some in the northern Greek area.</p> <p>Fauna of Lailia includes a rich world of mammals, while, sometimes, wolves and the bears find shelter in the most inaccessible corners of the forest for humans. More than forty species of birds exist in the ecosystem of Lailia</p> <p>The slopes of the peaks of Lailia, covered by beech and mountain pine forests (code GR 1260007 in the NATURA 2000 program), offer the forest visitor opportunities for hunting, camping, winter sports, photography, painting, studying nature, climbing, mountain biking and hiking on the walking path E6.</p>	<p>Natural parks :CatalanPyrenees, Etna, Gran Sasso e MontidellaLaga, Olympus, Serra de Tramuntana</p> <p>World reference for botanists (Canigó), highest number of plants across Europe (Gran Sasso), 25% of the Greek flora (Olympus), 20% of French fauna and flora (Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>Astrotourism (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Granite reserves (Canigó)</p> <p>Grotta del gelo (cave of the ice) (Etna), Second southernmost glacier in Europe (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Monumental trees with spectacular sizes (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Speleopark (Psiloritis)</p>
C8 Mediterranean cultural identity	2 characteristics associated with intangible aspects related to the Mediterranean culture	Naturally connected with the Mediterranean Sea Cultural richness	<p>The area of Lailia is a typical Mediterranean area that was exploited by man for its rich natural beauty, while at the same time it was an important cultural center of the wider area.</p> <p>The plateau of Lailia was known from the first centuries of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, when the city of Serres was called Siris. A monument of natural beauty, with mountains covered everywhere with dense vegetation. The princes of theByzantine court and the other despots of Greece built residences that were used</p>	<p>400 PDO wine cellars in a single territory (Etna)</p> <p>Cradle of Catalanity (Canigó, Pedraforca)</p> <p>Drystonetechnique (Serra de Tramuntana, Psiloritis, Canigó)</p> <p>Fire-related events (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Mountain marathon races (Olympus, Etna, Psiloritis, Canigó)</p> <p>Picasso way (60 km cultural route) (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Traditional wedding receptions (Psiloritis)</p> <p>Bear festival (Canigó)</p>

Criteria	Minimum Requirements to achieve pass grade	Power assets	ANESER	Indicative examples
			<p>for the ccommodation of noble vacationers during the summer.</p> <p>Local cuisine is based on high consumption of olive oil, vegetables, legumes, fruits and whole grains, moderate to high consumption of fish, and low consumption of meat and dairy products. It represents a unique lifestyle shaped by the climate and the area's tradition. . It is a way of life that combines healthy eating with culture and social habits and emphasizes hospitality, neighbourliness, intercultural dialogue. Overall, the Local cuisine is linked to Mediterranean diet and is a cultural monument linked to the history, traditions and way of life of people in the Mediterranean regions.</p>	<p>Ancient Dion (Olympus) Necropolis of Fossa (Gran Sasso)</p>
C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment	1 man-made related environmental element	Conservation and management of the area Man-made authentic features	<p>1. As part of its social and cultural contribution, the Municipality of Serres founded in 1996 the Natural Environment Protection Center - Natural History Museum. The Museum is housed in a specially designed building owned by the Serres Hunting Association, located at the 1st kilometer of the Serres - Holy Monastery of Timiou Prodromos road.</p> <p>2. Ancient castle and smelter. It is located in Koulata near the settlement of Oreni. It is a large hill which is surrounded by a defensive enclosure built of argillaceous stones. It is a defensive fortification that protects the passage and the adjacent metallurgical facilities. Fragments of tools and remnants of slag are found in the area.</p> <p>3. Square of Woodcutters Area where there used to be the camp of</p>	<p>320 km route (Gran Sasso) Dry Stone Route hiking trail (Serra de Tramuntana) Mining tradition and museums (Pedraforca, Sainte Victoire, Canigó)</p>



EMBLEMATIC  
MEDITERRANEAN  
MOUNTAINS



Criteria	Minimum Requirements to achieve pass grade	Power assets	ANESER	Indicative examples
			woodcutters who took care of the wooded areas of Lailia. Today it is a recreation area, where hikers can rest	
C10 Historic places	2 historic places or/and events	Prehistoric and historic places Landmarks and emblematic personalities	<p>1. Holy Monastery of TimiouProdromos of Serres The Monastery of TimiouProdromos of Serres was built in 1270 and is a stunningly beautiful monument of Byzantine art. The central temple is built of stone and there are many Byzantine frescoes.</p> <p>2. The ancient and Byzantine acropolis. The acropolis as it survives today is a work of Byzantine times, but it was founded on an ancient fortress of the 7th and 6th centuries BC. The construction of the acropolis dates to the 9th century AD, probably during the reign of Emperor Nikiforos Phokas</p>	<p>Mountain linked with two Popes (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Paleontological site (Pedraforca, Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>World war II Holocaust town (Psiloritis)</p> <p>Medieval towns (Gran Sasso, Etna)</p>

The gravity of criteria used for evaluation was described in “Conduction of an in depth study on the criteria composing the emblematic dimension of the nine (9) areas of the project “Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal destinations of excellence - EmbleMatiC” that are members of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network PHASE 2. EMBLEMATIC DIMENSION – EACH TERRITORY PERSPECTIVE”, Final Version, December 2017.

According to this study, the distinction of the criteria as major ones and others as secondary was done according to the next table:

C1 Proud local people	secondary
C2 Institutional recognition	major
C3 Reputation	major
C4 Legends and myths	secondary
C5 Power of inspiration	secondary
C6 Picturesque landscape	major
C7 Particular ecosystem	major
C8 Mediterranean cultural identity	secondary
C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment	major
C10 Historic places	secondary

#### **MAJOR AND SECONDARY CRITERIA**

Regarding the gravity of the criteria the pass limits are set at 5 and 7 respectively. However it was recommended and approved that the total score of 60 should not be considered enough (following the European Commission approach), but the pass limit for the overall score to be 70 in this scenario adapted. Hence, a mountain will be qualified as emblematic if it gets a cumulative score of 70.

CRITERIA	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Score
C1 Proud local people						Pass 5					5
C2 Institutional recognition						Pass 7					7
C3 Reputation						Pass 7					7
C4 Legends and myths						Pass 5					5
C5 Power of inspiration						Pass 5					5
C6 Picturesque landscape						Pass 7					7
C7 Particular ecosystem						Pass 7					7
C8 Mediterranean cultural identity						Pass 5					5
C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment						Pass 7					7
C10 Historic places						Pass 5					5
<b>TOTAL</b>											<b>60</b>

#### **TOTAL SCORE TABLE**

Total score: Pass 70, for emblematic candidates



Based on the table submitted by LAG Lailias, the following grading has been achieved:

CRITERIA	Min Score	Achieved Score	Justification
C1 Proud local people	5	5	General description, enough to pass the criterion but not strongly supported for a higher score.
C2 Institutional recognition	7	8	Typical Recognition (Natura, Hunting area) but also a Preserved natural Monument of paleontological interest
C3 Reputation	7	8	Based on the monasteries, regional/national level, expanded in the nearby countries.
C4 Legends and myths	5	7	International level legends (Zarathustra) but also locals.
C5 Power of inspiration	5	5	General description.
C6 Picturesque landscape	7	8	Based also on actual site visit.
C7 Particular ecosystem	7	9	Detailed description
C8 Mediterranean cultural identity	5	7	Typical description, nevertheless rich.
C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment	7	9	3 rich examples.
C10 Historic places	5	7	Important but typical for a Med mountain.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>73</b>	

***TOTAL SCORE TABLE for LAILIAS***

#### **Application of Step 4 for Lailias Mountain**

##### **Step 4.1**

In the first stage of Step 4, all major Criteria as defined in the table above have to reach a score above 7. According to the TOTAL SCORE TABLE for LAILIAS, the scores are the following:

Criterion	Type	Score
C2 Institutional recognition	major	8
C3 Reputation	major	8
C6 Picturesque landscape	major	8
C7 Particular ecosystem	major	9
C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment	major	9

All scores are above 7, so the candidature continues to Step 4.2. In the second stage of Step 4, all secondary Criteria as defined in the table above have to reach a score above 5. According to the TOTAL SCORE TABLE for LAILIAS, the scores are the following:

Criterion	Type	Score
C1 Proud local people	secondary	5
C4 Legends and myths	secondary	7
C5 Power of inspiration	secondary	5
C8 Mediterranean cultural identity	secondary	7
C10 Historic places	secondary	7

All scores are above 5, so the candidature continues to Step 4.3. In the third stage of Step 4, the total score of all criteria should be above 70. According to the TOTAL SCORE TABLE for LAILIAS, the total score is  $73 > 70$ .

As a result of all stages the mountain could be appointed the title of the Member for Emblematic Mediterranean Mountain.


## 4. Results

Although the transfer plan of the Emblematic Mediterranean Network has been applied and tested several times (including the EMM2 project), this has been the first time that the evaluation process of being a member of the network has been applied. The major scope was to test the applicability under actual circumstances. The following results were recorded, leading to some corrective actions:

- ✓ Steps 2 and 3 are not so clearly distinguished between each other. It was difficult for the applicant to understand the difference and what to include in their justifications. It was made clear that the letters have overlapping concepts. As a result there could be 2 corrective actions:
  - Merging the 2 steps in one
  - Providing more detailed instructions for each one of the two steps
- ✓ There was a difficulty to quantify criteria that have a more qualitative character (i.e. C1, C8). As a result there could be 2 corrective actions:
  - Exclude them from being graded
  - Providing more detailed instructions on how to justify these criteria
- ✓ The on-site visit that was implemented within the duration of the project should be defined as obligatory for the evaluation. The assessors had the opportunity to visit some of the criteria and having the opportunity to visit all of them could offer a more actual picture of the real situation.
- ✓ A meeting with the local stakeholders should be an obligatory activity for assessing the wholeness of the mountain.
- ✓ Time duration for each step of the process is suggested, to be followed strictly.
- ✓ Punctuality of the applicant could be also a criterion for them.

## 5. Appendixes

### 5.1. Motivation letter



**Development Company of Serres S.A. - Agency  
of Serres Local Government (ANESER S.A.)**

ANESER S.A. | Meraxias 67, Postal code 62124, City Serres | Tel. 23210 64402 - 3 |  
www.aneser.gr | e-mail: info@aneser.gr

**LETTER OF MOTIVATION**



**Participating in the network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains**

ANESER s.a. was founded in December 1994. Its main shareholders are the local administration organizations of Serres Prefecture, the Region of Central Macedonia, the Regional Association of Municipalities of Central Macedonia the Chambers of commerce. ANESER s.a. as a collective body it expresses the collective will in the region. Our mission is to support local administration, private sector and other interested parties in the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies and programs for economic and social development of the region. More specific we seek the implementation of national and EU programs, as well as of every other initiative that enhances the local development with specific focus in tourism and agriculture, environment protection and establishment of efficient and stable partnership between local public authorities, private sector and society.

GAL ANESER S.A. with great enthusiasm joined the transnational cooperation project "Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network 2" taking into account that the objectives of the project correspond to the strategies that the LAG has implemented and is implementing in the area and also considering the opportunities for our mountain to become part of a greater network that will broaden its perspectives.

**With respect to the values of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains Network, we declare that:**

- **We are committed to applying a sustainable approach** that ensures the optimal use of environmental resources which are essential elements of tourism and it contributes to the development, maintenance of key ecological processes. An approach that respects the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities and provides sustainable, long-term economic activities and socio-economic benefits to all participants, equitably distributed.
- **We are committed to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and the experience associated to it**, through consistent local strategy and land use planning. The preservation of our natural and cultural heritage is a resource for our identity and the cohesion of our communities. Furthermore, preserving our cultural and natural heritage enhances our quality of life, keeps alive the memory and identity of the area we live in, and helps sustain sustainable activities. .Historical landmarks, living heritage and natural sites enrich our daily lives in countless ways.
- **We are committed to be an open mountain.** Visitors are freely to explore our landscape and to share the spirit of the place whilst our territory is associated with the cultural legacy that has been passed down from generation to generation and makes it possible for the local communities to provide distinctive characteristics of our cultural identity.
- **We are committed to cooperate to transnational and interterritorial projects** to share and work on the common principles-values such as sustainable approach to tourism development, preservation of cultural and natural heritage.



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EMBLEMATIC  
MEDITERRANEAN  
MOUNTAINS



For ANESER S.A..

The President and the Board of Directors




*[Signature]*  
Dimitris Karipidis



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## 5.2 Letter/document of arguments.



**AN.E.ZEP. A.E.**

**Development Company of Serres S.A. - Agency  
of Serres Local Government (ANESER S.A.)**

ANESER S.A. | Meraxias 67, Postal code 62124, City Serres | Tel. 23210 64402 - 3 |  
www.aneser.gr | e-mail: info@aneser.gr

### Letter / document of arguments

**I. Key aspects of Tourism resources / elements that attract tourists in the hinterland coastal mountainous area of Vrontou - Lailias Mountain.**

Tourism resources are considered the natural (climate, natural environment, etc.) and the cultural (tradition and customs, cultural events) aspects of the territory including infrastructure and services that directly or indirectly contribute to tourism experience.

Visitors are searching for quality that enriches the travel experience. There is a tendency for more "active" tourism, in relation to the "passive form" of tourism of the 3 s (sun, sand, sea,). Visitors interact more with local people and a key concern of tourism services is respect for nature and the local inhabitants of the destination, elements.

Priorities like environmental protection and upgrading, the preservation and revitalization of local cultural values, the promotion of local prosperity are important while at the same time the visitor is offered, a real participation in the cultural events of the society he is visiting.



The local dimension as expressed by local communities is crucial in the management and development of tourism resources, but also the priorities and dilemmas regarding their use and the involvement of local societies in decision-making is essential to ensure that development, benefits the local community and satisfies tourists.

**II. Having under consideration the above our vision and principles of tourism development in territory of Vrontou – Lailias mountain are:**

1. Tourism development based on the criteria of sustainability, environmentally friendly, economically viable and socially just for local societies.
2. Tourism development harmonized with the natural, cultural, and human environment.
3. Tourism development takes into consideration of its effects on cultural heritage and the tradition of the local communities.
4. Active contribution and participation of all shareholders in the tourism sector to sustainable tourism development.
5. Development of tourism that serves and improves the quality of life of the local societies and enriches the socio-cultural identity of the destination.

**III. Furthermore our goals for the Vrontou – Lailias mountain region in the field of Tourism are:**

1. The preservation, protection, and exploitation of the wealth of our natural and cultural heritage through cooperation, aiming to produce integrated planning and management tools for tourism development.
2. The formulation of tourism strategies and programs aiming simultaneously in maintaining the quality of the tourist destination and the ability to satisfy tourists.
3. Tourism based on expanding opportunities for the local communities contributing

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the most to the local economy.

4. The adoption and implementation of environmentally friendly ethics important for all stakeholders in tourism.

#### IV. Planning for Tourism in the territory of Vrontou – Lailias Mountain

Our role as a local development agency is to guidance tourist development, towards a desired standard - according to the characteristics of the area, the possibilities and development prospects of the area.

The concept "tourism planning" is related to the continuous effort to regulate and control the future course of tourism development. This process is also combined with the approach of sustainable tourism development, helping to avoid and limit negative tourism impacts. An important element for the success of our tourism planning, but also for tourism sustainability itself, refers to the participation of local communities, during the decision-making process for the course of tourism development in their area.

Tourism and its development in the hinterland territories / zones, adjacent to areas where mass tourism develops, takes on a particular difficulty.

The Central Administration and the agencies involved in the area of mountain Vrontou – Lailias, as well as the NGOs undertake actions to achieve an integrated planning of the tourism development in the area.

Priority is given to actions for the protection and promotion of the environment and the mechanisms for integrating environmental aspects into investments and interventions for tourism.

Importance is also given to the creation of open information networks, for the exchange and dissemination of experiences and knowledge about actions and technologies that integrate sustainable development strategies into tourism.

#### V. Taking into account what is mentioned above our motivation for participation in the network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains is based on:

1. The need for preservation, protection, and exploitation of the wealth of our natural and cultural heritage through cooperation and integrated planning and the creation of management tools for tourism development.
2. The need of formulation tourism strategies and programs for maintaining the quality of the tourist destination and the ability to satisfy tourists.
3. The need to promote alternative forms of tourism which are in line with the principles of sustainability and to support sustainable tourism development, by applying environmentally friendly tourism management systems.
4. The need to develop a background/basis to support decision-making, both by public and private entities in the tourism sector of our area.
5. Our desire to share and work on the common principles-values such as sustainable approach to tourism development, preservation of cultural and natural heritage.
6. Our desire to share the spirit of the our place whilst respecting local rules and conscious.
7. Our desire, to strengthen cooperation and to find solutions to common problems through a spirit of mutual benefit.



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**For ANESER S.A..  
The President and the Board of Directors**



*[Signature]*  
**Dimitris Karipidis**



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