

# THE PATH TO CREATING A RAL QUALITY MARK





**RAL QUALITY MARKS** (RAL Gütezeichen) hold a special position in the German labelling industry. Their neutrality, reliability and transparency mean that they provide everybody with dependable guidance when searching for particularly high-quality goods or services. Companies that use a **RAL QUALITY MARK** also benefit. Due to the growing range of

goods and services on offer both at home and abroad, many suppliers find it difficult to stand out from the competition. Companies using **RAL QUALITY MARKS** make it clear at first glance that the highest level of quality and fair treatment of their customers are principles close to their hearts – providing them with an important competitive advantage in many markets.

One reason for the high level of reliability offered by **RAL QUALITY MARKS** is the process used for approving and issuing them that has remained almost unchanged for more than 90 years. An important factor here is the development of the Quality Assurance and Test Specifications that need to be fulfilled for issuing the quality marks. **RAL** incorporates a diverse range of social institutions such as industry and consumer associations, ministries or testing institutes into this process. This guarantees the neutrality of **RAL QUALITY MARKS** and prevents the Quality Assurance and Test Specifications being influenced by individual market participants.

The brochure "The Path To Creating A RAL Quality Mark" clearly describes the individual steps from the application through to the issuing of the quality mark. This path is identical for every sector and every group of products or services. It is also for this reason that you can always rely on **RAL QUALITY MARKS**.

**Rüdiger Wollmann**  
Chief Executive

## A SHORT EXPLANATION ABOUT RAL QUALITY

### RAL QUALITY MARKS (RAL GÜTEZEICHEN)

A quality mark can only be called a RAL Quality Mark (RAL Gütezeichen) if it has been created and issued exclusively in accordance with the Guidelines for Quality Marks.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION

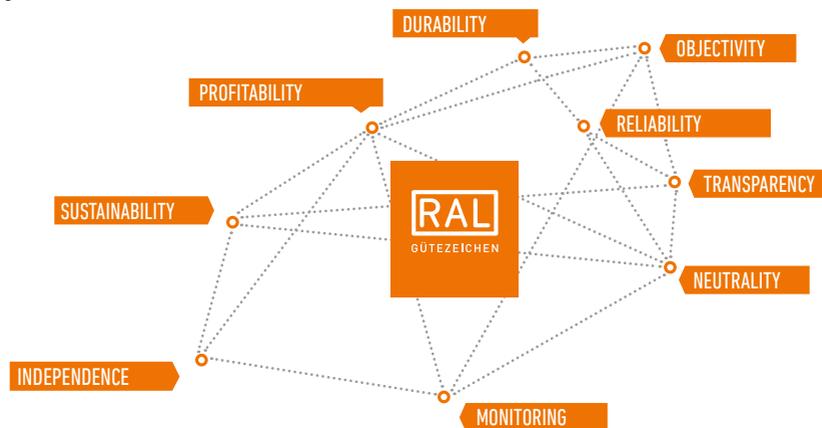
The group of companies that use the RAL Quality Mark (RAL Gütezeichen) for a group of products or services.

### QUALITY COMMITTEE

A committee formed by a Quality Assurance Association that comprises company representatives and representatives from independent testing institutes and strictly monitors adherence with the quality assurance system. The Quality Committee also continuously updates the quality assurance system to reflect the current state of technology or market conditions. This ensures that it always goes above and beyond current standards and legal regulations.

### RAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

This system has existed since 1925. It ensures the reliability, objectivity and transparency of RAL quality assurance. RAL quality assurance is the foundation upon which consumers and industry are able to place their trust in RAL Quality Marks (RAL Gütezeichen) without any reservations.



## RAL QUALITY MARKS (RAL GÜTEZEICHEN) IN JUST A FEW STEPS

### 1. START

- Informative discussion about the process
- Overall length of the process: approx. 6 - 9 months
- Short written specifications of the contents and scope of the planned quality assurance system (scope of validity) by the applicant. The assessment of the scope of validity is carried out free of charge by RAL.

### 2. APPLICATION AND PROCESSING

- Signing of the quality mark application form
- Charges due upon application (plus 7 % VAT)
  - € 1,850.00 flat-rate application charge
  - € 2,000.00 advance payment for preparing the RAL approval process. Once the process has been completed, this advance payment is offset against the flat-rate charge of € 4,800.00.
- Processing of the quality mark application form by RAL.
- RAL develops the statutes (association statutes, quality mark statutes and implementation provisions) in draft form for the applicant.
- The applicant submits the draft Quality Assurance and Test Specifications to RAL. RAL aligns these specifications within a classification structure and presents suggestions for monitoring them.
- In cooperation with the applicant, RAL develops the draft layout for the planned RAL Quality Mark (RAL Gütezeichen) in a uniform RAL corporate design.

3.

## FOUNDATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION

- Foundation of the RAL Quality Assurance Association as a legally registered association by the applicant.
- The founders and thus members of this legally registered association can be natural persons and legal entities. The association must have at least seven members when it is registered (Article 56 of the German Civil Code (BGB)). The number of members must not fall below 3 members in accordance with Article 73 of the BGB.
- Additional legal costs may be incurred due to registering the Quality Assurance Association in the register of associations at the relevant district court (e.g. registration fee, lawyer's fees or notary fees).

4.

## APPROVAL OF THE QUALITY MARK (RAL GÜTEZEICHEN)

- RAL carries out an approval process based on the planned statutes. The draft version of the Quality Assurance and Test Specifications is sent to relevant professional and commercial groups (associations within the industry manufacturing or supplying the product or service and consumers or users at testing institutions, as well as public bodies and, where relevant, specialist institutions) and the remaining part of the statutes is also sent to the relevant bodies for their comments.
- Consultation timeframe: 10 weeks
- RAL answers and, if relevant, incorporates the comments it has received with specialist support from the applicant.
- The final version of the Quality Assurance and Test Specifications and the statutes is sent by RAL to the professional and commercial groups involved in the process.
- In consultation with those professional and commercial groups involved in the process and after checking aspects relating to association, antitrust and competition law, RAL decides whether to approve the RAL Quality Assurance Association and the RAL Quality Mark (RAL Gütezeichen).
- RAL approves and recognises the Quality Assurance and Test Specifications, the statutes, the RAL Quality Assurance Association and the RAL Quality Mark (RAL Gütezeichen).
- Charges due upon approval (plus 7 % VAT)
  - € 4,800.00 flat-rate approval charge (offset against the advance payment of € 2,000.00 received with the application charge)
  - € 1,800.00 advance payment for the typesetting and printing of the PDF and printed versions of the quality assurance system (offset against the typesetting and printing costs that are actually incurred)

## 5. MEMBERSHIP IN RAL

- The Quality Assurance Association becomes a member of the RAL Deutsches Institut für Gütesicherung und Kennzeichnung e. V.
- RAL publishes the quality assurance system. The defined Quality Assurance and Test Specifications are made accessible and can be viewed by everybody.
- The new Quality Mark (RAL Gütezeichen) is published in the German Federal Gazette (Bundesanzeiger) and the Overview of Quality Marks issued by RAL.
- Registering the RAL Quality Mark as a trade mark
  - as a collective trade mark in the register of the German Patent and Trademark Office or with the European Union Intellectual Property Office in Alicante, Spain (EU trade mark).
  - The costs for registering the Quality Mark as a trade mark are borne by the Quality Assurance Association.
- Formation of the Quality Committee by the Quality Assurance Association as part of the committee work of the Quality Assurance Association.
- Organisation of independent monitoring of the quality assurance regulations by the RAL Quality Assurance Association (e.g. by independent testers/testing institutions). The costs for the required independent monitoring are borne by the holders of the quality mark. Management of the independent monitoring and, where relevant, punishment of infringements against the quality assurance system is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Association.
- Annual RAL membership charge:
  - in accordance with the membership charge regulations agreed by the General Meeting of Members (plus 7 % VAT).

## 6. ISSUING OF THE QUALITY MARK

- Quality Marks are issued to companies by the Quality Assurance Association after a successful initial inspection to confirm adherence with the quality assurance system by the applicant.

### OVERVIEW OF THE TOTAL COSTS TO BE BORNE BY THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION:

- Charges due upon application (plus 7 % VAT)
  - € 1,850.00 flat-rate application charge
  - € 2,000.00 advance payment for preparing the RAL approval process. Offset after the completion of the process against the flat-rate charge of € 4,800.00.
- Legal costs for entry into the register of associations.
- Charges due upon approval (plus 7 % VAT)
  - € 4,800.00 flat-rate approval charge (offset against the advance payment of € 2,000.00 made with the application charge)
  - € 1,800.00 advance payment for the typesetting and printing (offset against the actual costs for the typesetting and printing)
- Costs for registering as a trade mark
- Costs for independent third party monitoring (to be borne by the users of the Quality Mark)
- Annual membership charge (plus 7 % VAT)

# We set standards. Since 1925.

Consumers, companies, industry and trade have been placing their trust in RAL for over 90 years.

Our mission is to gain your trust. RAL Simply Excellent.

Further information is available at: [www.ral.de](http://www.ral.de)



## RAL QUALITY MARKS (RAL GÜTEZEICHEN) A reliable choice

RAL QUALITY MARKS (RAL Gütezeichen) signal the particularly high level of quality of products and services to consumers. At the same time, they stand for clearly defined values: Companies that use RAL QUALITY MARKS promise fair, honest and exemplary behaviour. They assume responsibility for their products and services and are thus reliable partners for consumers.



## RAL COLOURS The language of the world of colour since 1927

RAL COLOURS is the world's leading colour standard for all professional users of colour in industry, trade, architecture and design. More than 2.500 colour tones deliver the highest level of precision and a varied choice. Products of RAL COLOURS are marketed via our own sales partners in over 85 countries.

[www.ral-colours.com](http://www.ral-colours.com)



## RAL ENVIRONMENT The awarding body for the Blue Angel ecolabel for over 40 years

Consumers require reliable information in order to act in an environmentally conscious manner. Environmental labels such as the "Blue Angel" or the "EU Ecolabel" provide assistance in this area. Both labels stand for particularly environmentally-friendly goods and services, which are only permitted to carry the environmental label once they have passed a strict testing process. The testing process and the awarding of the environmental labels have been carried out by RAL ENVIRONMENT since 1978.



## RAL LOGO LICENCE Brand marketing and monitoring

THE RAL LOGO LICENCE guarantees the worth of the tests carried out by Stiftung Warentest by monitoring and licensing advertising that uses the test results. Consumer deception and false advertising are prevented and the tests thus remain objective and independent. In addition, the RAL LOGO LICENCE is issuing and monitoring body of the government-run meta label Grüner Knopf (Green button) for sustainable textiles. Further the RAL LOGO LICENCE is available to institutions and companies that want to independently market and/or monitor their brand.



## RAL ACADEMY High quality communication of knowledge

At our seminars, workshops, presentations and talks, we pass on our specialist knowledge to interested parties and a variety of occupational groups. Further high quality training of colour designers is a key focus of the RAL ACADEMY.

This printed matter has been awarded the BLUE ANGEL.



## IMAGE CREDITS

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*Simply Excellent.*

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